

Minnesota Principals Academy – Action Learning Project Ben Chiri

Refinement of a School-Wide System for Implementing Tier 2 & Tier 3 Student Supports

ABSTRACT

The focus of this action learning project was to use recommendations from current research to refine the procedures of the Highview Middle School Student Intervention Team (SIT), a system for managing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, for the sake of better supporting staff and improving student outcomes. In its 3rd year of implementation, the Highview SIT provides a forum for teachers to discuss students of concern and develop a plan for academic and social/emotional/behavior supports with the guidance of intervention teachers, the school psychologist and an administrator. Research findings reported in the scholarly literature supported many of the practices currently in the SIT process, yet indicated the need for improvement specifically in the areas of data-based progress monitoring and systems for supporting teachers through coaching and professional development. Accordingly, the team established clearer systems for pre-intervention data collection, post-intervention data collection, and post-intervention follow-up oversight. Concurrently, school's PBIS Team designated a PBIS coach for each grade level to support implementation of generalized and targeted classroom strategies.

Evaluation data indicated generally positive outcomes from the modifications in the SIT process this year. While student outcomes varied widely in response to varying interventions targeted to individual student needs, some of the students showed signs of improved academic achievement and behavior after SIT-managed interventions were implemented. Staff impressions of the process were mixed, but mostly positive. All of the students who were referred for Special Education evaluation as a result of the SIT process successfully qualified for Special Education services.

Vision

High levels of student achievement via engagement in essential curriculum with a personalized approach.

Background/Context

The successful development and implementation of Tier 2 & 3 academic and social/emotional supports is essential to this personalization for many students. At recent district-level meetings and at Highview's Spring ISIIP (school improvement) meeting, our superintendent placed particular emphasis on development of strong systems for Tier 2 & 3 interventions across schools district-wide. The overall goal is to provide students with effective supports that are independent of the Special Education system, and to reduce the overall number of non-qualifying Special Education referrals. While Highview Middle School received commendation in this area at our Spring 2015-16 ISIIP meeting, we are committed to continuous improvement of our systems.

What we did

Prior the 2016-17 school year, the members of the Highview SIT determined to implement the following enhancements to the SIT process:

- **Pre-SIT intervention planning surveys**
- **Modified SIT Action Plans to establish clearly-defined student goal(s) and a system for data-based progress monitoring and follow-up**
- **Established SIT Point-Person for each student to oversee follow-up and encourage consistency of intervention implementation**
- **SIT follow-up surveys to remind staff of commitments, monitor progress, and inform staff of progress toward goal(s)**
- **PBIS coaches designated for all 3 grade levels to help promote generalized and targeted classroom strategies**

What we found out

Specific follow-up data varied depending on student need. Generalized end-of-year data led to the following conclusions:

- **Referral data indicates there is continued need for a consolidated system for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention management.**
- **Student response and staff survey data indicate that, overall, students and staff benefitted from SIT procedures this year, yet further refinement is needed.**
- **The SIT process was successful at helping ensure appropriate SpEd referrals this year.**
- **Strengthening follow-up procedures is essential for ensuring positive outcomes for students and teachers. Follow-up surveys are helpful, but should not be relied on as the sole basis for follow-up actions. Establishing a SIT point-person for each student increased consistency of follow-up from previous year.**
- **Strengthen data collection system, particularly behavior referral consistency.**

Implications for practice

As a result of this project, the SIT plans to implement these additional refinements for the 2017-18 school year:

- **At start of new year, review previous year's list for continued follow-up and connection with new interventions**
- **Share 8th grade intervention records with high school deans for continuity of support**
- **Develop a stronger system for following-up with families in support of Tier 2 intervention strategies**
- **Further PD with staff to share data, as well as SIT referral and follow-up expectations**
- **Strengthen the role of SIT members as instructional coaches**
- **Streamline SIT referral process**
- **Use academic behavior interventionist as a new resource**