



RTI AT WORK™ Success Story

Clinton High School CLINTON, IOWA

Course failures in English and algebra decreased 79% in just five years.



Solution Tree

Clinton High School

CLINTON, IOWA

► DEMOGRAPHICS

- **1,100** Students
- **55%** Free and reduced lunch
- **1%** Limited English proficient
- **18%** Special education
- **12.3%** African American
- **5.4%** Hispanic
- **1.4%** Asian/Pacific Islander
- **<1%** Other

Clinton High School is located on the Mississippi River in Clinton, Iowa, the seat of Clinton County.

► CHALLENGE

Clinton High School administrators chose to attend a Solution Tree conference with the hope of learning strategies that would help them fight several discouraging trends. The graduation rate was declining as failures were increasing. State assessment results and attendance were both down. Student behavior issues were increasing. Staff efficacy and overall school morale were low and continuing to diminish. The existing structure and culture did not allow staff the time to fully support all students—those in general classes as well as those in honors and AP. Another challenge was eliminating the barrier to honors and AP classes to make those opportunities available to all students.

“After hearing Mike Mattos speak, I was very intrigued by his vision but still had many reasons why none of what he had to say would work for my school,” recalled former principal Karinne Tharaldson-Jones. “I approached him after his session and told him why I believed RTI at Work™ wouldn’t be successful in our school. He surprised me by saying, ‘You’re right; it won’t work for you. You’re the principal, and you don’t believe it.’”

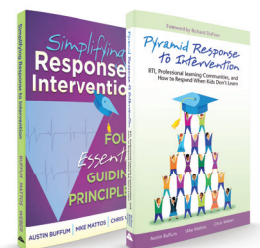
► IMPLEMENTATION

“That conversation with Mike Mattos changed everything,” Tharaldson-Jones said. “He was right; I had the power, the resources, and the vision to fix things. If not me, who?”

Tharaldson-Jones returned to Clinton High School with her leadership team, determined to focus on the right things that would enable a total and complete school system change:

- Student learning
- Teacher collaboration
- Administrative “laser-like” focus

Using the books *Pyramid Response to Intervention* and *Simplifying Response to Intervention* (Buffum, Mattos, and Weber) as guides, Clinton High School staff



“Clinton High School’s outstanding results are because our team comes together each week and has meaningful conversations around interventions. No excuses or complaining allowed. Student success is the only goal.”

—Former principal Karinne Tharaldson-Jones

► IMPLEMENTATION *(continued)*

eventually realigned and implemented an intervention process where data for every student was analyzed by a data team each week. Student indicators now are reviewed each week, and interventions are implemented for all students in all class levels, including AP. Staff are required to update grades each week, and the data team reviews the success of each intervention.

Tharaldson-Jones and her team started very small and with great focus: one teacher, one course, and one grade level. “We put a study table in place for Algebra 1 during lunch. One teacher was assigned to

this lunch intervention to see if any progress could be made. We had great success after only one trimester. Our failures dropped in half.”

After expanding this small effort to other courses, school staff ultimately created a system where students could be successful and achieve at high levels.

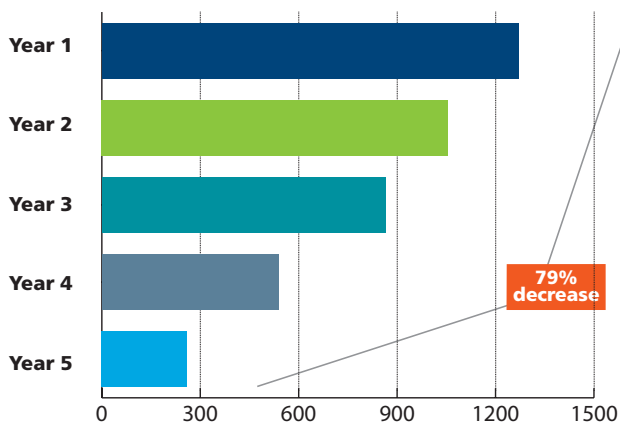
“In the end I realized the biggest barrier to the success at Clinton High School was me,” Tharaldson-Jones admitted. “Our staff was good enough, our students were bright enough; the principal just had to be brave enough.”

► RESULTS

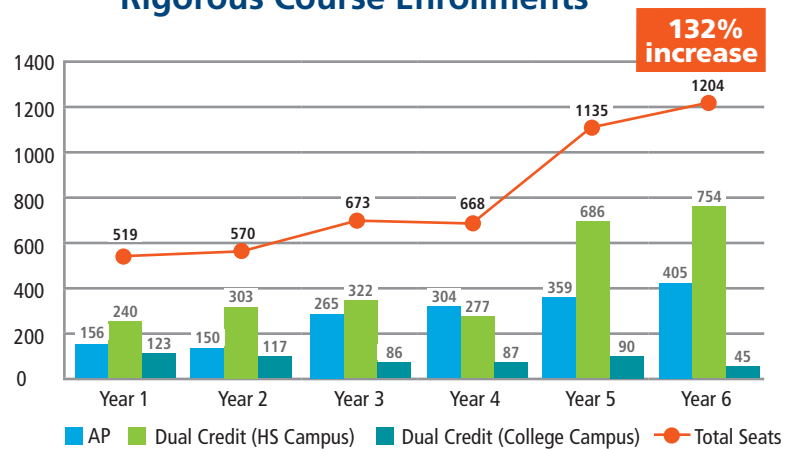
Following implementation of the RTI at Work process, the data from Clinton High School illustrates significant positive change. By every indicator, the school has been successful in improving student performance. In just four years, the total number of course failures in grades 9–12 decreased by 79%.

Students have shared that they feel supported in their efforts to be successful in the classroom. In response, they are showing up to learn, with many more pursuing rigorous coursework. From year 1 of RTI at Work implementation to year 6, Clinton High School saw a 132% increase in rigorous course enrollments.

Course Failures by Year (Grades 9–12)



Rigorous Course Enrollments





Start Your Success Story

You have a vision for change and improvement in your school or district. You want to see results in the classroom for the lifelong betterment of your students. Like many educators, you may be doing more with less, and you are always looking for ways to improve.

At Solution Tree, we share your vision to transform education to ensure learning for all, and we can help you make this vision a reality.

OUR PROMISE: No other professional learning company provides our unique blend of research-based, results-driven services that improve learning outcomes for students.

► Start your school's RTI at Work journey at SolutionTree.com/rti-at-work or call 800.733.6786 ext. 440