

# The Impact of Research-Based Interventions on Academic Underachievement Among K-12 Students

Presented by: Meagan Lowery, Professional School Counseling  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke

## INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that contribute to student underachievement. The list of factors is extensive; however, a few of the most significant factors include, lack of motivation, chronic absences, and lack of academic achievement skills.

Lack of motivation occurs when students do not perceive education as important, and do not make a connection between education and real-life experience; resulting in no desire to perform to their potential.

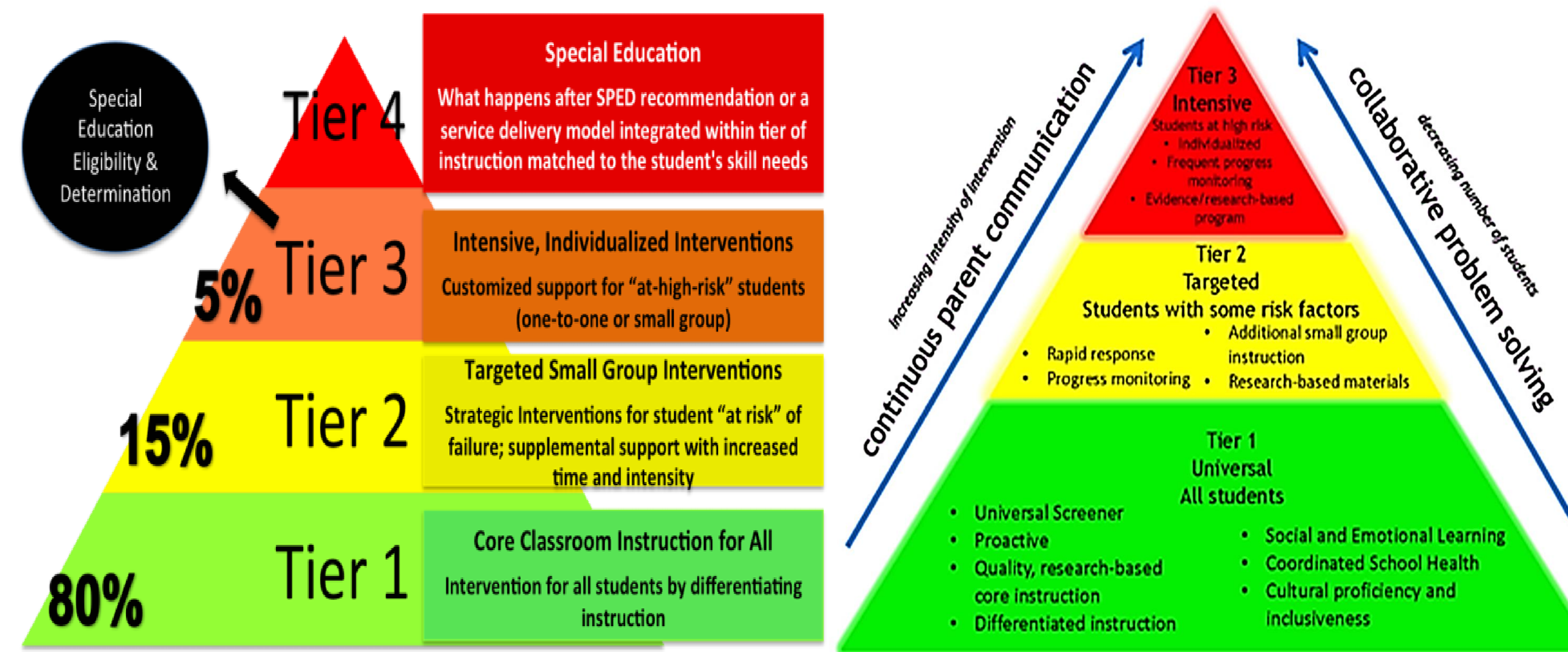
Kamrath and Brooker (2017), stressed that chronic absences and tardiness by students, leads to underachievement because students are missing valuable instructional time. Unfortunately, young children may be absent or tardy often because of an irresponsible parent; therefore, it will be important to involve the parent during the intervention process. Other times students miss instructional time because they are referred to the office for poor behavior. Lack of academic motivation may also result in chronic absences among high school students because they may choose to skip their least favorite class or skip all classes in general. Regardless of the reason, when a student is absent often, they are not learning the concepts that are necessary to be grade-level proficient.

During their research, Kamrath and Brooker (2017) Kayler and Sherman (2018), noticed that underachieving students lacked many skills that many achieving students possessed. These skills include, organization, time management, goal setting, test-taking strategies, study skills, and learning strategies. Fortunately, proper intervention from the school counselor can help students make appropriate growth in these areas.

## OBJECTIVE

This presentation will focus on research-based interventions used in schools for underachieving students and the impact that these interventions had on student achievement. Similarities among the interventions include the importance of an individualized and small-group approach to student success. This approach is often delivered through implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and may also be referred to as RTI (Response to Intervention) or Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

## MULTI TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT



## SEVEN COMPONENTS ESSENTIAL TO WHOLE SYSTEM REFORM

- Leadership- leaders set a vision for their school and work towards it through effective collaboration
- Professional Learning- develop the skills needed to consistently implement a tiered system
- Empowering Culture- involve the student and their family in the student's education
- Curriculum- adoption and use of a research-based curriculum and differentiating instruction to meet the specific needs of students
- Instruction- varied tiered instruction delivered to students based on the severity of a student's difficulties
- Assessments- ongoing student assessment to monitor student progress
- Data-Driven Decision-Making- determines the effectiveness of intervention and improves outcomes for students

## INTERVENTIONS

Tier one is where universal screening takes place. Tier one interventions by a school counselor includes, but is not limited to, Positive Behavior Supports to all students, transition programs for new students, and establishing a peer-mediator program. These areas of intervention are beneficial for all students but can affect the success of underachieving students.

Students who have difficulty adjusting during tier one interventions are identified and tier two is where small group interventions happen. The school counselor may develop six to twelve small group sessions based on the needs of the group. These small group sessions may address a variety of student needs including, but not limited to, increasing study skills, improving behavior, self-efficacy, goal-setting, or improving attitude towards school and education. These are common areas of concern among underachieving students.

In small group settings, it is easy to identify a student who needs to move to the third tier of intervention. These individuals will receive a more intensive intervention, such as, an individualized action plan.

## RESULTS

A pretest-posttest design can be a useful tool to measure the effectiveness of an intervention. The school counselor may also compare students' academic proficiency, GPA, attendance, and discipline referrals pre- and post- intervention.

Research suggests that implementation of tiered interventions is an effective approach to identify and address learning difficulties in schools.

## CONCLUSION

The role of the school counselor in a multi-tiered approach includes collaboration, implementation, organization, and evaluation skills. The counselor should expect to create and deliver presentations for parents, staff, and administration to explain and advocate for the selected intervention. The counselor should use frequent progress monitoring and student data to place students in appropriate tiers or interventions. Also, the counselor should be responsive to staff concerns and suggestions, along with student needs, and use this information to modify the intervention program.

It is discomfoting to see students fall behind in academics, but when effective interventions are implemented, students can receive the high-quality education they deserve and have academic success.

## REFERENCES

- Bardhoshi, G., Duncan, K., Erford, B., (2018). Effect of specialized classroom counseling intervention on increasing self-efficacy among first-grade rural students. *Professional School Counseling, 21*(1), doi:10.5330/1096-2409-21.1.12
- Berger. (2018). Bring out the brilliance: A counseling intervention for underachieving students. *Professional School Counseling, 17*(1), 1-8.
- Brougham, L., & Kashubeck-West, S. (2017). Impact of a growth mindset intervention on academic performance of students at two urban high schools. *Professional School Counseling, 21*(1). doi: 10.1177/2156759x18764934
- Gruman and Hoelzen, (2018) Determining responsiveness to school counseling interventions using behavioral observations. *Professional School Counseling, 14*(3).
- Kamrath and Brooker, (2017). Improved attitude and achievement: A case study of an elementary school academic advisement intervention. *Professional School Counseling, 6*(1).
- Kayler and Sherman, (2018). At-risk ninth grade students: A psychoeducational group approach to increase study skills and grade point averages. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(6), doi: 10.1177/2156759X0901200608
- Milsom and Morey, (2019). Does RAMP Matter? *Professional School Counseling, 22*(1), 1-8. doi:10.1177/2156759X19847977
- Ryan, T., Kaffenberger, C. J., & Carroll, A. G. (2011). Response to intervention: An opportunity for school counselor leadership. *Professional School Counseling, 14*(3), doi:10.1177/2156759x1101400305