Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

What is RtI?
Response to Intervention (RtI) is a comprehensive school-wide framework that includes multiple approaches to providing early intervention for students at all levels - whether they are below grade level or advanced. Interventions begin in the classroom at Tier I. Students not progressing can move to Tier II through two options: 1.) standard protocol interventions selected by the school, or 2.) the problem solving team approach, which is most effective for students with multiple skill deficiencies or complex situations. The essential goal of RtI is to meet each student’s academic and/or behavioral needs.

What is PBS?
Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a school-wide approach to establish and maintain school environments that support academic achievement and promote positive behavioral outcomes while preventing problem behavior that interferes with learning. A continuum of proactive, evidence-based behavioral supports are implemented by a building team at the universal level for all students through defining and teaching positive expectations in all school settings by the staff. Modeling and reinforcing appropriate social behavior increases the occurrence of positive behaviors and provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate success. PBS utilizes a problem solving model that is consistent with the principals of RtI. PBS supports students at the universal, targeted and intensive levels using evidence-based interventions and analysis of behavioral data. Parents are actively engaged in teaching and acknowledging identified positive academic and social/emotional behaviors at home for students who require more intensive supports.

Wasson High School RtI/PBS

How Wasson High School addresses the six areas significant to RtI Implementation defined by The Colorado Department of Education (CDE)*:

1) Leadership
2) Curriculum and Instruction,
3) School Climate and Culture,
4) Problem-Solving Process,
5) Assessment, and
6) Family and Community Involvement.

1) Leadership
Leadership is critical for effective implementation of RtI. The success of RtI will be determined, to a great extent, by the degree to which district and school leaders are able to move the focus of RtI from philosophical understanding to actual practice. District and school leadership is also imperative to the sustainability of the model.
Wasson High School building leadership is committed to the success of RtI. In an effort to implement and sustain RtI practices, Wasson embraces systemic change through the following:

- Participation in ongoing staff development (knowledge of curriculum and instructional practices across all tiers),
- Implementation of academic interventions, in addition to the core curriculum, that best meet the unique needs of our student population,
- Implementation of positive behavior supports to promote a positive school climate,
- Allocation of time and resources for universal screening and progress monitoring of all students,
- Allocation of time and resources for the creation of a problem solving team and a problem solving process that incorporate parent and community involvement.

2) Curriculum and Instruction
The RtI Model is a three-tiered system designed to meet the needs of ALL students. Curriculum based on the state standards and quality instruction is essential for student success. The ultimate purpose of the RtI process is not to determine if a student qualifies for special education, but rather, to enhance the success of students with a variety of academic and/or behavior supports.

Wasson High School is committed to providing quality, research-based instruction to students in all tiers of the RtI process. Our three-tiered approach is defined below:

The Tiers:
- **Tier I**: The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all students in the general education classroom. Struggling and advanced students are provided classroom supports in the general education classes and their progress is monitored. Tier I provides core instruction for all students and flexible grouping that targets specific skills are included so that the instructional goals of all students can be met.
- **Tier II**: The curriculum and instruction at Tier II is designed to meet the needs of students not progressing as expected in Tier I. Tier II offers supplemental instruction in addition to the standards-based curriculum received in Tier I. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction.
- **Tier III**: Students whose progress is still insufficient in Tier II are moved to Tier III for more intensive interventions. Tier III instruction includes more explicit instruction that is focused on a specific skill need, whether that be an accelerated need or a remedial need. At the Tier III level, the intensity, duration and/or frequency of the intervention will increase.
3) School Climate and Culture
The core principles of a multi-tiered RtI model support and embrace positive school climate within all school settings. Essentially, a positive school climate provides the foundation on which instruction will occur and all students will be engaged in learning. Positive school climate depends on four essential elements:
1. Creating a caring school community,
2. Teaching appropriate behavior and social problem solving skills
3. Implementing positive behavior support (PBS) and
4. Providing rigorous academic instruction

Wasson High School is committed to the success of PBS. In an effort to implement and sustain PBS practices, Wasson embraces systemic change through the following:
- Defining and consistently teaching expectations of behavior for students, parents and educators through our T-BIRD traits (Trustworthy, Bold, Innovative, Responsible, and Determined),
- Acknowledgment and recognition for appropriate behaviors (T-BIRD tickets, Student of the Month, Sundae Bar, etc.),
- Allocation of time and resources for the creation of a collaborative problem solving team and a problem solving process that uses data to design learning plans that promote positive behavior,
- Inclusion of parents and/or community members in a culturally-sensitive solution-focused approach to support student learning.

4) Problem-Solving Process
As part of the collaboration process, schools create a Problem Solving Team (PST). The purpose of the problem-solving team is to assist the classroom teacher and parents in designing and selecting strategies for improving student academic and/or behavioral performance.

The purpose of the problem-solving process is to develop academic and behavior intervention strategies that have a high probability of success. It provides a structure for addressing the academic and/or behavioral concerns identified by teachers or parents. A problem-solving process requires full collaboration among a team of professionals along with parents to identify a specific, measurable outcome and to design research-based interventions to address the concerns. The process includes ensuring interventions are implemented with fidelity according to their research base and student progress is monitored to determine the student’s response. Family engagement in the process is vital to ensure all information that might impact success is considered. The system must integrate the use of data, both to guide the development of effective interventions and to provide frequent monitoring of progress.

Wasson High School is committed to the problem solving process and the creation of a problem solving team to help ensure all students respond to instruction:
The Problem Solving Team at Wasson High School consists of a collaborative group of teaching professionals, building administrator(s), a counselor/social worker/psychologist, and parents.

The team meets on a regular basis and uses data, both to guide the development of effective interventions and to provide frequent monitoring of progress.

The Problem Solving Team Process at Wasson High School:
The Problem Solving Team receives a referral when Tier I interventions do not sufficiently close the gap between where the student is performing and where they are expected to perform. When the team receives the referral, the building facilitator collects all available data on the student (grades, assessment scores, attendance, etc.). The facilitator will also initiate parent contact with a letter and a brochure. The collected information is taken to the team and a designated consultant (DC) is assigned. The Designated Consultant will compile student information and interview the parent and student. This individual leads the group in the problem solving process and is responsible for monitoring the progress of the student. If necessary, the team will meet with the student and parent to develop a Learning Plan. The Learning Plan is distributed to the student’s teachers and all teachers implement these interventions. If a student continues to be unresponsive to the interventions, the student moves to Tier III and there may be a referral for additional evaluations (i.e. special education, gifted/talented plan, etc.).

5) Assessment
The RtI Model uses data to drive the decision making process – at the individual student, classroom, and school levels. Data is collected to identify, monitor, inform and evaluate instructional practices at all levels. RtI uses a tiered system of assessments that increase in frequency and intensity as greater needs are revealed. Assessments indicate which students are falling behind in critical skills or which students need their learning accelerated.

Wasson High School is committed to the use of data to ensure that all students are responding to instructional practices. Wasson High School uses data to:

- Identify students at the beginning of year who are in need of instructional support through “standard protocol”.
- Monitor students’ progress throughout the year to determine if students are making adequate progress with selected instruction/intervention.
- Inform or guide instructional practices with individual students, classes or building programs.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction/intervention for all students.

6) Family and Community Involvement
When families, schools, and communities work together, children are more successful in school and schools improve. Effective partnerships include parents, families, students, community members and educators. Central to effective partnership is the recognition of shared responsibility and shared ownership of student challenges and successes.
Wasson High School is committed to a collaborative partnership between schools, parents, students and community members. We support the following goals:

- Parents are recognized as having important information and expertise that they can contribute (through parent/teacher conferences, ongoing communication with teachers, the problem solving process, etc.),
- School personnel provide parents with information and empower them as equal partners in supporting their children’s learning (through Parent Connect, positive notes home, conferences, etc.),
- Parent involvement is encouraged at all levels of the RtI process, but especially at Tier II and Tier III, a parent’s expertise regarding the individual student is vital as they may provide information about the student and strategies that will lead to improved student outcomes.

How Parents Can Help:
Students are most successful when there is a strong spirit of cooperation between home and school. Your cooperation in the Response to Intervention process is greatly appreciated. As a member of the PST the parent:

- Provides valuable information and another viewpoint for planning an effective program
- Shares the student’s strengths and concerns with the school staff and participates in the development of a positive Learning Plan
- Holds the greatest knowledge of their child and their input is essential to the creation of a successful Learning Plan
- Frequently checks with their son/daughter to make sure they are upholding their part of the plan
- Maintains regular contact with teachers and your designated consultant.

*Adapted from CDE’s Response To Intervention (RtI), “A Practitioner’s Guide to Implementation” 2008.*