



Building an RTI-B Schoolwide Screening Process Through Archival Data & Multi-Gating Procedures

A central mission of Response to Intervention-Behavior (RTI-B) is to surface and address emerging student problems, intervening before those challenges become severe. Schools use an array of building-wide screening tools to identify students with behavioral or social/emotional problems. This proactive approach allows schools to find at-risk students and place them on appropriate classroom (Tier 1), early-intervention (Tier 2), or intensive-intervention (Tier 3) support plans. The goal is to prevent behavior and social-emotional problems from escalating to the point where intervention becomes more costly to implement and the student faces possible serious disciplinary consequences such as repeated classroom removal and suspension from school (Benner, Kutash, Nelson, & Fisher, 2013).

Presented here is a two-part protocol for conducting school-wide behavior/social-emotional screenings that incorporates best practices taken from several models. This method makes use of existing building ('archival') data while also adopting a multi-gating approach to allow teachers to identify at-risk students in their classrooms with a minimum of time and effort.

Part 1: Archival Data: Screen for Attendance and Disciplinary Referrals. Two important indicators of trouble in student adjustment are high rates of (1) tardiness or absenteeism and (2) office disciplinary referrals ('ODRs') (Grosche & Volpe, 2013; McIntosh, Chard, Bolan, & Horner, 2006). Schools traditionally track both of these information sources but often wait until problems escalate before reacting. In contrast, RTI-B monitors building-wide rates of absences and office referrals every 5 weeks, noting which students show a spike on either indicator and therefore require RTI intervention. Advantages in using archival data as a component of a school-wide RTI-B screening process are that schools routinely collect the information, that this data is already understood and used by educators, and that rates of tardiness, absenteeism, and office disciplinary referrals are all robust predictors of student problems.

Here are 5 steps that schools can follow to harness the power of archival data to serve as one source of RTI-B screening data:

1. *Ensure the timely collection of quality data.* The school verifies that data on class tardiness, school absences, and ODRs is being collected reliably and entered into some type of electronic management system on a timely basis. For example, if a teacher sends a student from the classroom as a disciplinary consequence, that removal must be recorded on paper or digitally (e.g., to include date, time, location, and a brief narrative of the incident) and added within a reasonable timespan (e.g., within 2 days) to the school's ODR database.
2. *Set cut-points for RTI intervention.* The school next sets cut-points that will determine if a given student is at-risk. Typically, a school would adopt five-week intervals for data reviews. Cut-points, then, are set as the minimum number of incidents of tardiness, school absence, or classroom problem behavior (ODRs) that will trigger some type of RTI response at the end of 5 weeks. Separate cut-points are set to trigger an early-intervention (Tier 2), or intensive-intervention (Tier 3) support plan. For example, a school may decide that a student with at least 2 ODRs will require a Tier 2 intervention while one who has 4 or more ODRs merits a more intensive Tier 3 RTI response.
3. *Develop a matrix of RTI responses to match cut-points.* The school puts together appropriate RTI interventions that match the Tier 2 and Tier 3 cut-points for tardiness, absences, and ODRs. For example, a student flagged for RTI Tier 2 for ODRs may require a parent conference and reteaching of behavioral expectations, while one



eligible for Tier 3 for the same reason will be referred to the RTI Team for a full problem-solving meeting. TIP: Schools may want to generate a menu of several acceptable responses for students identified by these data cut-points, to better match each individual learner to an appropriate intervention plan.

4. *Run periodic data reports.* The school creates procedures and assigns person(s) responsible to run reports every five weeks and share them with appropriate RTI and classroom staff. At minimum, these reports highlight students who have exceeded the pre-set RTI cut-points on tardiness, absenteeism, and ODRs for Tiers 2 and 3.

Part 2: Multi-Gating: Employ Teacher Knowledge Through Nominations and Questionnaires. While archival data--particularly ODRs--can be analyzed to reliably locate students with serious disciplinary issues, it tends to miss both individuals whose problem behaviors are concerning but are currently being managed within the classroom and those whose behavior problems are more 'internalizing' (e.g., depression, anxiety) and therefore not picked up through disciplinary referrals. Teacher nominations, then, are an excellent additional method to flag less-visible students at risk for behavioral and social-emotional problems. However, the process of teacher nomination must be made manageable so as not to overwhelm classroom staff with additional evaluation duties.

A multi-gating approach is a compromise that is both efficient and reliable. It allows the teacher rapidly to survey the mental-health and behavioral needs of all their students while limiting that educator to a much smaller number of more detailed assessments for the handful of students that present the greatest classroom concerns (Grosche & Volpe, 2013). In 4 steps, here is how a multi-gating behavioral/social-emotional screening can unfold:

1. *Teacher: Complete classwide 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 asked to nominate the top 3 students in their classroom with the most pronounced externalizing and internalizing behaviors. (An instructor working with multiple sections of students would complete separate nomination lists for each section.) The school collects these nomination lists.
2. *Teacher: Complete questionnaires.* The teacher is directed to complete a short (5- to 10-minute) normed behavior-assessment questionnaire for each of the 6 student that he or she previously nominated as internalizing or internalizing. A school mental-health professional collects and scores those questionnaires. NOTE: The BASC-2 Progress Monitor for Externalizing and ADHD Problems is an example of such a questionnaire. Review other commercial questionnaires suitable for this stage in the screening at the National Center on Intensive Intervention: <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/resources/tools-charts>
3. *Mental-Health Professional: Conduct 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. If needed, other information (e.g., via student interview; parent contact, etc.) is collected as well.
4. *School: Match students to appropriate RTI services.* Based on screening results, those students whose behavioral and/or socio-emotional profile place them in the significantly at-risk range are identified for and matched to appropriate Tier 2 or Tier 3 services.

References

- Benner, G. J., Kutash, K., Nelson, J. R., & Fisher, M. B. (2013). Closing the achievement gap of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders through multi-tiered systems of support. *Education and Treatment of Children, 36*(3), 15-29.
- 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.



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.



Activity: Using Archival Data as an RTI-B Screening Tool: Creating 'Cut-Points'

Directions: In each of the tables below, list the cut-points in a 5-week span that will identify students as needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 support. Next to each cut-point, brainstorm one or more RTI 'next step' ideas for addressing the student's needs.

Data Source 1: Office Disciplinary Referrals. The teacher completes a paper or digital referral form to document incidents in which the student is removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons.	
<i>Tier 2 Cut-Point:</i> ODRs at or above: <input type="text"/>	RTI 'Next Step' Ideas:
<i>Tier 3 Cut-Point:</i> ODRs at or above: <input type="text"/>	RTI 'Next Step' Ideas:

Data Source 2: Tardiness. The date and time that a student arrives late to class is noted to allow for summary reports by course and date.	
<i>Tier 2 Cut-Point:</i> Tardiness incidents at or above: <input type="text"/>	RTI 'Next Step' Ideas:
<i>Tier 3 Cut-Point:</i> Tardiness incidents at or above: <input type="text"/>	RTI 'Next Step' Ideas:

Data Source 3: Absences. A student's absences are recorded by class period to allow a summary report of absences by course as well as full days missed.	
<i>Tier 2 Cut-Point:</i> ___ single-course ___ full-day Absences at or above: <input type="text"/>	RTI 'Next Step' Ideas:
<i>Tier 3 Cut-Point:</i> ___ single-course ___ full-day Absences at or above: <input type="text"/>	RTI 'Next Step' Ideas: