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TENNESSEE TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE NETWORK

Tier II Behavior Intervention: Breaks are Better

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center

October 23, 2025

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Agenda

• Welcome and Attendance
• Intervention Overview
• Implementation
• Implementation Tips
• Intervention Logistics
• Resources

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About Us

- ■ Vanderbilt University - West TN Team
- ■ Vanderbilt University - Middle TN Team
- ■ University of Tennessee, Knoxville - East TN Team

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Slide 6

Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN)

TN-TAN provides school districts, administrators, educators, and families access to free high-quality training, resources, and supports designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, ages 3-22. See below for more information about our areas of support.

Intensive Behavior

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides technical assistance for complex behavior support needs and associated training. Supports include direct instruction for staff on behavior assessment and intervention implementation, as well as ongoing coaching to help students engage within their least restrictive environments.

Autism

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides training, consultation, and coaching services designed to support educators in their classrooms and develop school and system-wide supports to address needs specific to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

RTI²-A+RTI²-B

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center assists districts and schools as they build and implement an aligned student support system. The center provides training, coaching, and resources for building an aligned framework for tiered academic and behavioral supports.

Secondary Transition

Transition Tennessee provides a range of services to transition stakeholders to improve in-school and post-school outcomes for transition-aged students (14-22) with disabilities. Supports include tiered technical assistance for in-school transition stakeholders and resources and services specific to educator and family needs.

Assistive Technology

The Assistive Technology Project for Education (ATP) assists districts and staff in building capacity to provide assistive technology supports for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, direct coaching for staff, and access to AT equipment-lending libraries for assessment trials.

Family Engagement

The Arc Tennessee partners with schools and caregivers of students with disabilities. Family Engagement provides educator training and technical assistance to schools, integrates family supports into existing school networks and strategic plans, and connects families to available services and family-friendly special education resources in order to ensure a successful school experience.

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Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of Tier I instruction and support and their relation to Tier II intervention.
2. Recognize the components of Breaks are Better and conditions that make it effective as a Tier II intervention.
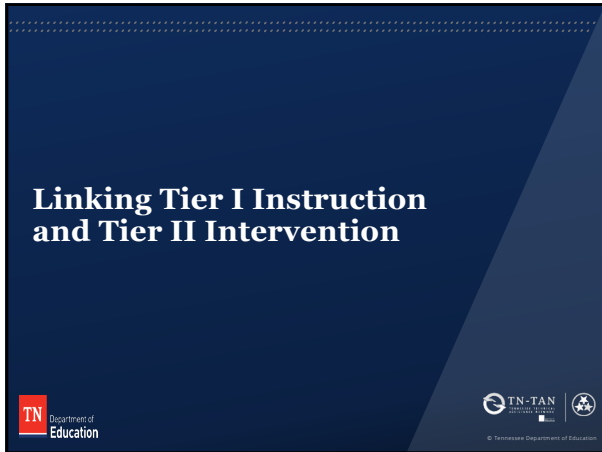3. Understand the steps for setting up Breaks are Better in your school.

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Linking Tier I Instruction and Tier II Intervention

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Tiered Supports

RTI²-A + RTI²-B

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS *FOR ALL TIERS*

1 Leadership

2 Assessment

3 Data-Based Decision Making

Define A — B Analyze

Evaluate D — C Implement

4 Instruction & Intervention

FEW

SOME

ALL
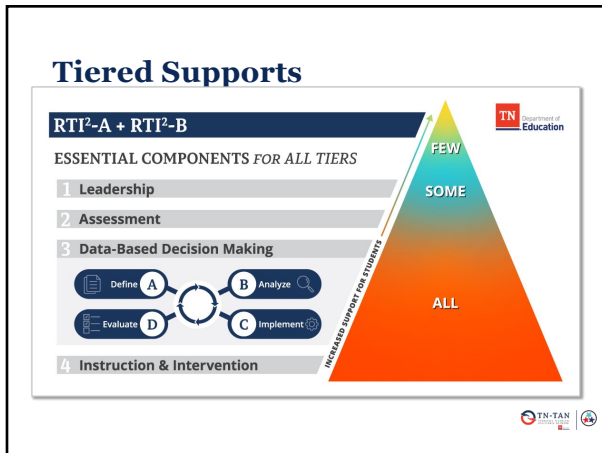
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Importance of Tier I

Effective Tier II intervention depends on a solid Tier I foundation that:

- teaches and reinforces school-appropriate behaviors that empower students to access Tier I instruction fully,
- fosters supportive relationships and creates positive, safe, and predictable learning spaces for all students, and
- prioritizes data-driven decisions and continuous improvement of support for all students.

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Qualities of a Solid Tier I

INSTRUCTION and INTERVENTION	
Tier 1	**Score**
32. School staff explicitly teach and review **school-wide expectations for learning**.	
33. School staff use a **continuum of strategies** to promote student independence, academic engagement, and behaviors that align with school-wide expectations.	
34. Teachers deliver explicit and culturally responsive **instruction** with access points for all students.	
35. The school provides **core (Tier 1) instruction** that is based on grade-level standards, research-based, and delivered using high-quality instructional materials.	

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(Tennessee TSC, n.d.e, see p. 5)

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Qualities of a Solid Tier I

(Tennessee TSC, n.d.a,b,d)

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Slide 13

Qualities of a Solid Tier I

(Tennessee Department of Education, n.d., 2022)

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Enhancing Tier I Instruction

- School Leadership Teams must use **multiple** data sources when evaluating the effectiveness of Tier I instruction and making decisions to enhance the support provided for all students.

- Example data sources include:
  - Discipline
  - School climate
  - Behavior screenings
  - Attendance
  - Teacher nominations
  - Caregiver requests
  - Teacher report
  - Student input
  - Classroom observations
  - School Implementation Fidelity Assessment
  - Academic
  - Resource maps

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Evaluating the Need for More Intense Support

- Teams must use **multiple** data sources and should use a problem-solving process to identify students' strengths and areas of need and inform decisions about re-teaching, intervention, and enrichment.

- When multiple data sources indicate that a student is not making adequate gains from Tier I alone, intervention is provided in addition to Tier I instruction.

- In some cases, academic *and* non-academic intervention may be necessary.

(TDOE, 2023b)

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Tier II Intervention

Tier II intervention includes explicit and systematic skill-based interventions designed to address the **specific needs** of students and have application opportunities anchored in grade-level content and expectations, whenever possible.

(TDOE, 2023b)

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Characteristics of Tier II Interventions

Tier II Interventions are:
- cohesively linked to Tier I instruction and expectations,
- supported by research,
- standardized,
- delivered by trained interventionists,
- administered at an appropriate dosage,
- comprehensive, and
- aligned with needed skills or behaviors.

(Fuchs et al., 2017; National Center on Intensive Intervention, 2022d)

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Cohesion with Tier I

Instructional coherence ensures that instructional experiences are connected and skill development is aligned with grade-level learning expectations at all tiers.

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Connecting Tier I Instruction and Tier II Intervention

Cohesion between Tier I instruction and intervention can be strengthened through:

- regular communication and collaboration between interventionists and teachers,

- a unified approach to language and support strategies throughout a student's learning experience,

- opportunities to practice developing skills using grade-level content and expectations, and

- opportunities to generalize mastered skills across a variety of contexts.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2024; Tennessee TSC, n.d.e)

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Intervention Overview

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What Is It? Who Is It For?

- Breaks are Better is a modified version of Check-In/Check-Out, a commonly researched and implemented Tier II intervention.
- Breaks are Better is designed to teach and reinforce taking breaks as a replacement for **task-avoidant behaviors**, which can look like:
  - ignoring directions,
  - engaging in alternate activities during work time,
  - refusing to complete assignments, and
  - leaving a work area.

(Crone et al., 2010; Boyd & Anderson, 2013; Majeika et al., 2020, 2022)

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How Does it Work?

Students participate in a daily cycle that includes:
- meeting with mentor for morning check-in,
- using a daily progress report,
- receiving teacher feedback across the day,
- meeting with mentor for afternoon check-out,
- receiving rewards for meeting daily point goals,
- sharing parent communication, and
- **scheduled breaks**.

(Crone et al., 2010; Boyd & Anderson, 2013; Majeika et al., 2020, 2022)

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Similarities and Differences

Intervention Component	Check-In/ Check-Out	Breaks are Better
Adult mentor	✓	✓
Morning check-in with mentor	✓	✓
Use of a daily progress report	✓	✓
Structured and scheduled opportunities for feedback	✓	✓
Afternoon check-out with mentor	✓	✓
Family communication	✓	✓
Progress monitoring	✓	✓

(Majeika et al., 2022)   TN-TAN   © Tennessee Department of Education

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Similarities and Differences

Intervention Component	Check-In/ Check-Out	Breaks are Better
Expectations on the daily progress report that link to behaviors promoting academic engagement (e.g., asking for help)		✓
Procedures for taking a predetermined number of breaks that provide access to predetermined activities		✓
Points earned for taking breaks appropriately		✓

(Majeika et al., 2022)   TN-TAN   © Tennessee Department of Education

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Implementation
Roles and Responsibilities

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Resources

Breaks are Better (BrB) Implementation Materials

(Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023; Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2024)

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Daily Cycle

- Morning Check-In
- Instruction and Feedback
- Afternoon Check-Out
- Home Check-In

Daily Cycle

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Daily Cycle

- Morning Check-In
- Instruction and Feedback
- Afternoon Check-Out
- Home Check-In

Daily Cycle

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Morning Check-In

Role	Responsibilities
Mentor	1. Gives the student a Daily Progress Report. 2. Reviews behavior expectations, behavior rating scale, and point goal. 3. Ensures student has materials needed for school success. 4. Provides encouragement.
Student	1. Returns Home Communication Report from previous day, if applicable. 2. Receives a new Daily Progress Report and takes it to class.

(Crone et al., 2010; Boyd & Anderson, 2013)

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Daily Cycle
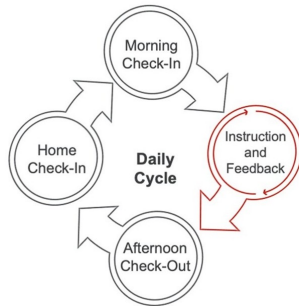
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Instruction and Feedback

Role	Responsibilities
Teacher	1. Checks in with student first before instruction. 2. Delivers instruction. 3. Uses the Daily Progress Report to rate the student's behavior at the end of class. 4. Gives feedback to the student based on the ratings. 5. Provides approved breaks to students as part of this system.
Student	1. Brings the Daily Progress Report to class. 2. Participates in a feedback conference with the teacher at the end of class.

(Crone et al., 2010; Boyd & Anderson, 2013)

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Breaks

- It is critical that breaks offered are moderately preferred, non-disruptive break activities.
- While teachers can delay students' access to breaks, they should not deny them breaks.
- The approved breaks and continuous feedback are built-in incentives of the Breaks are Better system.

(Boyd and Anderson, 2013)

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Daily Cycle

- Morning Check-In
- Instruction and Feedback
- Afternoon Check-Out
- Home Check-In
- **Daily Cycle**

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Afternoon Check-Out

Role	Responsibilities
Mentor	1. Totals the student's earned points and compares the total to the daily goal.
	2. Provides positive feedback and a reward, if earned.
	3. Completes a Home Check-In Report.
	4. Records intervention data for progress monitoring purposes.
Student	1. Receives reward if earned.
	2. Takes the completed Home Check-In Report home.

(Crone et al., 2010; Boyd & Anderson, 2013)

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Daily Cycle

Morning Check-In → Instruction and Feedback → Afternoon Check-Out → Home Check-In → (Daily Cycle)
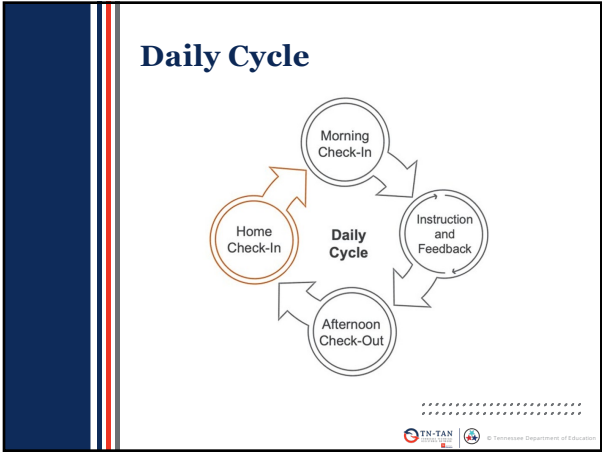
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Home Check-In

Role	Responsibilities
Student	1. Takes the Home Check-In Report home. 2. Returns the form, signed, to school.
Parent	1. Reviews the Home Check-In Report. 2. Provides positive feedback. 3. Signs the form.

(Crone et al., 2010; Boyd & Anderson, 2013)

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Implementation Tips

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Implementation Tips

- Print break procedures on the back of break cards or daily progress reports.
- Offer Daily Progress Report templates with pictures instead of words.
- Add incentives to strengthen participation in the intervention, including no-cost reward options.
- Create an information packet to share with students and families.
- Plan for implementation on atypical school days.
- Consider locating morning check-ins and afternoon check-outs in easily accessible and semi-private areas, especially for secondary students.

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Reinforcing Desired Behaviors

- Follow students' requests for help with positive feedback **and academic support**.
- When giving feedback, adults acknowledge the desired behaviors they observed and avoid reprimanding.

(Hawken et al., 2021)

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Point Goals and Rewards

- Before intervention begins, a daily **point goal** and **frequency of breaks** are set for each student.
  - o The initial point goal is based on baseline data.
  - o The frequency of breaks is based on baseline data.
  - o The goal can change over time.
- Students earn a **reward** for meeting their point goal.
  - o Rewards are selected based on student preferences and interest.
  - o Rewards can change over time and include no-cost, intangible options.
  - o The reward schedule can be faded over time.

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Intervention Logistics
Setting Up the Intervention and Key Collaborator Professional Development

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Daily Progress Report

- A Daily Progress Report is a standardized form that is used to evaluate student behavior.
- Some of the elements the form could include are:
  - behavior expectations,
  - intervals for evaluating student behavior throughout the school day,
  - behavior rating scale,
  - space to track breaks,
  - opportunities to earn points throughout the day,
  - space to total earned points and compare the total to a point goal, and
  - space for a caregiver signature.

(Hawken & Horner, 2003)

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Before Intervention Begins

- Designate a Breaks are Better Coordinator (optional) and identify mentors.
- Create Daily Progress Report and Home Communication Form templates.
- Create a system for managing student data.
- Create and implement training protocols for staff, students, and families.
- Plan for intensifying and fading the intervention.

(Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023)

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Daily Progress Report

Use Behavioral Expectations

Determine number of intervals and type of scale

Compare points earned to goal

Track breaks

Define points on rating scale

Points earned with mentor

Optional caregiver signature

Name						Date		
	Safe	Respectful	Responsible					
	Keep your hands to yourself	Raise your hand if you have something to say	Follow directions the first time	Breaks taken the right way (if needed) OR not taken	2-minute Breaks Left			
Targeted Reading	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			
Core Literacy	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			
Writing	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			
Core Math	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			
Sci/SS/Mus/Lib/PE	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			
Workshop	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			
Sci/SS/Mus/Lib/PE	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B			

Points
2   Met expectations (Great job!)
1   Met some expectations (Good work!)
0   Met few or no expectations (Room for improvement)

Check-In Points	Attends check-in	0 1
	Was prepared	0 1
Check-Out Points	Attended check-out	0 1
	Teacher completed ratings	0 1

Today's Goal_____ Today's Total_____ Goal Met? Yes No
Parent Signature
All work due is complete _____
All work due is not complete _____

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Taking Breaks

Name						Date	
	Safe	Respectful	Responsible				
	Keep your hands to yourself	Raise your hand if you have something to say	Follow directions the first time	Breaks taken the right way (if needed) OR not taken	2-minute Breaks Left		
Targeted Reading	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		
Core Literacy	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		
Writing	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		
Core Math	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		
Sci/SS/Mus/Lib/PE	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		
Workshop	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		
Sci/SS/Mus/Lib/PE	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1	B B B		

Points
2   Met expectations (Great job!)
1   Met some expectations (Good work!)
0   Met few or no expectations (Room for improvement)

Check-In Points	Attends check-in	0 1
	Was prepared	0 1
Check-Out Points	Attended check-out	0 1
	Teacher completed ratings	0 1

Today's Goal_____ Today's Total_____ Goal Met? Yes No
Parent Signature
All work due is complete _____
All work due is not complete _____

2-minute Breaks Left

~~B~~	~~B~~	B
~~B~~	B	B
~~B~~	~~B~~	~~B~~
B	B	B

Break Cards

Optional: B   B   B

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Taking Breaks

These hand signals can be used to limit disruptions to instruction:

Asking for break

Break approved

Asking for help

Break not approved

(Anderson, et al., n.d.)

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Let's Check In!

Scenario 1:
You are providing directions on the steps needed to complete a homework assignment.

Teddy shows you this.	
What's your signal?	
What does Teddy do?	

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Let's Check In!

Scenario 2:
You have finished providing homework directions, and Teddy waited the required two minutes before requesting a break again.

Teddy shows you this.	
What's your signal?	
What does Teddy do?	

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Taking Breaks

Break Timer

(Anderson, et al., n.d.)

Break Procedures

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Professional Learning for Key Collaborators

- Key collaborators involved in the intervention should be taught how to implement the intervention before the intervention begins.
- Key collaborators should be taught their roles and responsibilities, logistics, and necessary materials to implement Breaks are Better.
- Ongoing professional learning opportunities, coaching, and feedback should be provided to all key collaborators.
- Refresher sessions should be available as needed.

(Hawken et al., 2021)

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Staff and Mentor Professional Development

Topics to cover include:
- intervention purpose,
- behaviors the intervention is designed to target,
- intervention materials and steps,
- check-in and check-out location,
- completing the daily progress report,
- providing student feedback,
- providing student breaks,
- providing rewards,
- managing student data, and
- communicating with parents.

(Hawken et al., 2021)

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Student Learning Goals

Topics to cover include:
- intervention purpose,
- check-in and check-out location,
- intervention materials and steps,
- behavior rating scale and daily point goal,
- caring for the Daily Progress Report,
- receiving teacher feedback,
- taking breaks as expected,
- handling met and unmet point goals,
- reward preferences, and
- Home Communication Report.

(Hawken et al., 2021)

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Informing Parents

Topics to cover include:
- intervention purpose,
- behaviors supported by the intervention,
- intervention materials and steps,
- how to provide feedback to the student,
- how to use Home Communication Report, and
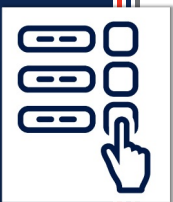- how to monitor progress.

(Hawken et al., 2021)

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Let's Check Out!

Complete the poll by selecting ALL the answers that apply.

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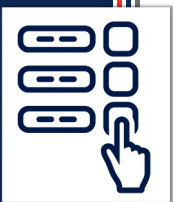
Let's Check Out!

Complete the poll by selecting ALL the answers that apply.

For the following examples, the team used multiple data sources to determine the students needed Tier II intervention and supports.

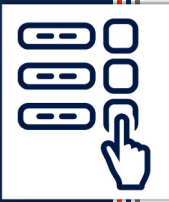© Tennessee Department of Education

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Let's Check Out!

Scenario 1:

Henry arrives at school on time each day. He is on time and prepared for his 1st-period history class, but he is swept by school security for being in the halls after 2nd-period begins. The sweep results in Henry missing the first 10 minutes of math class, which involves homework review.
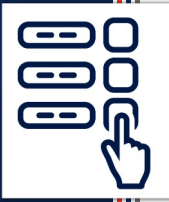
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Let's Check Out!

Scenario 2:

Imani was a model student in her K-6 school. During her first month of middle school, she received four office discipline referrals. During a discussion about her behavior, Imani shared, "My PE teacher was always there to look out for me, and I could always talk to her about things."
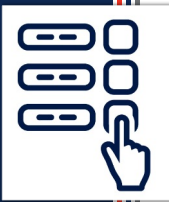
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Let's Check Out!

Scenario 3:

Ava displays a pattern of off-task behavior during her English/Language Arts block. During class, she asks to visit the restroom, spending 25 minutes out of her seat during that 50-minute block.

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Resources

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Resources

(Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023; Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2024)

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Resources

"The resources and opinions shared have not been vetted by the TDOE and are not an endorsement on quality or content of these materials or any vendor." (Anderson & Boyd, n.d.)
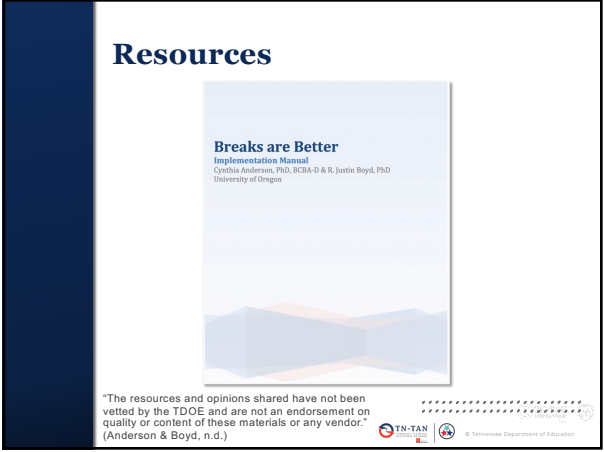
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Thank you!

- Questions?
- Contact information
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To learn more about our services, connect with us on our website, through our newsletter, and on social media.

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TN-TAN End-of-Session Survey

Please complete the evaluation survey using the following link or scanning the QR code:
https://kusurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_085eZrS8I4jZlIC

TESS-Full

Project Provider: *Tennessee TSC*

Event Title: *BRB*

Learning Objectives:
1. *Relate Breaks are Better to Check-In/Check-Out and recognize the conditions and components that make it effective as a Tier II intervention.*
2. *Understand the steps for setting up Breaks are Better in your school.*
3. *Identify ways to evaluate the effectiveness of Breaks are Better in your school.*

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