MTSS for All: Including Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

SPDG MTSS CoP - April 2021

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TIES Center

Introductions

Gail Ghere

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The TIES Center is the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies with a focus on students with significant cognitive disabilities.

www.tiescenter.org

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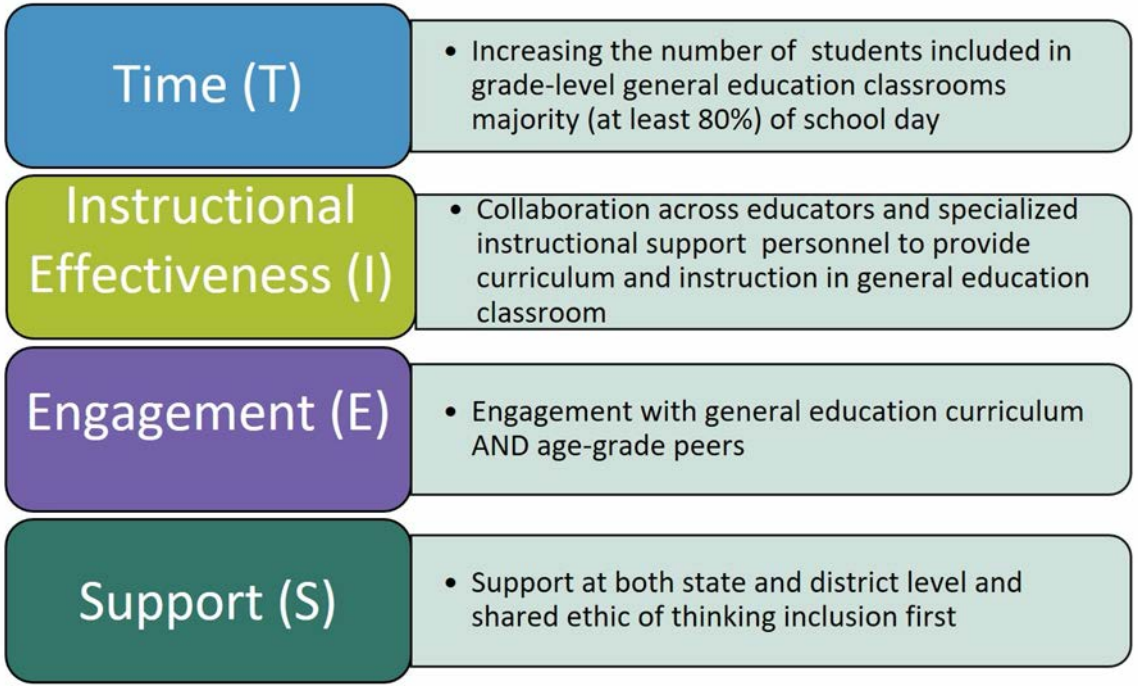
TIES Center: T-I-E-S



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Today's Objectives

- Review Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and its additive nature
- Provide a framework for how it relates to inclusion for all students with disabilities, including students with significant cognitive disabilities at the school-wide level
- Consider how MTSS looks for students with significant cognitive disabilities "top-down" (school-wide systems) and "ground-up" (instructional level)
- Considerations for moving forward

POLL

When you begin working with a district or school on MTSS, how often do they bring up being inclusive of all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities?

1) Most of the time
2) Sometimes
3) Occasionally
4) Never

ESSA

Developing programs and activities that increase the ability of teachers to effectively teach children with disabilities, **including children with significant cognitive disabilities,** and English learners, which **may include the use of multi-tier systems of support and positive behavioral intervention and supports**, so that such children with disabilities and English learners can meet the challenging State academic standards;…

(Sec 2103(b)(3)(F))

Misperceptions	Facts
MTSS does not include students with disabilities because those students already receive extra support.	MTSS should be inclusive of all students in a school.
MTSS is solely a process for qualifying students for special education services.	MTSS is an instruction and intervention framework for all students. It is a preventative model. It can be included in referral and evaluating processes, but that is not its primary purpose.

Misperceptions	Facts
Special education is Tier 3 in MTSS.	Tier 3 is individual supports for any student who needs this level of support. It is not special education services.
If a student qualifies for special education then they receive special education services separate from the the rest of the school-wide MTSS.	A student with special needs receives their services within the school-wide MTSS framework. (= inclusion)

POLL: Which of these do you see as the most prevalent misperception in your work?

1) MTSS does not include students with disabilities because those students already receive extra support.

2) MTSS is solely a process for qualifying students for special education services.

3) Special education is Tier 3 in MTSS.

4) If a student qualifies for special education then they receive special education services separate from the the rest of the school-wide MTSS.

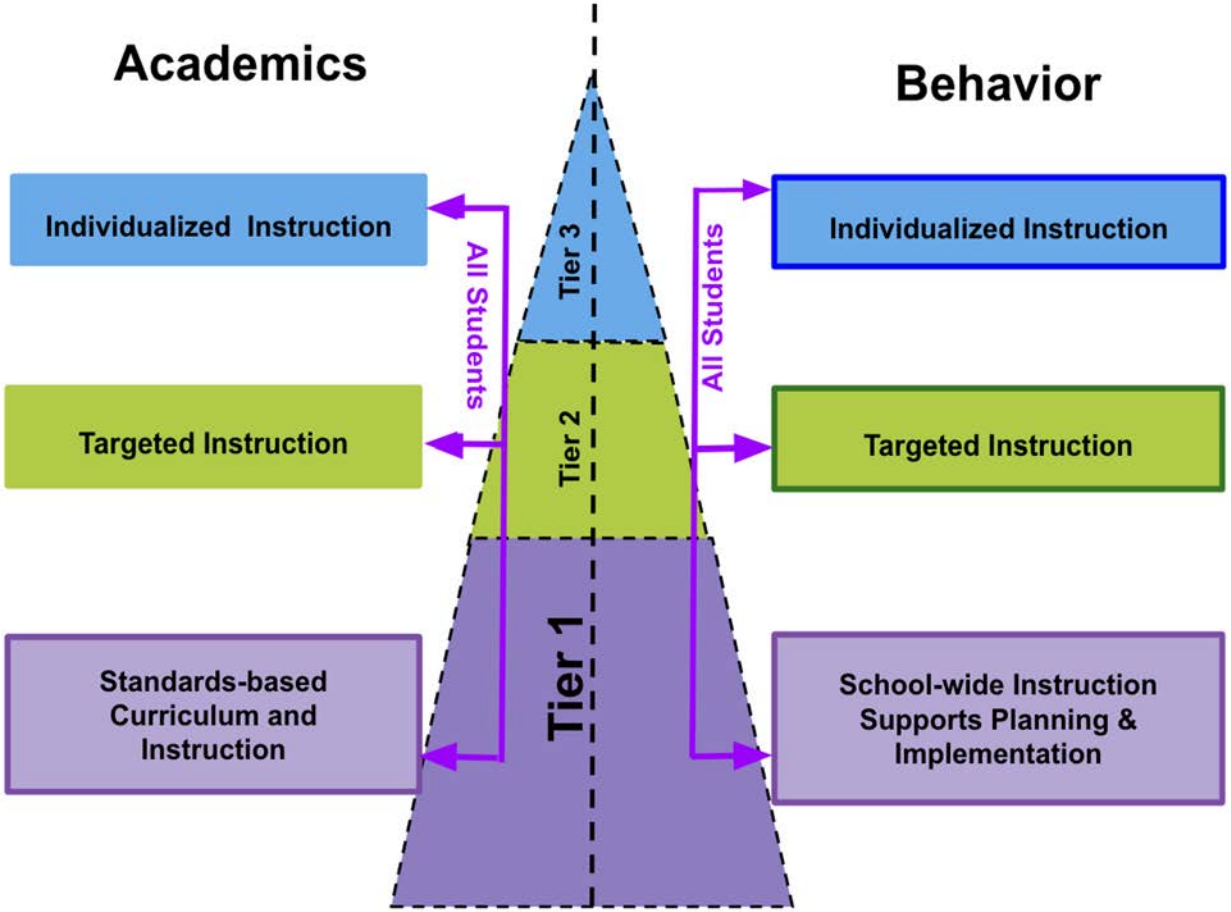
5) All of above

6) None of the above

Foundational Assumptions

- Students receiving special education services are general education students first; special education services are supplementary services.
- Districts provide a continuum of *services* rather than a continuum of *placements*.
- When a group of students with disabilities is not included in an MTSS framework:
  - the concept of all students being general education students first and that special education services are supplementary is eroded
  - Greater “silo-ing” of special education (both the students and staff)
- All students need to access to and to make progress in their grade-level, general education standards (core instruction)

Multi-Tiered System of Supports



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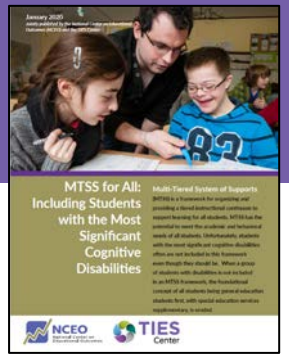


Multi-Tiered System of Supports Inclusive of All Students

Academic Standards-based Curriculum and Instruction

School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Tier 3

- **Individualized Instruction**
  - Individualized Instruction Focused on Skill Gaps
- **Individualized Instruction**
  - Individualized Intervention Plan

Tier 2

- **Targeted Instruction**
  - Build Background Knowledge / Reinforce Priority Learning
- **Targeted Instruction**
  - Pre-teach and Reteach

Tier 1

- **Standards-based Curriculum and Instruction**
  - Focused on Priority Learning Targets
- **School-wide Instruction Supports Planning & Implementation**
  - Simplified / Supported Skill Building & Understanding of School Culture and Rituals and Routines

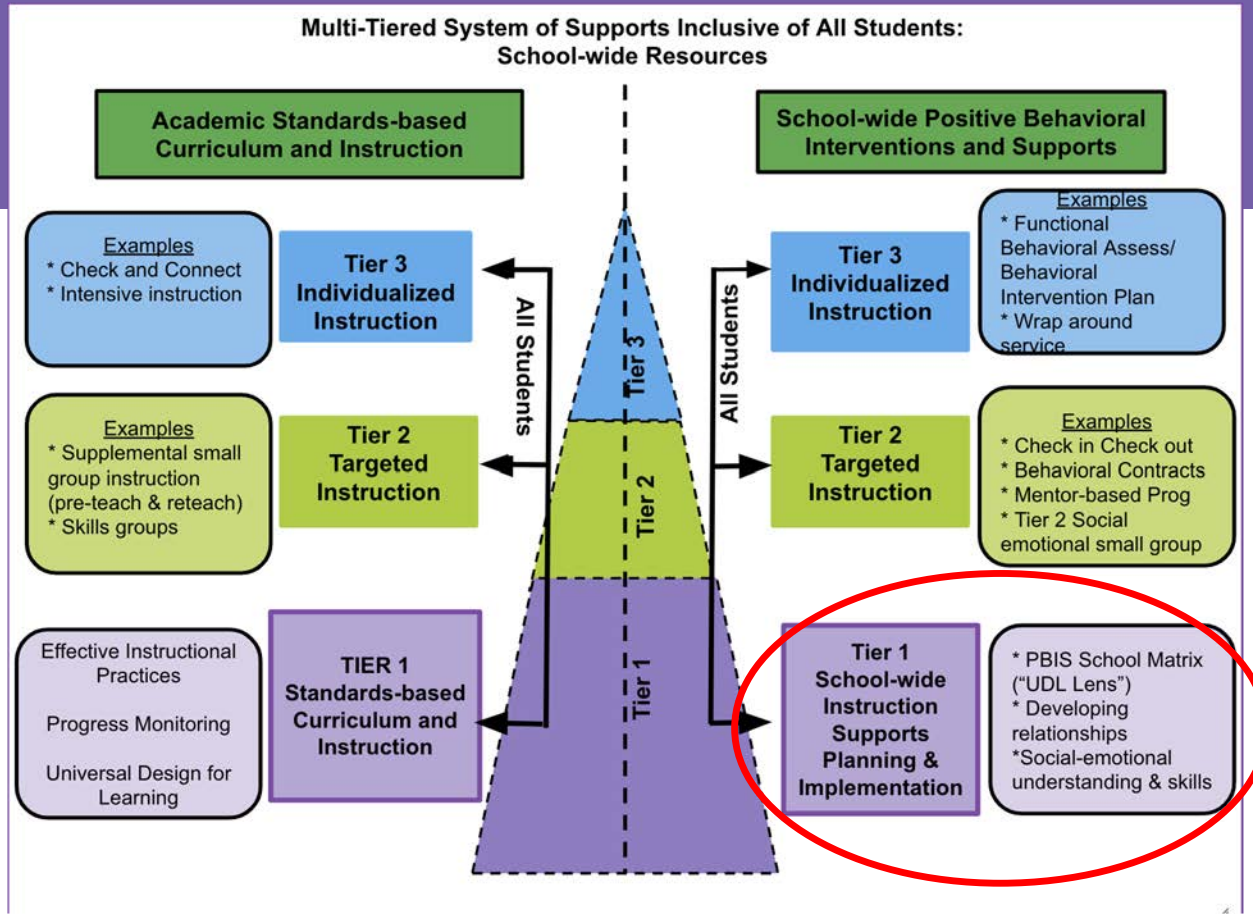
All Students

All Students

Aligned Supplementary Strategies for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Aligned Supplementary Strategies for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

School-wide example of an integrated system



Behavioral Expectations with Definitions Used

Table 1. Behavioral Expectations With Definitions Used.

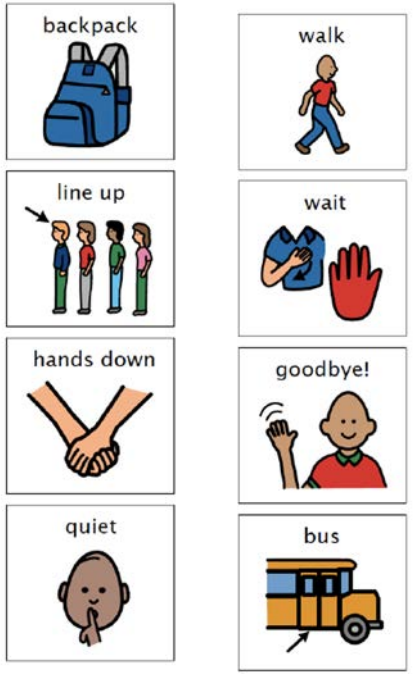
Setting	Expectation: Be Safe	Expectation: Be Respectful	Expectation: Be Responsible
Cafeteria	Sit up Feet on the floor Keep hands to yourself	Quiet voice Stay in your space (giving people their own space)	Listen to the teacher Follow directions
Recess line-up	Walk Hands to yourself	Quiet voice Listen to the teacher	Stay in line Return to your assigned seat
Departure routine	Stand and wait Use your seatbelts	Quiet voice Wave to others	Remember your belongings Walk in line

(Walker et al, 2018)

Research Example

Cafeteria Table Rules!

safe hands	Hands safe and quiet.
	Feet still and on the floor.
	Sit up straight.
quiet talk	Voices quiet. Ok to talk to neighbors.



(Walker et al, 2018)

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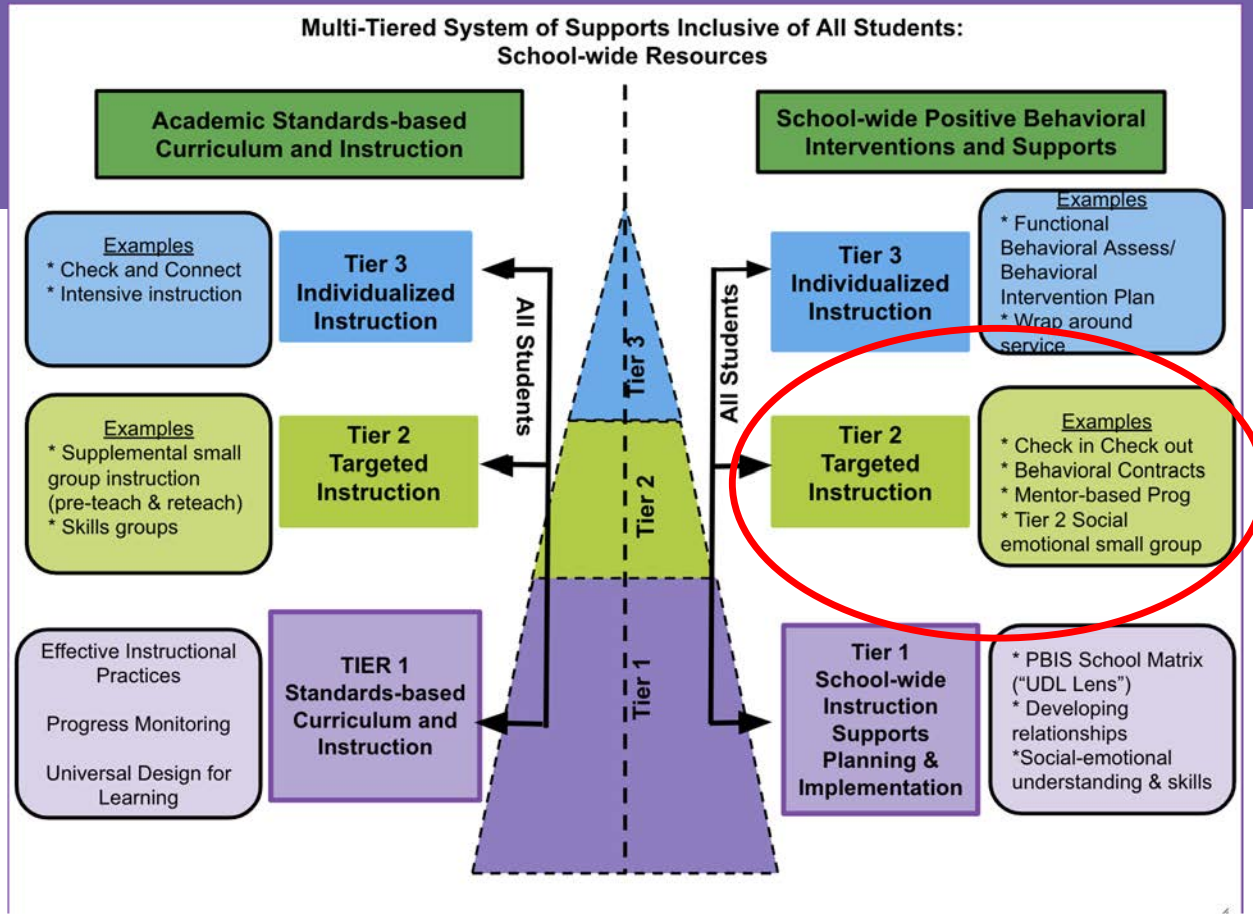

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Check in check out

Table 1. Modifying Check in Check out (CICO) Intervention for Students With Intellectual Disabilities

Step	Traditional CICO	Modification	Rationale
Check in	Student meets with mentor, receive a points sheet (DPR), and set a behavioral goal for the day	Takes place where students spend the majority of their day No more than 5 minutes long Occurs more than one time per day	Difficulty generalizing skills Difficulty maintaining attention; difficulty attending to relevant information Require frequent reminders
Receive feedback	Student receives feedback throughout the day from his or her teacher(s) and receives a score from 0 (did not meet expectations) to 2 (fully met expectations)	DPR incorporates picture symbols Feedback for inappropriate behaviors is immediate DPR adapted to a yes/no format	Assists students with limited reading skills Difficulty with memory Difficulty with abstract concepts
Check out	Student checks out with mentor, reviews DPR, receives praise/reinforcement for meeting goal or encouragement to meet the goal the next school day	Give immediate reinforcers for meeting goals in addition to a token or coupon Provide additional feedback for parents on the DPR	Require more frequent reinforcement Difficulty with communication skills
Home component	Parents sign the DPR and provide praise/reinforcement for meeting goal or encouragement to meet the goal the next school day	Additional at-home reinforcer for meeting goals	Require more frequent reinforcement
Return to school	Student returns DPR to mentor the next school day	Additional reinforcer or group contingency	Memory difficulties and lack of organizational skills

(Boden et al., 2012)

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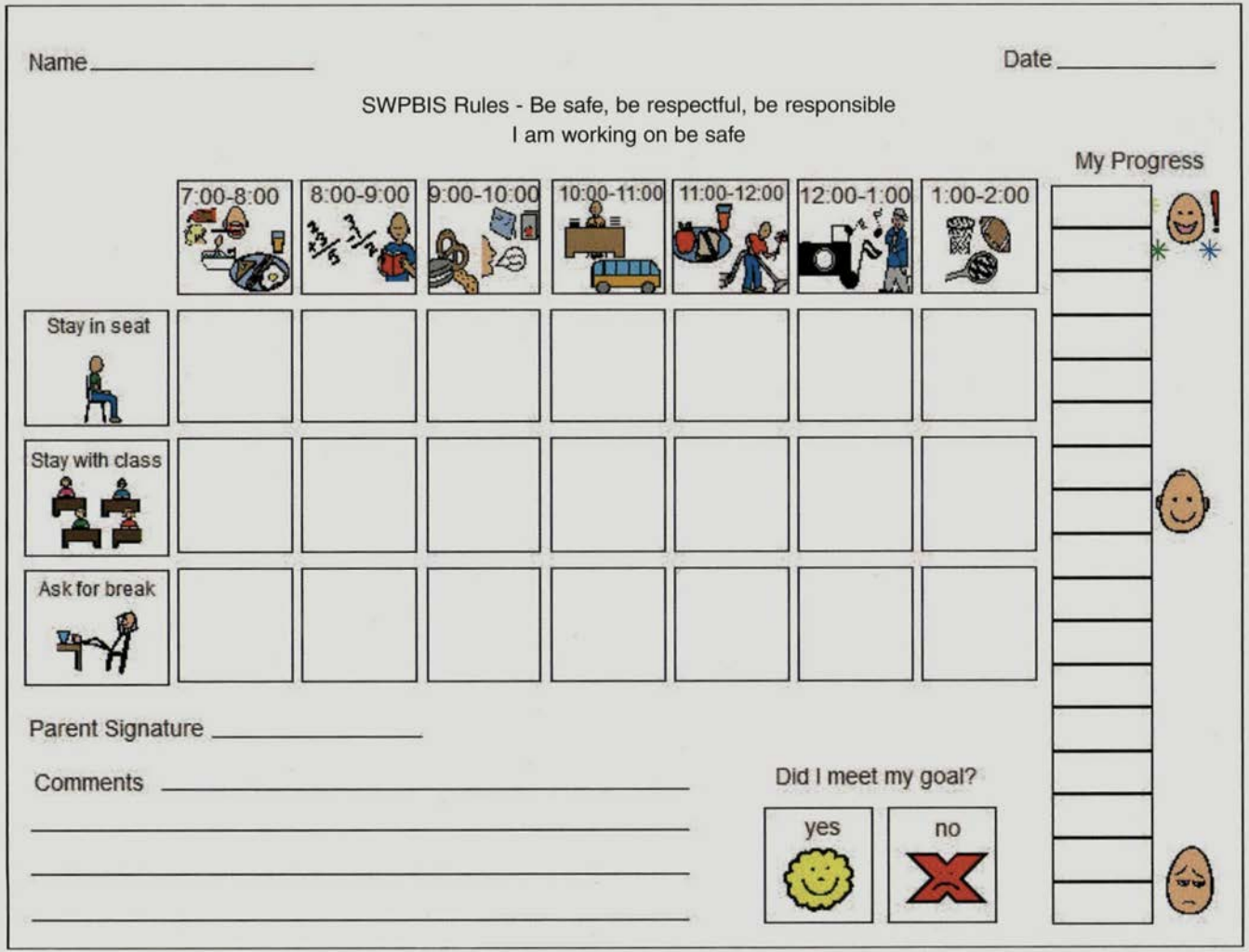
Figure 1. Kerry's Daily Progress Report

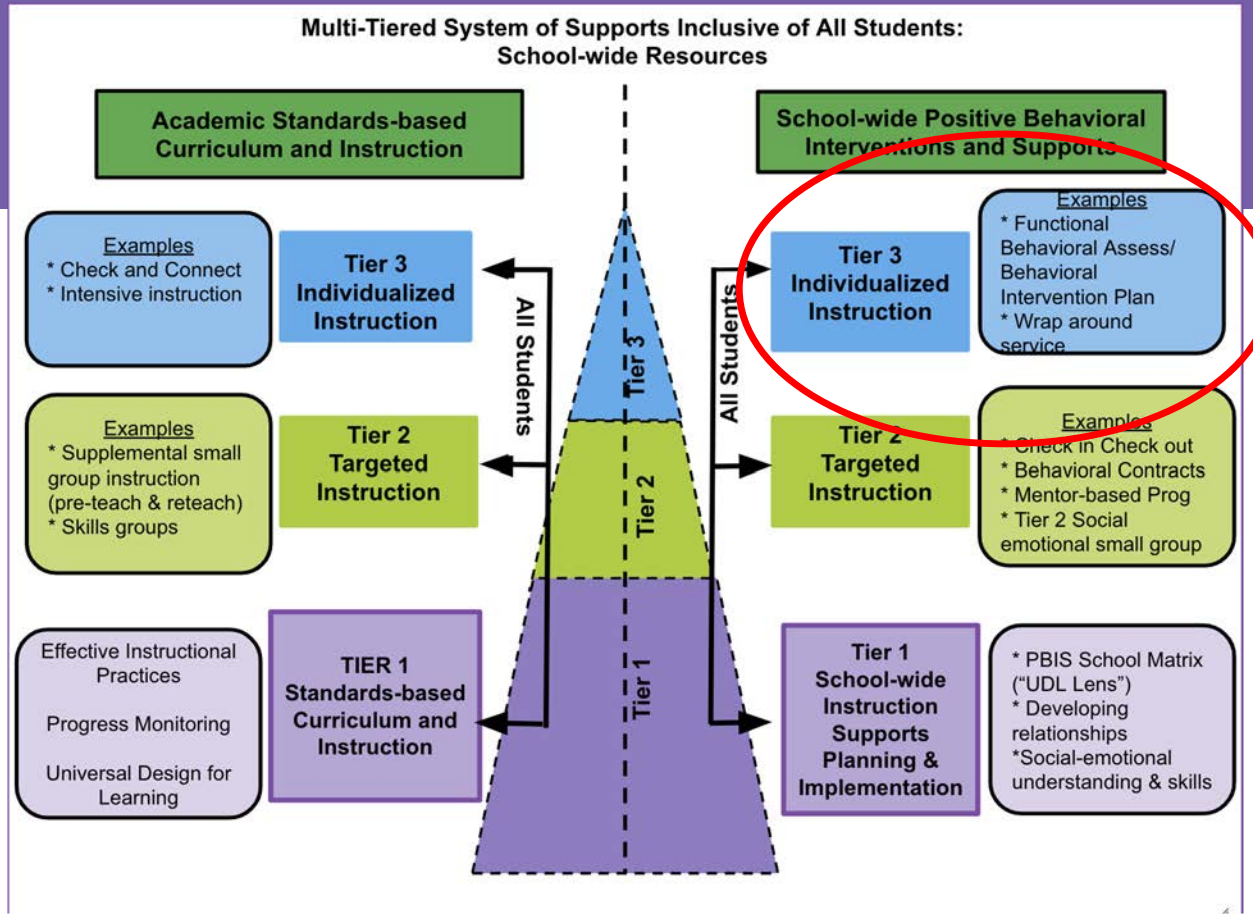


(Boden et al., 2012)

Figure 2. Carter's Completed Daily Progress Report

(Boden et al., 2012)

School-wide example of an integrated system



Tier 3 – Individualized Intervention Plan

TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM FOR PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

Student/ Grade:
Interviewer:
Date:
Teacher:

Student Profile: Please identify at least three strengths or contributions the student brings to school.

_____
_____
_____

Problem Behavior(s): Identify problem behaviors

__ Tardy	__ Fight/physical Aggression	__ Disruptive	__ Theft
__ Unresponsive	__ Inappropriate Language	__ Insubordination	__ Vandalism
__ Withdrawn	__ Verbal Harassment	__ Work not done	__ Other
	__ Verbally Inappropriate	__ Self-injury	

Provide more detail about the problem behavior(s):

What does the problem behavior(s) look like?

How often does the problem behavior(s) occur?

___ Hourly ___ Daily ___ Weekly ___ Less Often

How long does the problem behavior(s) last when it does occur?

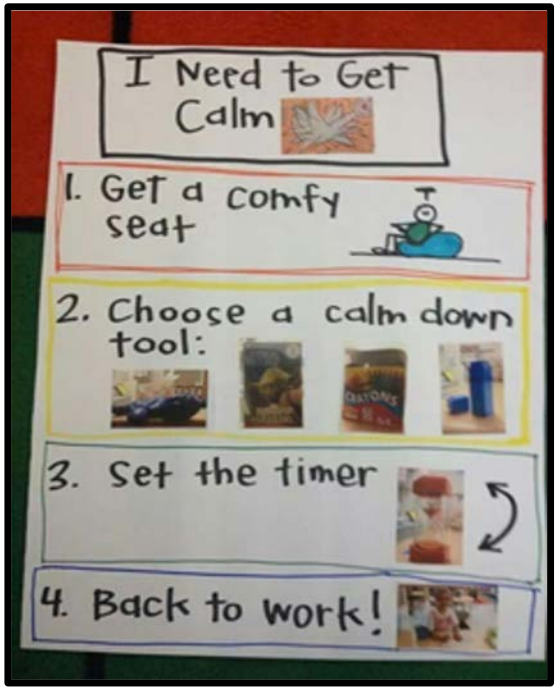
___ Less than 3 minutes ___ 5 Minutes ___ 10-20 minutes ___ 30 minutes ___ Over 30 minutes

What is the intensity/level of danger of the problem behavior(s)?

_____ **Mild:** Disruptive but little risk to self, others or property

_____ **Moderate:** Property damage or minor injury

_____ **Severe:** Significant threat to self or safety of others



(Fischer, A.J., Hawken, L., Hidalgo, R., 2019)

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Discuss

How do these ideas on how to include students with significant cognitive disabilities in tiered behavior supports align with what you see in your work?

How don't they align?

(Enter ideas in chat or unmute and share)

“If the adults are separate, then the kids are separate.”

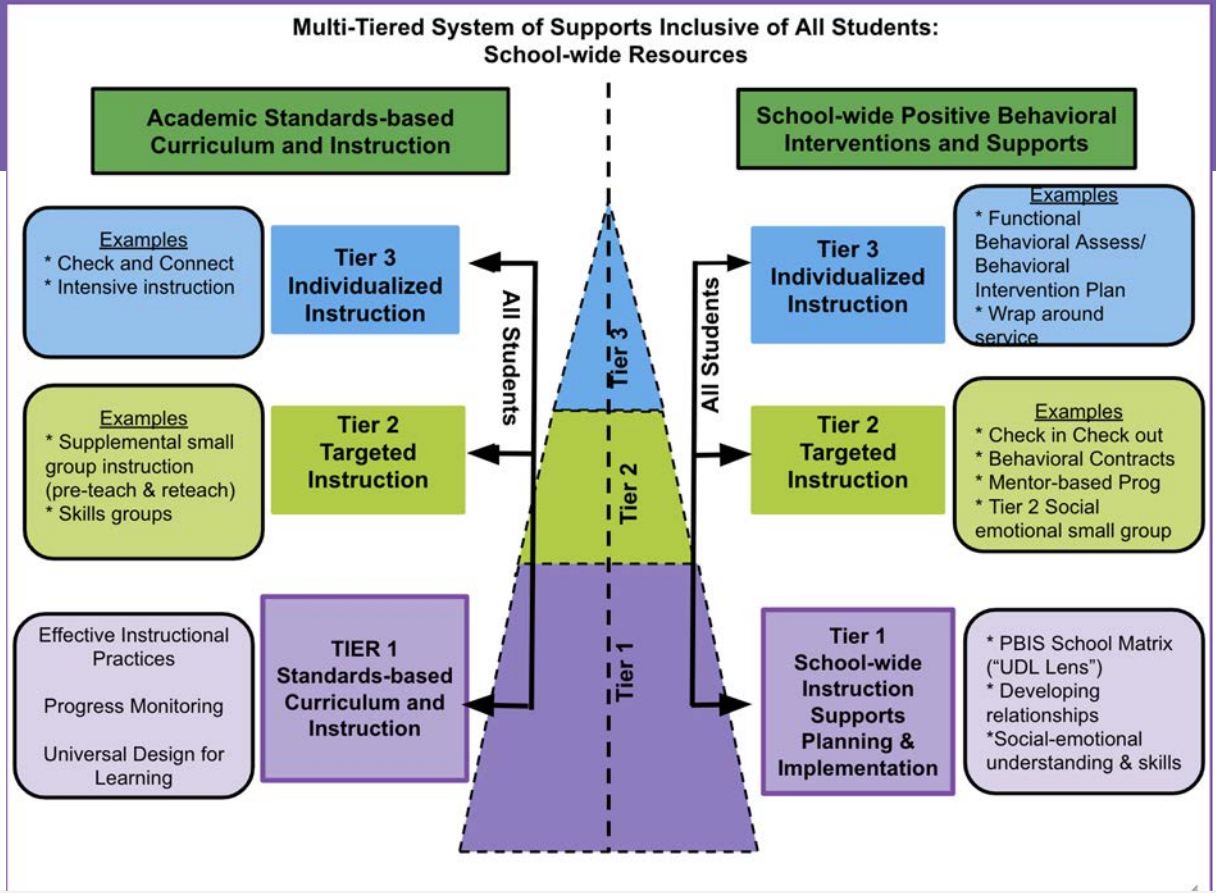
Terri Vandercook & Jennifer York-Barr

University of Minnesota

Vandercook, T., and York-Barr, J. (2003). Lessons learned on the way to inclusion. *Impact: Feature Issue on Revisiting Inclusive K-12 Education.* University of Minnesota: Institute on Community Integration. Available from http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/161.

Special education - general education collaboration for academics and behavior:

- instructional planning
- intervention planning
- teaming for **data decision** making



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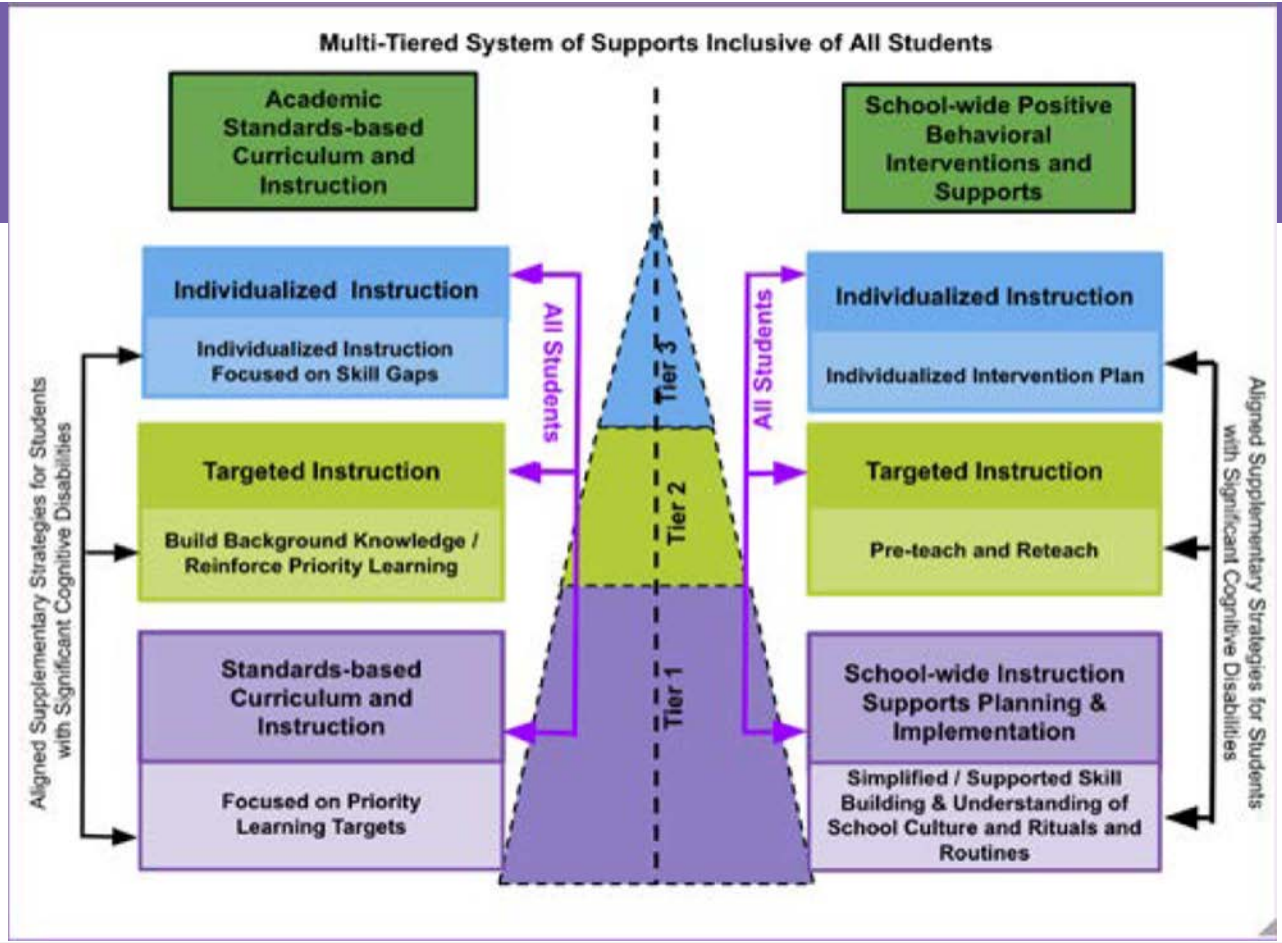
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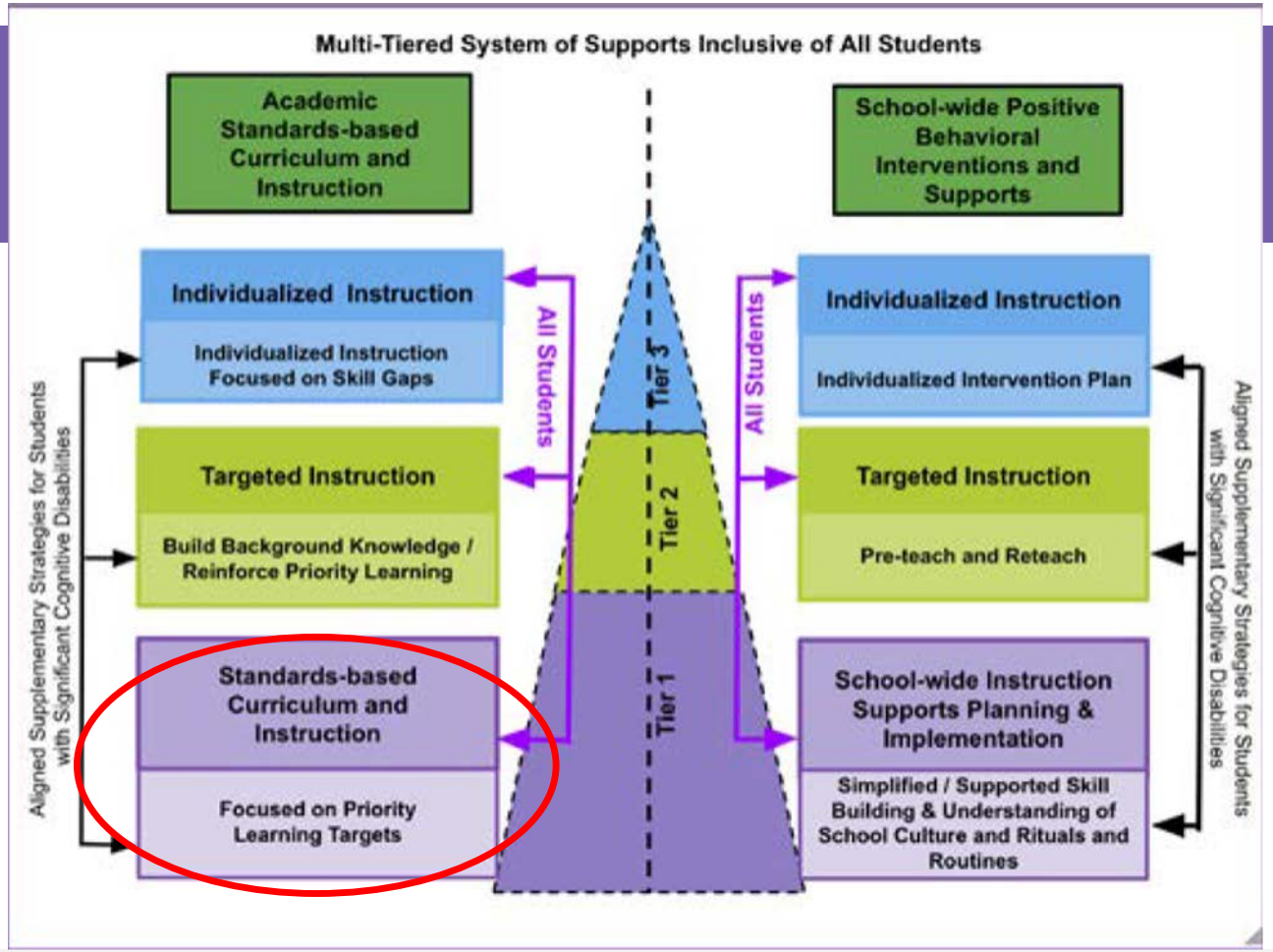
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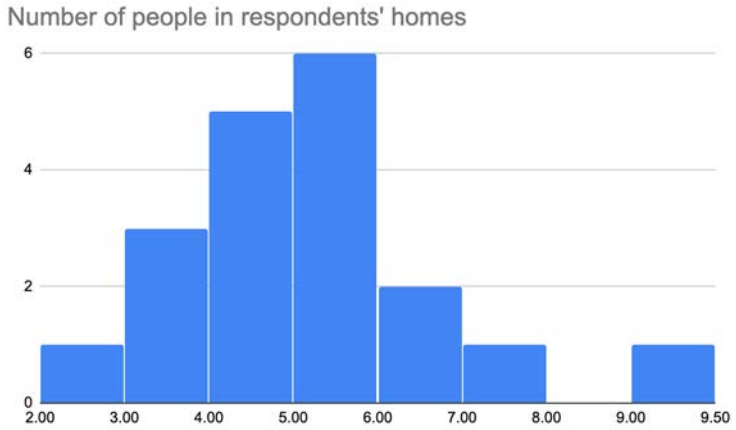
Tier 1 – Standards-based Curriculum and Instruction

6th Grade Math Lesson

- **Summarize and describe distributions of data**
- Students will conduct a survey, and display the results in a histogram.
- Students will work in pairs and describe the distribution using descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, symmetry, and skew).

Prioritized goals for a student with SCD (Tier 1)

- **Summarize data distributions as shown in tables or graphs**



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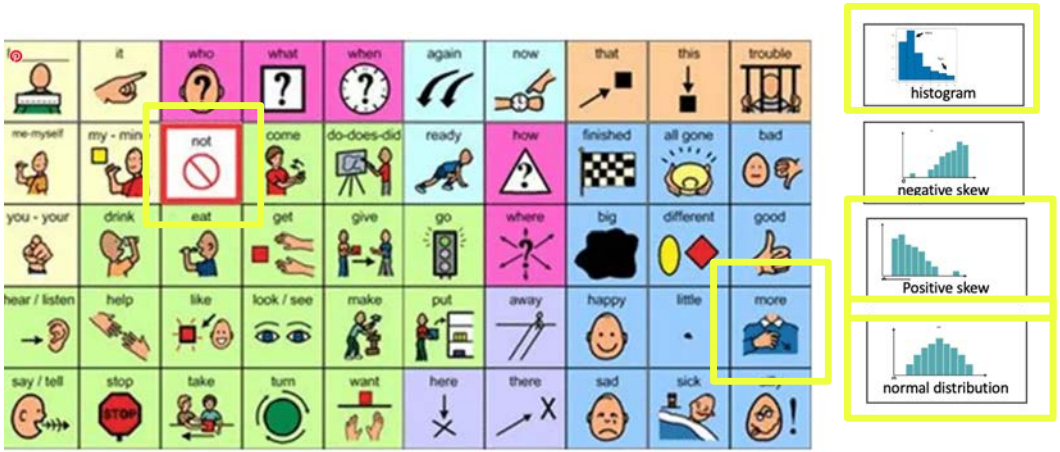
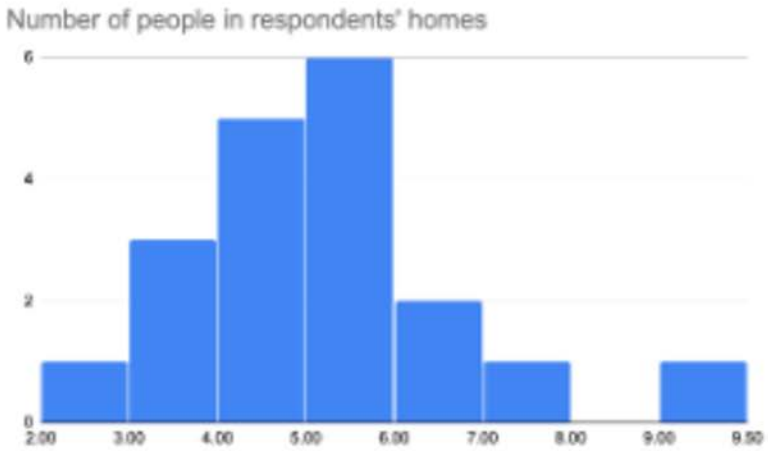


Tristan will describe his distribution by matching it with his fringe vocabulary while his partner will calculate mean, median, and mode.

- Teacher is modeling, using group discussion, eliciting and interpreting student thinking, and checking student understanding
- In collaboration, the teacher may also support students who are having difficulties by
  - modeling in an accessible way (e.g., using concrete and abstract materials)
  - Modeling and supporting augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)

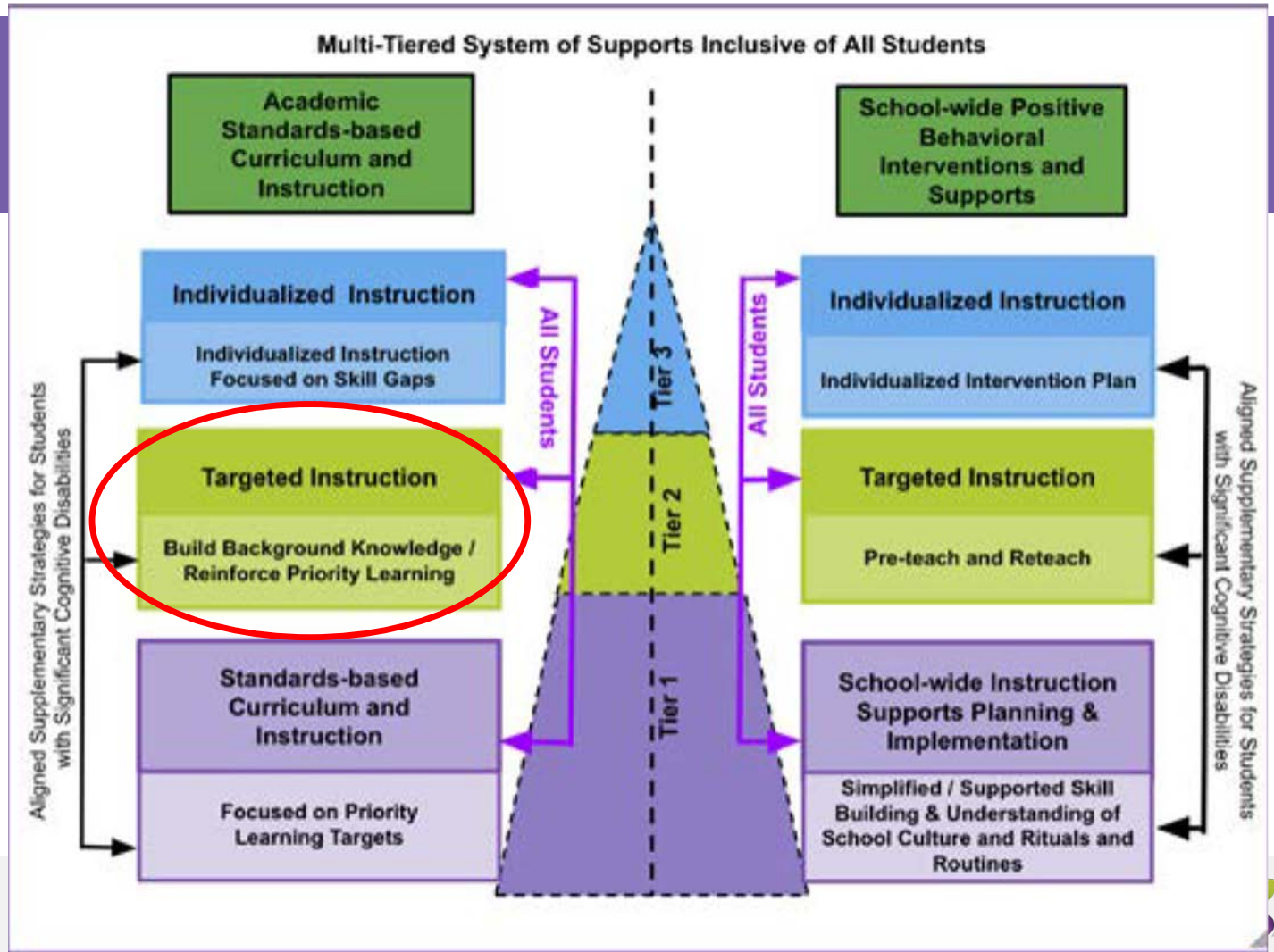
Tier 1, continued



Most people have between 8 and 10 people in their house

Most people have between 2 and 4 people in their house

Most people have between 4 and 6 people in their house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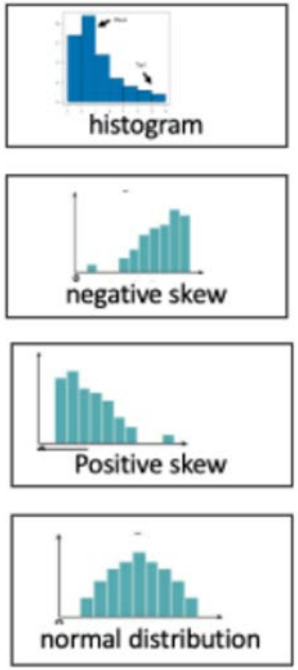
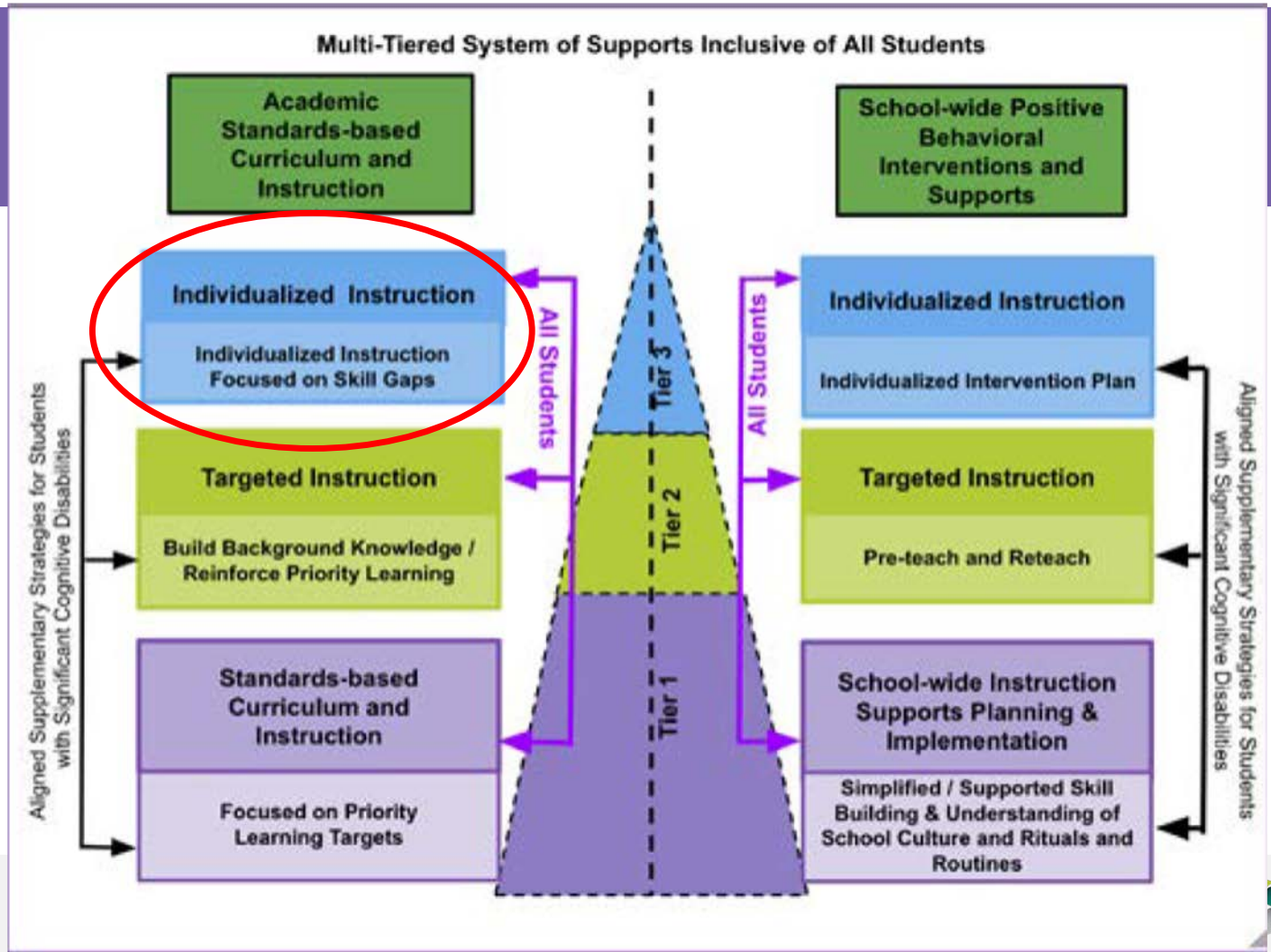
Tier 2 – Targeted Instruction

- Pre-teaching and re-teaching concepts using explicit instruction
  - Pre- and re-teaching vocabulary with visuals in a small group format
  - Re-teaching the day's concepts, giving students additional opportunities to talk about the problem(s) completed in class

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Tier 3 – Individualized (Embedded) Instruction

Embedded instruction is an evidence-based practice (Jimenez et al., 2015)

- Student receives this Tier 3 instruction in the general education classroom twice a week when the paraprofessional comes in to do additional embedded instructional trials during natural opportunities in the classroom routine

Tier 3 – Individualized Instruction, an example

Example math problem:

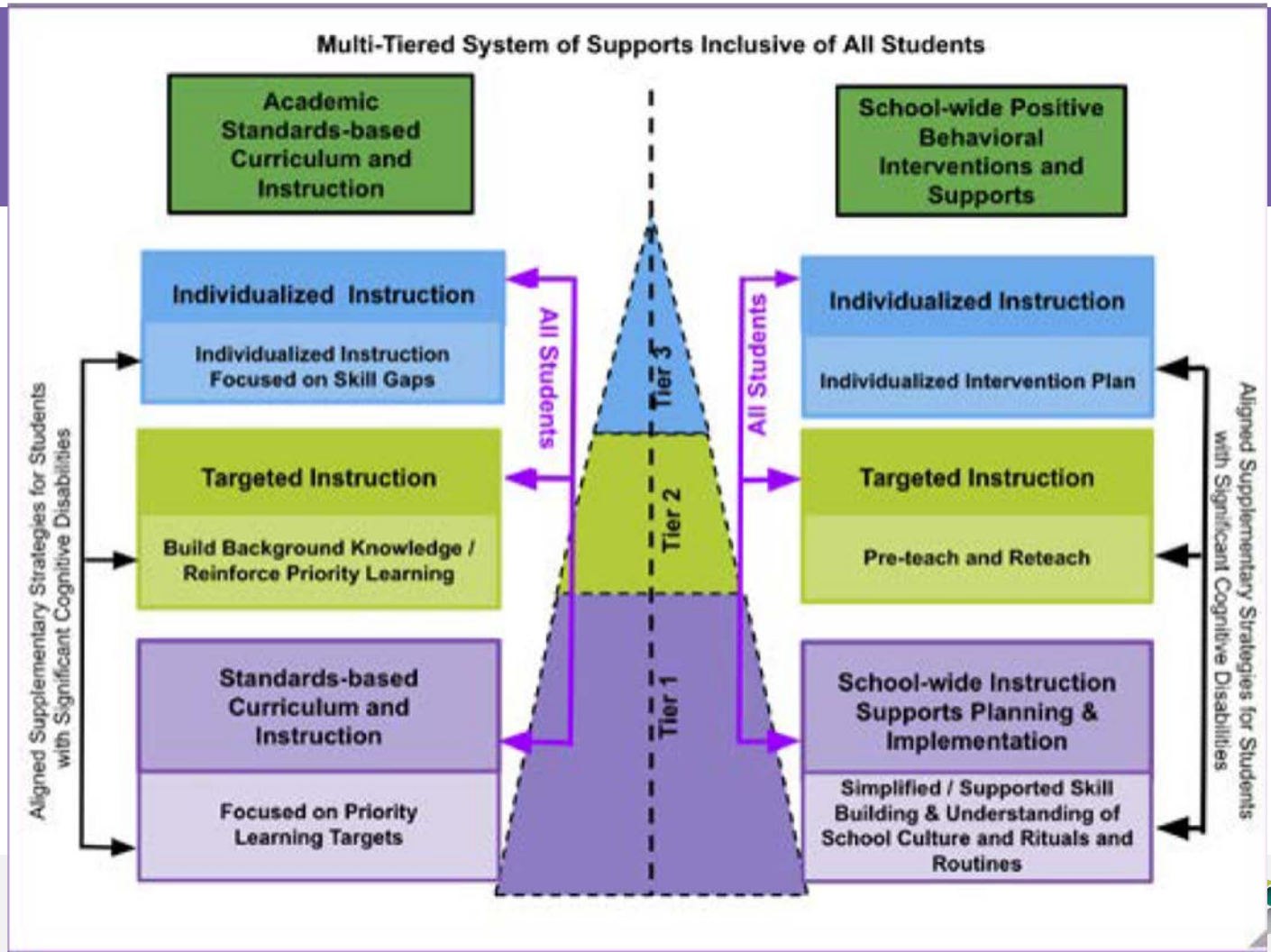
Holly had a party. She had 3 friends come and they each bought 3 bags of chips. How many bags of chips did they bring?

3 x 3 = _____

Discuss

What are the data systems in schools and are students with significant cognitive disabilities included in these systems?

(Enter ideas in chat or unmute and share)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Takeaway #1

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who have intensive need for academic and behavioral support are more likely to be excluded from general education settings, and from their neighborhood schools.

Possible Actions:

- Increase the **capacity for inclusive, evidence-based tiered academic and behavior supports** at school and district levels.(all three tiers)
- Create **IEP guidance** such that all IEP teams who cite academic or behavior needs as a rationale for segregation must present data and targets for moving to less restrictive settings
- Review **district data** with reference to this group of students
- Ensure district data reporting includes a method to **disaggregate this group**

Takeaway #2

Students with significant cognitive disabilities can and should participate in any and all school-wide academic and behavioral frameworks (i.e., MTSS)

Possible Actions:

- **Share your desire for resources** with your state MTSS team
- Request that statewide MTSS trainers/centers include **examples of students with significant cognitive disabilities** in all trainings.
- Work with state, district and school MTSS teams to suggest that at least one team member has **experience with this student population**.

Takeaway #3

Students in need of Tier 3 supports should also receive access and support in Tier 1 and Tier 2. Over time this may decrease or eliminate the need for Tier 3 supports.

Possible Actions:

- Suggest that this **messaging** is part of all statewide MTSS trainings
- Provide **TA/Coaching to special educators** to ensure that student IEPs include Tier 1 and 2 academic and behavioral supports

Discuss

What action steps stood out to you that might be relevant and actionable for you/your team this year?

What opportunities might you have?
What barriers might you encounter?

(Enter ideas in chat or unmute and share)

Questions?

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  Research Associate
  University of Minnesota
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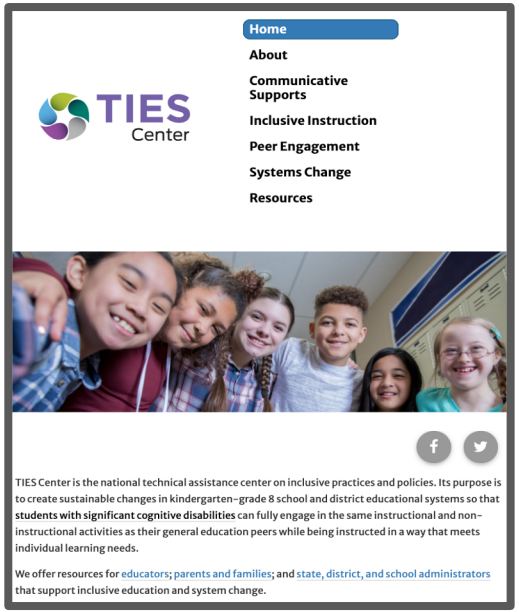

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