



**West Virginia Tiered
System of Support**

Academics • Behavior • Attendance

West Virginia Tiered System of Support

2026-2027 Guidance for West Virginia Schools





West Virginia Board of Education
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Introduction

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) is committed to helping every student succeed by supporting not only academics, but also behavior and attendance. We believe all students can learn and thrive when schools remove barriers and provide intentional support.

Consistent with West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) Policies [2510](#), [4373](#), and [4110](#), schools are encouraged to create learning environments tailored to each student's needs, interests, and strengths. This occurs naturally when educators build strong relationships, provide high-quality instruction, and use evidence-based strategies. Families, schools, community partners, and the WVDE all share responsibility in making this happen.

What is the West Virginia Tiered System of Support?

The West Virginia Tiered System of Support (WVTSS) is a framework that addresses the whole student across all domains: academics, behavior, and attendance. Student mental health and general wellbeing are embedded within each domain, as well as explicitly addressed through the work of student support teams. The current WVTSS model is designed to be practical and easy to use for educators of all experience levels.



How is it different from Response to Intervention (RTI)?

RTI focused mostly on academics. The WVTSS takes a broader approach by including academics, behavior, and attendance. It also emphasizes the importance of prevention and building functional systems to address the three domains before problems arise.

WVTSS and Exceptionalities

The WVTSS is for all students, including those who are gifted, English Learners (EL), or students with disabilities. Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 plans, or EL plans still have access to all levels of WVTSS support, because all students are general education students first. For example, a student with a disability may have classroom accommodations through an IEP but still benefit from attendance or behavior interventions through the WVTSS. Likewise, students without disabilities may still require a significant level of assistance to be successful. The WVTSS ensures that help is available without lengthy delays and that educators can increase the accurate identification of students with disabilities through improved instructional quality. As such, referrals to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) can happen at any point, but interventions should be ongoing, well-documented, and supportive of a student's individual needs.

Purpose and Scope

This document is designed to answer the questions: “What does the WVTSS look like in practice at a school?” and “How would I know if my school is implementing it successfully?” When the WVTSS is implemented effectively, all building staff should:

- Understand what effective Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 interventions and supports look like
- Be able to identify when students need more or less assistance in the domains of academics, behavior, and attendance
- Use simple look-fors to determine if the system is functioning effectively

The WVTSS is not a program or a curriculum. Instead, the WVTSS helps schools coordinate the resources and processes they already have available so that students receive the right level of support at the right time.

Tier	Who it Supports	Purpose	Who's Involved
1-Universal	All students	Prevents challenges through schoolwide systems and practices	Everyone in the building including non-professional staff
2-Targeted	Some students	Provides additional support and/or intervention when students need more assistance to be successful	Teachers, instructional aides, building-level interventionists, support staff
3-Intensive	A few students	Provides frequent, individualized support and/or intervention for students with significant or ongoing needs	Teachers, instructional aides, building-level interventionists, support staff, administration, district level specialists, outside agencies

Supports vs. Interventions

Within the WVTSS, there are references to the necessity of both supports and interventions. A support is a practice, strategy, action, or accommodation used to assist students in accessing grade-level learning and demonstrating success. An intervention is an intentional, specific, and monitored approach used to increase student attainment in a defined area.

For example, when addressing disruptive student behavior with the function of obtaining adult attention, a support could be positive, specific feedback, while an intervention could be Check-In Check-Out. Supports do not typically require formal monitoring and documentation, while interventions do.

Assessments

The WVTSS relies on a range of assessments to guide decision-making. Screeners, benchmarks, and summative assessments give a broad picture of student performance. Formative assessments provide quick checks for understanding during lessons, while progress monitoring shows if interventions are working. Diagnostic and interim assessment tools help pinpoint specific needs, and summative assessments measure overall achievement. Behavior and attendance data are also important. Together, these measures ensure that the root cause of any problem is being addressed in a timely and effective manner.

Tier 1: Universal Supports for All Students

Academics

Teachers provide high-quality instruction aligned to the West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards and use evidence-based strategies that make learning clear and accessible for all students. Examples may include:

- Displaying, explaining, and unpacking standards through ‘I can’ statements and learning targets
- Building schedules that protect instructional time and ensure adequate opportunities to teach content
- Modeling new skills and providing guided practice
- Using visuals, examples, and hands-on learning tools
- Using formative assessment to check for student understanding and make instructional adjustments
- Adjusting instruction when students show confusion
- Providing students with differentiated opportunities to respond
- Facilitating meaningful student collaboration

Students receive regular feedback and multiple opportunities to practice and demonstrate learning.

Behavior

Schools teach and reinforce clear and developmentally appropriate behavioral expectations, so students understand how to act across different settings. Examples may include:

- Making school expectations visible and part of common language
- Reviewing expectations after long breaks or transitions
- Recognizing and reinforcing specific positive behaviors
- Modeling respect and routines

Many schools organize these practices through a schoolwide preventative discipline system such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which aligns with the WVTSS and is highlighted in WVBE Policies 2419 and 4373.

Attendance

A direct relationship exists between students’ daily school attendance, academic performance, graduation, and the development of good work habits. Thus, schools must build a culture that encourages engagement, student ownership, and belonging. Examples may include:

- Understanding factors that contribute to student absences such as inequitable access to needed services
- Welcoming environments and positive messaging campaigns
- Facilitating strong relationships between staff and students and staff and families
- Communicating clearly with families about attendance expectations as well as ensuring meaningful contact after three and five days unexcused
- Implementing a schoolwide tracking system to monitor student attendance patterns and identify trends
- Recognizing consistent and improved attendance

Regular attendance is essential because students cannot benefit from instruction and support if they are not present.

Tier 1 may need to be strengthened/revisited if...

- ✓ There is widespread low performance on standardized assessments
- ✓ There is inconsistency in disciplinary response across classrooms
- ✓ Staff spend more time managing than teaching
- ✓ Students are disengaged or apathetic about their educational experience

<i>Domain</i>	<i>What This Looks Like in Practice</i>	<i>Questions Schools Should Ask</i>
<i>Academics</i>	Teachers provide clear instruction aligned to West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards. Lessons include modeling, guided practice, and checks for understanding. Students receive feedback and opportunities to practice skills.	Do most students demonstrate mastery of the lesson? Are teachers adjusting instruction when students struggle? Does the rigor of the lesson and student tasks match the demand and intent of the standard highlighted?
<i>Behavior</i>	Schools teach and reinforce clear behavior expectations. Staff model expectations and address minor behavior concerns early. Positive behavior is recognized and reinforced.	Do students know the school’s expectations? Are expectations consistently taught and reinforced across classrooms? When expectations are not met, is there a prompt and appropriate response?

Domain	What This Looks Like in Practice	Questions Schools Should Ask
Attendance	Schools promote regular attendance through positive relationships, welcoming environments, and clear, positive messaging.	Are attendance concerns identified early? Do students feel connected to adults in the building? Is there clear messaging to families regarding the importance of regular attendance?
School Environment	Classrooms and school spaces are organized, predictable, and well monitored. Staff work together to support student success.	Do students feel safe? Would you feel comfortable sending your own child to this school?

When Additional Supports/Interventions May Be Needed

Despite strong foundational practices, some students may still require additional assistance to be successful. Students may benefit from Tier 2 supports/interventions when:

- Struggling to make academic progress in a classroom with strong universal practices
- Showing repeated difficulty meeting behavior expectations
- Having missed three to five days of school

Tier 2: Targeted Supports (some students)

Tier 2 provides additional support for students who are not responding to strong foundational practices. Tier 2 is not differentiation or limited to small group structures. These supports are:

- Typically, short-term
- Supplemental to Tier 1 (does not replace core instruction)
- Focused on a specific skill or need
- Monitored regularly to see if progress improves

The goal is to help students close gaps quickly so they can return to success with universal supports.

Academics

Teachers provide additional targeted instruction for specific skills when students are not making adequate progress. Examples may include:

- Providing small group instruction focused on identified deficits
- Increasing opportunities for supported practice
- Using progress monitoring to adjust instruction based on student growth
- Adjusting the frequency, personalization, or pacing as students respond

Students receive more frequent feedback and purposeful opportunities to practice and demonstrate learning. Data is reviewed regularly to determine whether interventions selected are effective.

Behavior

Schools provide reteach opportunities, additional structure, supervision, and feedback for students struggling to meet behavioral expectations. Examples may include:

- Using monitoring systems such as Check-in Check-Out (CICO) or Student Self-Monitoring
- Conducting small group instruction for targeted skills
- Increasing communication between home and school
- Maintaining ABC (antecedent-behavior-consequence) data for settings where the student experiences difficulty

These practices help students build healthy and appropriate behavioral habits while remaining in the general classroom environment. Progress is monitored regularly to determine the effectiveness of supports/interventions and whether adjustments are needed.

Attendance

Schools address emerging patterns of tardiness, absenteeism, and disengagement that impact student learning and belonging. Examples may include:

- Providing access to support services such as counseling, mentoring, and tutoring to address underlying factors that contribute to attendance issues
- Increasing communication between school and home to develop individualized plans for improved attendance
- Creating goal setting systems and contracts
- Leveraging student voice in their own learning

Schools work to engage students and their families so that concerns are addressed before they become patterns.

Tier 2 may need to be strengthened/revisited when...

- ✓ Students receive the same intervention for long periods without progress
- ✓ Small groups do not have an identified skill focus based on assessment performance
- ✓ Students are pulled from core instruction to receive intervention
- ✓ Staff are unsure of their role in available supports
- ✓ There is no clear entry or exit criteria

Tier 2 interventions and supports should remain flexible, helping students regain success in the general learning environment. Most students should be able to improve through intervention; however, it is important to note that others may require additional assistance for the duration of their educational career.

Domain	What This Looks Like in Practice	Questions Schools Should Ask
Academics	Instruction is focused on specific skills. Sessions typically occur several times per week in addition to regular classroom instruction.	Is the intervention focused on a specific skill students are struggling with? Is the student in the classroom for core instruction and practice?
Behavior	Students receive additional mentorship or structured reteaching of skills such as Check-In/Check-Out, Class Pass, and/or School-Home Note.	Are students receiving consistent feedback and support throughout the day? Are families involved with and informed of the process?
Attendance	Schools identify students showing early attendance concerns and make meaningful connections with families to identify challenges and needed supports.	Are attendance patterns improving after support is provided?
Progress Monitoring	Student progress is reviewed regularly to determine if the support is helping. Adjustments are made if progress is limited.	Are we reviewing data frequently to determine if the support is working?

When Additional Supports/Interventions May Be Needed

Despite strong and varied supports and interventions, a few students may need more intensive and personal assistance to be successful. Students may benefit from Tier 3 supports and interventions when they:

- Do not respond to Tier 2 supports over time
- Exhibit ongoing or unsafe behavior
- Demonstrate significant academic skill gaps
- Miss 10 or more days of school

There are a few occurrences where a student might require immediate Tier 3 support, but the vast majority of students should participate in Tier 2 intervention with fidelity first.

Academics Example: A student transfers to your school from another district and tests several grade levels below their current placement. This student would likely not be able to engage in learning without substantial assistance.

Academics Nonexample: A student stops completing their work in their English class and receives failing grades. The foundational structures within the English class should be assessed. If they are functioning as intended, the student should receive Tier 2 intervention.

Behavior Example: A student expresses thoughts of harming themselves. This level of distress will likely require outside support, including but not limited to referral to mental health resources.

Behavior Nonexample: A student who has several office disciplinary referrals in the same week. Multiple referrals are not necessarily indicative of the need for intensive student support. The classroom environment, nature of referrals, and any attempted interventions should be assessed first.

Attendance Example: A student who has previously missed minimal days of school becomes homeless due to a house fire and misses two weeks of instruction. This student will likely require more external resources than the school alone can offer. Intensive, personalized support will ensure the student can return to school and support can be reduced once the situation has stabilized.

Attendance Nonexample: A student who has no prior absences is out of school for a week to attend a family trip. When assigning Tiers, all relevant data pieces must be considered. This student has no prior absences and is passing all their classes.

Tier 3: Intensive Supports (few students)

Tier 3 provides frequent, individualized support/intervention for students with significant or ongoing needs. These supports are:

- Personalized for the student
- More frequently occurring than Tier 2
- Based on specific data and identified needs
- Monitored closely to determine effectiveness

The goal of Tier 3 is to provide the level of support needed for the student to make meaningful progress and access learning successfully.

Academics

Tier 3 academic supports and interventions include intensive, individualized instruction for students with significant or continual academic needs. These supports are provided in addition to Tier 1 instruction and are designed to address specific skill deficits identified through diagnostic data and progress monitoring. Examples may include:

- Providing individualized or very small group instruction focused on specific skill deficits
- Increasing the frequency, duration, or intensity of intervention sessions
- Narrowing instruction to targeted foundational or prerequisite skills needed for grade-level access
- Providing immediate corrective feedback and frequent opportunities for practice
- Using diagnostic assessments and frequent progress monitoring to guide instructional adjustments
- Adjusting pacing, materials, grouping, and instructional strategies based on student response
- Coordinating support among classroom teachers, interventionists, special educators, and related service providers when appropriate

Students receive ongoing, data-based instructional adjustments and individualized support designed to promote meaningful academic progress and access to grade-level learning.

Behavior

Tier 3 behavior supports provide individualized and intensive behavioral interventions for students demonstrating significant and/or persistent behavioral needs. Examples may include:

- Developing individualized behavior support plans based on identified student needs
- Conducting Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) to better understand the purpose of behavior
- Providing individualized instruction in self-regulation, coping, and social-emotional skills
- Increasing adult support, feedback, and supervision throughout the school day
- Using individualized reinforcement systems
- Coordinating support among school staff, families, and community or mental health providers when appropriate
- Monitoring behavior data frequently to evaluate progress and adjust supports
- Providing crisis planning or safety support when needed

These supports are designed to improve student success, safety, regulation, and participation in the school environment while maintaining student dignity and connection to instruction.

Attendance

Tier 3 attendance supports/interventions address students with chronic or significant attendance concerns that continue despite targeted supports. Missing 10 or more percent of instructional days for any reason including excused absences, unexcused absences, and/or suspensions is defined as chronic absenteeism, requiring immediate action. Examples may include:

- Developing individualized attendance support plans
- Addressing barriers such as transportation, anxiety, health concerns, housing instability, or school avoidance
- Increasing communication and monitoring related to attendance goals
- Collaborating with relevant agencies and organizations to ensure continuity of support beyond the school setting

These practices are designed to address the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism and help students successfully reconnect with school, learning, and supportive relationships.

Tier 3 may need to be strengthened/revisited if...

- ✓ Supports look identical across students or are the same as Tier 2
- ✓ Staff are unsure how to access and utilize external resources
- ✓ Progress is reviewed infrequently and adjustments are only made when crises arise
- ✓ Interventions are being provided by inexperienced/untrained staff
- ✓ Families are informed of the process but do not engage as active participants

Domain	What This Looks Like in Practice	Questions Schools Should Ask
Academics	Students receive individualized instruction focused on specific skill gaps. Instruction occurs daily and is tailored to the students' needs.	Is instruction matched to the student's specific skill deficits? Are the individuals administering the intervention trained and knowledgeable?
Behavior	Students have individualized behavior supports such as a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), based on identified needs.	Are behavior supports clearly defined, consistently implemented, and based on function?
Attendance	Schools work with students and families to address barriers to attendance (e.g., transportation, anxiety, health concerns).	Are we addressing the root causes of attendance issues?
Collaboration and Support	School staff may collaborate with specialists, therapists, or outside providers to support the student.	Are the right people involved to support the student? Is someone routinely communicating with the external provider?
Progress Monitoring	Student progress is reviewed frequently, and support/intervention is adjusted as needed.	Is the student making progress? If not, are we adjusting their plan?

The WVTSS Decision Process

There are a few key principles for making data-based decisions that a school team must consider before escalating or decreasing a student's level of support.

First, always start with the assessment of Tier 1. If there are not reliable, consistent, and effective universal supports in place, it is hard to determine if the challenge can be more attributed to the school/class environment, or actual student need.

Second, data discussed should be objective and without opinions and assumptions.

Third, the WVTSS is designed to be a flexible system, not a permanent label. Students may increase or decrease their level of support as the data requires.

Step 1: Look at Student Data

Schools regularly review data in academics, behavior, and attendance. Ask:

- Is the student meeting expectations?
- Is the student making progress?
- Is there a core instruction problem?



Step 2: Identify the Need

If a student is not successful, define the concern clearly. Examples:

- Challenges with decoding consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words
- Repeated instances of physical aggression toward peers
- Increasing number of tardies on Mondays

Guiding questions:

- Does the student's data indicate a deficit in foundational skills?
- Has the student received high-quality, evidence-based instruction in the targeted skill?
- Does the curriculum support the development of the target skill?
- Does the school environment support the acquisition and application of the targeted skill?
- Is scaffolding and differentiation being appropriately used?



Step 3: Provide the Right Level of Support

If this is happening...

Then schools should...

Student is successful

Continue Tier 1 supports

Student shows early signs of difficulty

Provide Tier 2 support/intervention

Student shows significant difficulty

Provide Tier 3 support/intervention

Students should receive support as soon as a need is identified through the examination of Tier 1 practices prior to the initiation of Tier 2 or 3 supports or intervention.



Step 4: Progress Monitoring

Schools review data regularly to determine if support/intervention is working. Ask:

- Is the student improving?
- Is progress enough to meet expectations?



Step 5: Adjust Support/Intervention

If the student is...

Then...

Improving

Continue or reduce support

Not improving

Adjust or intensify support

Domain	What to Adjust	Examples
Time and Structure	Increase time and opportunities to practice	Longer sessions, more days per week, smaller group size
Instruction	Make instruction more explicit and focused	Model skills, guided practice, clear feedback, break skills into smaller steps
Focus	Target a more specific skill	Narrow from “reading” to phonics, fluency, or comprehension
Practice and Feedback	Increase student response and correction	More opportunities to respond, immediate error correction
Connection to Core	Align with classroom instruction	Use same language, pre-teach skills, connect to classroom tasks
Environment	Reduce distractions and increase support	Smaller group, quieter setting, more adult supervision

Moving through the WVTSS Process

Students move through the tiers based on need and continual data analysis. There are many different conclusions to the process, including but not limited to a student remaining in a general education setting with targeted intervention, and a student receiving intensive intervention in one domain and only universal support in another, and a student becoming identified as needing special education services. Regardless of the outcome, all students receive what they need and all adults have a defined role in the work.



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