RTI for Behavior & Social-Emotional Concerns: 'Critical Elements' Checklist

Tier 1: Class-Wide Management. Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes teaching behavioral expectations to students and using proactive strategies to manage group behaviors.

1. High Expectations for Behavior. Students receive explicit training and guidance in expected classroom behaviors--to include:		
Element	**Verified? (Y/N)**	**Information Source(s)** (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Teaching Culturally Responsive Behavioral Expectations. Students have been explicitly taught classroom behavioral expectations. Those positive behaviors are acknowledged and reinforced on an ongoing basis (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). Behavioral expectations are selected and framed in a manner that acknowledges the diversity of cultures within the school community and recognizes the need for students to be active rather than passive learners (Bal, Thorius, & Kozleski, 2012).		
Training the Class in Basic Classroom Routines. The teacher has established routines to deal with common classroom activities (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Examples of classroom routines include: • engaging students in meaningful academic activities at the start of class (e.g., using bell-ringer activities). • assigning and collecting homework and classwork. • transitioning students efficiently between activities.		
Posting Positive Classroom Rules. The classroom has a set of 3-8 rules or behavioral expectations posted. When possible, those rules are stated in positive terms as 'goal' behaviors (e.g. 'Students participate in learning activities without distracting others from learning'). The rules are frequently reviewed (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).		
2. Instruction That Motivates. Academic instruction holds student attention and promotes engagement--to include:		
Element	**Verified? (Y/N)**	**Information Source(s)** (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Ensuring Instructional Match. Lesson content is appropriately matched to students' abilities (Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Boice, 2008).		

Providing Explicit Instruction. When teaching new material, the teacher delivers instruction in a manner that maximizes student understanding: starting with (1) modeling and demonstration, moving to (2) supervised practice with performance feedback, and concluding with (3) opportunities for independent practice with feedback (Rosenshine, 2008).		
Promoting Active Engagement. The teacher inserts activities at key points throughout the lesson to ensure that learners are engaged in 'active accurate responding' (Skinner, Pappas & Davis, 2005) at rates sufficient to hold attention and optimize learning.		
Providing a Brisk Rate of Instruction. The teacher presents an organized lesson, with instruction moving briskly. There are no significant periods of 'dead time' (e.g., drawn-out transitions between activities) when misbehavior can start (Carnine, 1976; Gettinger & Ball, 2008).		
Offering Choice Opportunities. The teacher provides the class with appropriate opportunities for choice when completing in-class academic tasks (Jolivette, Wehby, Canale, & Massey, 2001) Offering choice options can increase academic motivation and focus while reducing problem behaviors.		

3. Managing the Classroom. The teacher uses active, positive techniques to manage the classroom--to include:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Scanning the Class Frequently. The teacher 'scans' the classroom frequently—during whole-group instruction, cooperative learning activities, and independent seatwork. The teacher strategically and proactively recognizes positive behaviors while redirecting students who are off-task (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).		
Employing Effective Verbal Commands. The teacher delivers clear directives to students that are (1) spoken calmly, (2) brief, (3) stated when possible as DO statements rather than as DON'T statements, (4) framed in clear, simple language, and (5) delivered one directive at a time and appropriately paced to avoid confusing or overloading students (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Matheson & Shriver, 2005). These directives are positive or neutral in tone, avoiding sarcasm or hostility and over-lengthy explanations that can distract or confuse students.		
Providing Active Supervision. The teacher frequently moves through the classroom--strategically recognizing positive behaviors while redirecting students who are off-task (De Pry & Sugai, 2002). As needed, the instructor gives behavioral reminders or prompts, teaches or reteaches expected behaviors , and praises examples of appropriate student behavior.		
Shaping Behavior Through Praise. To increase desired behaviors, the		

teacher praises students when they engage in those targeted behaviors (Kern & Clemens, 2007). Effective teacher praise consists of two elements: (1) a description of noteworthy student academic performance or general behavior, and (2) a signal of teacher approval (Brophy, 1981; Burnett, 2001). The teacher uses praise at a rate sufficient to motivate and guide students toward the behavioral goal and maintains an average of 4 praise statements for every disciplinary statement (Villeda et al. 2014).		
Establishing a Range of Consequences for Misbehavior. The teacher has a continuum of classroom-based consequences for misbehavior (e.g., redirect the student; have a brief private conference with the student; temporarily suspend classroom privileges; send the student to another classroom for a brief reflection period) that can be used before the teacher considers administrative removal of any learner from the classroom (Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, 2002).		

Tier 1: Classroom Interventions. Because the teacher is the Tier 1 (classroom) RTI 'first

responder' who can potentially assist any struggling student, schools should prepare necessary resources and define clear guidelines for how to implement Tier 1 behavioral interventions.

1. 'First Responder'. As the Tier 1 interventionist, the teacher follows an RTI problem-solving approach to creating intervention plans for individual students:		
Element	**Verified?** (Y/N)	**Information Source(s)** (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Accessing Consultant Support. The teacher can easily access a behavioral consultant to assist in creating a student intervention plan to address behavioral/social-emotional concerns.		
Following a Structured Process. The teacher follows a consistent RTI problem-solving process in creating the intervention plan (Bergan, 1995).		
Choosing Evidence-Based Interventions. Strategies included in the intervention plan are evidence-based-- i.e., supported by published research (Hawken, Vincent & Schumann, 2008).		
Tracking Student Progress. The teacher has set a goal for improvement in the intervention plan and selected at least one method of formative data collection (e.g., Behavior Report Card) to monitor the student's progress toward the goal during the intervention.		
Allocating Sufficient Time. The intervention plan is scheduled to span a minimum length of time (e.g., 4-8 instructional weeks) sufficient to allow the teacher to fully judge its effectiveness.		
Documenting the Intervention. The teacher uses an online Content Management System (e.g., RTIm Direct) or an electronic or paper form to record details of the intervention plan. This documentation is completed *prior* to the start of the intervention.		
Ensuring Adult Participation. In settings with more than one educator (e.g., co-taught classrooms), all adults in that setting implement the intervention plan consistently with the target student.		

Tier 2: Supplemental Interventions. Tier 2 interventions occur above and beyond core instruction--and can take the form of small group programs, mentoring support, or individual counseling. Tier 2 RTI-B interventions are often 'standard-protocol' programs that match common student intervention needs in a school.

1. **Entrance & Exit Criteria**. Students move into and out of services based on objective data:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Using Data for Recruitment. At several checkpoints during the instructional year, the school identifies students for Tier 2 services through use of one or more objective data sources (e.g., school-wide behavioral screening tools; attendance records; Office Disciplinary Referrals) with specific cut-points (Grosche & Volpe, 2013; McIntosh, Chard, Bolan, & Horner, 2006).		
Convening Team to Place Students in Tier 2 Services. The school convenes a team (e.g., 'Data Analysis Team') that meets periodically (e.g., every 5 weeks) to review school-wide behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional data, to identify at-risk students, and to place them in appropriate Tier 2 services (Mitchell, Stormont & Gage, 2011).		
Making Timely Assignments. Once identified as qualifying for Tier 2 services, students are placed in those services with little or no delay (e.g., within 1-2 weeks of initial referral) (Mitchell, Stormont & Gage, 2011).		
Exiting. At the start of any RTI-behavioral intervention, the school establishes clear outcome goals/criteria for success to allow it to exit students whose data indicate that they no longer require Tier 2 support (Hawken, Vincent & Schumann, 2008).		

2. **'High-Quality' Services**. All Tier 2 services are validated as effective based on research:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Inventorying Evidence-Based Services. The school has inventoried its Tier 2 services and verified that all are 'evidence-based'-- i.e., supported by published research (Hawken, Vincent & Schumann, 2008). This inventory may include: • group-delivered interventions (e.g., social-skills training programs); • mentoring programs (e.g., Check & Connect); • individual counseling (e.g., Solution-Focused Brief Counseling); • individualized behavior plans to be implemented across at least 2 instructional settings.		

3. **Data Collection**. Tier 2 intervention plans are tracked to measure the quality of

implementation and rate of student progress:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Verifying Quality of Implementation. 'Intervention integrity' data are collected periodically (e.g., via direct observation; interventionist self-rating; and/or permanent products from the intervention) to verify that the Tier 2 intervention plan is carried out as designed (Gansle & Noell, 2007; Roach & Elliott, 2008). NOTE: Student attendance is a key aspect of intervention integrity and should equal or exceed 80%.		
Tracking Student Progress. Every Tier 2 intervention plan has at least one source of data (e.g., Behavior Report Card; behavioral frequency count) to be used to track the student's targeted behavior(s) (Grosche & Volpe, 2013). Before beginning the intervention, the school establishes a desired outcome goal that defines the minimum level of acceptable improvement during the intervention timespan. During the intervention, data are collected periodically (e.g., daily; weekly) to assess progress toward the outcome goal.		

Tier 3: Intensive: RTI Problem-Solving Team. General-education students needing Tier 3 academic or behavioral services take up the greatest amount of RTI resources and are at risk for referral to special education if they fail to improve. So these high-stakes cases require the RTI Problem-Solving Team, which follows a customized, team-based 'problem-solving' approach.

1. Problem-Solving Focus. The RTI Problem-Solving Team follows an investigative format to understand the unique needs of students requiring intensive intervention plans:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Creating a Tier 3 RTI Problem-Solving Team. The school has established an 'RTI Problem-Solving Team' to create customized intervention plans for individual students who require Tier 3 (intensive) social-emotional and/or behavioral interventions(Eber, Sugai, Smith & Scott. (2002).). The RTI Problem-Solving Team: • has created clear guidelines for when to accept a Tier 3 student referral. • identifies the function(s) that support problem behaviors of any referred student to better select appropriate interventions. • follows a consistent, structured problem-solving model during its meetings. • schedules (1) initial meetings to discuss student concerns and (2) follow-up meetings to review student progress and judge whether the intervention plan is effective. • develops written intervention plans with sufficient detail to ensure that the intervention is implemented with fidelity across settings and		

people. • builds an 'intervention bank' of research-based intervention ideas for common student academic and behavioral concerns.		
Implementing 'Non-Responder' Decision Rules. The RTI Team applies consistent guidelines/decision rules to judge which students with intensive behavioral needs have failed to respond to general-education behavioral plans and are candidates for referral to the Special Education Eligibility Team.		

2. Capacity for Mental-Health Interventions. The RTI Problem-Solving Team has resources to assemble interventions with strong behavioral/mental-health components:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Enlisting Staff Participation The RTI Team has the authority and scope to enlist the participation in the Tier 3 intervention plan of any educator who regularly interacts with the student.		
Accessing School-Wide Resources. The RTI Team has inventoried and can access available resources within the school--including Tier 1 and 2 intervention programs and services-- to include in any comprehensive, customized intervention plans that it creates. The Team also ensures that all elements of its interventions plans are 'evidence-based'-- i.e., supported by published research (Hawken, Vincent & Schumann, 2008).		
Serving as Resource Gatekeeper. The RTI Team serves as gatekeeper when scarce social-emotional or behavioral resources are to be added to a student's RTI-B intervention plan--e.g., temporary assignment of a 1:1 Teaching Assistant; placement in a multi-week series of individual counseling sessions.		
Conducting FBAs/BIPs. The RTI Team has the capacity to carry out Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and to use the resulting information to assemble Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) for students with the most intensive behavioral needs.		
Running 'Wrap-Around' Meetings. With parent agreement, the RTI Team is prepared to invite to Problem-Solving Meetings staff from mental-health or other community agencies who work with the student. These joint discussion between school and community agencies are run as 'wrap-around' meetings, with the goal of creating a comprehensive intervention plan that coordinates school, home, and perhaps community support.		

3. Data Collection. Tier 3 intervention plans are tracked to measure the quality of

implementation and rate of student progress:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Verifying Quality of Implementation. 'Intervention integrity' data are collected periodically (e.g., via direct observation; interventionist self-rating; and/or permanent products from the intervention) to verify that the Tier 3 intervention plan is carried out as designed (Gansle & Noell, 2007; Roach & Elliott, 2008).		
Tracking Student Progress. Every Tier 3 intervention plan has at least two sources of data (e.g., Behavior Report Card; behavioral frequency count) to be used to track the student's targeted behavior(s) (Grosche & Volpe, 2013). Before beginning the intervention, the school establishes a desired outcome goal that defines the minimum level of acceptable improvement during the intervention timespan. During the intervention, data are collected periodically (at least weekly) to assess progress toward the outcome goal.		

RTI-B: School-Wide Screenings. Schools use an array of building-wide data and screening tools proactively to identify students with behavioral or social/emotional problems. These students can then be placed on appropriate classroom (Tier 1), early-intervention (Tier 2), or intensive-intervention (Tier 3) support plans.

1. Analysis of Archival Data. The school uses existing data as a screener to identify students with emerging attendance and/or behavior problems:		
Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
Developing a System for Archival Data Analysis. The school creates a process for analyzing building-wide archival data on attendance/tardiness and Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs) to identify students with significant concerns of behavior, social-emotional adjustment, and school engagement (Grosche & Volpe, 2013; McIntosh, Chard, Bolan, & Horner, 2006). This system includes: • periodic (e.g., every 5 weeks) compilation and review of school-wide attendance/tardiness and ODR data. • the setting of cut-points for each data source that will determine which students are at-risk. • creation of a matrix of routine RTI responses to match cut-points. This matrix directs the school to appropriate RTI interventions that correspond with the Tier 2 and Tier 3 cut-points for tardiness, absences, and ODRs.		

2. Tapping Teacher Knowledge. Up to 3 times per year, instructors use a 'multi-gating' structured process to identify students in their classrooms with significant behavioral or socio-emotional concerns (Grosche & Volpe, 2013).

Element	Verified? (Y/N)	Information Source(s) (e.g., observation, interview, document review)
A. **Conducting Class-wide Nominations.** Educators are trained to recognize externalizing behaviors, such as non-compliance and hyperactivity, as well as internalizing behaviors, such as social withdrawal and signs of anxiety. Each teacher is directed to nominate the top 3 students in their classroom with the most pronounced externalizing and internalizing behaviors. The school collects these nomination lists.		
B. **Filling Out Follow-Up Behavior Questionnaires.** The teacher is directed to complete a short (5- to 10-minute) normed behavior-assessment questionnaire for each of the 6 students that he or she previously nominated as internalizing or internalizing. A school mental-health professional collects and scores those questionnaires.		
C. **Carrying Out Classroom Observations.** The mental-health professional conducts classroom observations of those students nominated by their teachers who score within the 'clinically significant' range on the behavior-assessment questionnaire.		
D. **Placing Students in RTI-B Services.** Students who are found, via the multi-gating process, to have significant behavioral or socio-emotional needs are matched to appropriate RTI services.		

References

Bal, A., Thorius, K. K., & Kozleski E. (2012). *Culturally responsive positive behavioral support matters.* Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University. Retrieved from http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/CRPBIS_Matters.pdf

Bergan, J. R. (1995). Evolution of a problem-solving model of consultation. Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 6(2), 111-123.

Brophy, J. (1981). Teacher praise: A functional analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 51,* 5-32.

Burnett, P. C. (2001). Elementary students' preferences for teacher praise. *Journal of Classroom Interaction, 36*(1), 16-23.

Burns, M. K., VanDerHeyden, A. M., & Boice, C. H. (2008). Best practices in intensive academic interventions. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp.1151-1162). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Carnine, D.W. (1976). Effects of two teacher presentation rates on off-task behavior, answering correctly, and participation. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 9,* 199-206.

De Pry, R. L., & Sugai, G. (2002). The effect of active supervision and pre-correction on minor behavioral incidents in a sixth grade general education classroom. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 11*(4), 255-267.

Eber, L., Sugai, G., Smith, C. R., & Scott, T. M. (2002). Wraparound and positive behavioral interventions and supports in the schools. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 10(3), 171-180.

Fairbanks, S., Sugai, G., Guardino, S., & Lathrop, M. (2007). Response to intervention: Examining classroom behavior support in second grade. *Exceptional Children, 73*, 288-310.

Gansle, K. A., & Noell, G. H. (2007). The fundamental role of intervention implementation in assessing response to intervention. In S. R. Jimerson, M. K. Burns, & A. M. VanDerHeyden (Eds.), Response to intervention: The science and practice of assessment and intervention (pp. 244-251). New York: Springer Publishing..

Gettinger, M., & Ball, C. (2008). Best practices in increasing academic engaged time. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp.1043-1057). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Grosche, M., & Volpe, R. J. (2013). Response-to-intervention (RTI) as a model to facilitate inclusion for students with learning and behaviour problems. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 28,* 254-269.

Hawken, L. S., Vincent, C. G., & Schumann, J. (2008). Response to intervention for social behavior: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. 16*, 213-225.

Jolivette, K., Wehby, J. H., Canale, J., & Massey, N. G. (2001). Effects of choice-making opportunities on the behavior of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 26*(2), 131-145.

Kern, L. & Clemens, N. H. (2007). Antecedent strategies to promote appropriate classroom behavior. *Psychology in the Schools, 44,* 65-75.

Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. J. (2003). *Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McIntosh, K., Chard, D. J., Bolan, J. B., & Horner, R. H. (2006). Demonstration of combined efforts in school-wide academic and behavioral systems and incidence of reading and behavior challenges in early elementary grades. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 8*(3), 146-154.

Mitchell, B. S., Stormont, M., & Gage, N. A. (2011). Tier two interventions implemented within the context of a tiered prevention network. *Behavioral Disorders, 36* (4), 241-261.

Roach, A. T., & Elliott, S. N. (2008). Best practices in facilitating and evaluating intervention integrity. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.*), Best practices in school psychology V* (pp.195-208).

Rosenshine, B. (2008). *Five meanings of direct instruction.* Center on Innovation & Improvement. Retrieved from http://www.centerii.org

Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., & Sugai, G. (2008). Evidence-based practices in classroom management: Considerations for research to practice. *Evaluation and Treatment of Children, 31*(3), 351-380.

Skinner, C. H., Pappas, D. N., & Davis, K. A. (2005). Enhancing academic engagement: Providing opportunities for responding and influencing students to choose to respond. *Psychology in the Schools, 42,* 389-403.

Sprick, R. S., Borgmeier, C., & Nolet, V. (2002). Prevention and management of behavior problems in secondary schools. In M. A. Shinn, H. M. Walker & G. Stoner (Eds.), *Interventions for academic and behavior problems II: Preventive and remedial approaches* (pp.373-401). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Stewart, L. H. & Silberglit, B. (2008). Best practices in developing academic local norms. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 225-242). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Villeda, S. T., Shuster, B. C., Magill, L, & Carter, E. W. (2014). *Behavior-specific praise in the classroom.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Project Support & Include. Retrieved from https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/resources/psibehaviorspecpraise.pdf