Response to Intervention

What is Response to Intervention?

RtI is a Framework, Not a Program
Response to Intervention (RtI) is a framework that brings together general, special, compensatory and gifted education with the goal of providing a comprehensive and integrated system of education to meet the needs of ALL students. The primary purpose of RtI is to improve student outcomes by ensuring that all students receive high quality instruction and intervention matched to their academic, social-emotional and behavioral needs.

RtI is NOT a program, a curriculum or a new way to sort or categorize children; rather it is a comprehensive system of instruction, intervention, and use of student response data to guide instructional decisions. RTI is also NOT a special education initiative or a new preferral process, however, the data gathered during the RTI process can also be used as part of a comprehensive evaluation to determine if a student has a Specific Learning Disability.

Response to Intervention is defined as the practice of:
- Providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs;
- Using learning rates over time and level of performance;
- To make important educational decisions (NASDSE, 2005)

RtI focuses on improving outcomes for ALL students including:
- Students not performing at expected levels;
- Students identified with disability conditions;
- Students who are culturally and linguistically diverse who need specialized instruction;
- Students who demonstrate evidence of requiring advanced instruction and students identified as gifted; and
- Students with behavior or emotional problems.

What Are the Core Principles of a Comprehensive Approach to RtI?

Research from numerous schools has demonstrated that successful implementation of RtI practices requires a system-wide approach, collaboration among educators and parents/families, and a commitment to key principles that are related to effective school practices. Some common key principles presented as relating to successful RtI implementation are:

- Shared ownership for all students, with a belief that all children must have access to rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum and effective instruction
- A belief that all children can learn when provided with high quality, scientifically-based effective instruction delivered by highly qualified educators
• *An emphasis on early intervention and prevention* – it is more effective to identify and intervene with student needs earlier than to remediate later

• *A comprehensive, integrated system of core instruction and positive behavior support, differentiated instruction, and effective intervention* is essential to meet the needs of all students (tiers of instruction and intervention) in an effective and efficient way

• *Problem-solving methods and data-based decision making* (using student outcome data) are used for all educational decisions

• *Effective, research-based assessment practices are used for key decisions* – student results improve when student performance data inform educational decisions

• *Collaboration among educators, families/parents, and community partners* is a foundation for success

• *Educational leadership at all levels* (district, building leaders, teachers as leaders) is critical for effective school practices

---

**What are the Essential Components of Response to Intervention?**

The essential components of effective RtI implementation include:

- Leadership and teaming at multiple levels;
- Use of a collaborative, problem-solving method;
- High quality instruction and responsive intervention, organized in an integrated system (tiers of instruction, supplemental (targeted) intervention, and individualized intervention) based on student need;
- Culturally responsive educational practices;
- An integrated assessment and data collection system to inform all decisions;
- Positive school climate, and
- Family/parent and community engagement.

---

**What is the Emphasis at Each Tier of the Integrated System of Instruction and Intervention?**

An essential component of successful RtI implementation is the development by the district of *an integrated, comprehensive system of instruction and intervention*. This system is most often represented in RtI by a multi-tiered framework as illustrated below. Most RtI frameworks address academic, behavior and social-emotional skills within the three tiers due to the additive benefits of addressing these areas simultaneously. *The tiers are not rigid “placements”* but represent a *fluid continuum* of instructional and intervention supports that systematically increase in intensity based on student performance. *RtI emphasizes the critical need for a seamless connection between all 3 tiers of instruction and intervention.*
**Integrated System of Instruction and Intervention**

**TIER 1 – High Quality Standards-Aligned Curriculum and Instruction and Safe Supportive Learning Environments for All Students**

*Tier 1 provides the instructional foundation and core of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) for all students and emphasizes:*

- The provision of a scientifically-validated curriculum aligned with the academic content standards and high quality differentiated instruction designed to meet the varying needs of students within the classroom
- A foundation of positive school culture, strategies to establish and teach school-wide expectations for behavior and instruction in these expectations
- Research-based reading instruction delivered by highly qualified teachers using a scientifically-based curriculum
- Use of proactive assessment practices, such as universal screening of all students, to identify students at risk as early as possible and to ensure that all students are reaching key academic benchmarks associated with academic success

**TIER 2 – Supplemental, Targeted Interventions for Some Students**

*Tier 2 provides research-based small group interventions for those students who require supports IN ADDITION to the instruction and services provided in Tier 1 (about 10-15% of students) and emphasizes:*

- Supplemental interventions that are data-driven, responsive to student need, research based, and automatic
• Interventions that are delivered through flexible scheduling and flexible use of resources by school-based teams
• Regular monitoring of student progress to determine the effectiveness of the intervention support

TIER 3 – Individualized, Intensive Interventions for Few Students

Tier 3 provides individualized, intensive interventions for those students who require supports in addition to supplemental, targeted intervention (about 5% of students) and emphasizes:
• Interventions derived through collaborative problem solving (with parents) that are research-based and designed to be responsive to student needs
• Frequent progress monitoring to determine the effectiveness of interventions
• Individualized services for students with the most severe behavior and emotional problems which could include partnering with mental health or other child-serving agencies and wraparound services designed around the needs of the particular child and family
• Use of data gathered through targeted and intensive interventions to determine eligibility for special education services and the ongoing provision of these interventions within special education if a student is determined to be a student with a disability

How is Scientifically-Based Research Defined in the Response to Intervention Framework?

Both NCLB and IDEA require districts to identify and use scientifically-based research in designing and implementing education programs, interventions and instructional strategies. A scientifically based intervention is a specific strategy or procedure that targets factors that are functionally related to a learning or behavior problem. An intervention is considered to be scientifically based when there is adequate empirical support for its efficacy in the form of published, peer-reviewed studies of the intervention itself, or of major components of the intervention. The guidance that will accompany the new Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools Serving Children with Disabilities outlines the key components of effective intervention which include the following:

- A clear statement in measurable terms of the specific skill or behavior that will be targeted by the intervention
- Baseline information on the student’s present performance as compared to that of peers on the same skill or behavior and an identified target goal that will be reached as a result of the intervention
- Involvement of the student’s parents in the problem solving process used to design the intervention and the strategy that will be used to measure progress
- Identification of a scientific, research based intervention that will be implemented to target the identified problem
- A description of the setting in which the intervention will occur and the individual(s) responsible for conducting the intervention
Assurance that the selected intervention is culturally and linguistically appropriate for the particular child

Identification of a method to measure the child’s response to the intervention and the frequency that measurement of progress will occur

Clear criteria, decision rules and timelines for determining an adequate or inadequate response to the intervention

A plan to ensure that the intervention is implemented as designed

Adequate documentation of the intervention to assist in current and future decision-making

What is Needed for Successful Implementation of RtI?

From implementation experience across several schools and many states, including many Ohio schools, much is known about some key elements of school organization that are necessary for successful implementation. Research on effective implementation practices also provides support for these elements. Some key elements of school organization and practice include the following:

- Use of leadership teams to develop understanding of RtI and to guide, plan, and monitor implementation (district and building levels)
- Use of building-level and teacher teams to make important school-based, data-driven decisions about flexible scheduling, flexible/needs-based use of resources, and instruction/intervention planning that is scientifically/research based
- Development of capacity to fully implement and sustain practices, through high quality, embedded professional development and development of building-level leadership to provide on-site support for practices
- Use of technology for efficiency (in assessment and data systems, data reports and displays for decision making)

Where Can I Find Resources to Support RtI Implementation?

The following websites provide a variety of resources to assist with RtI implementation:

RTI Action Network  http://www.rtinetwork.org/

The RTI Action Network is dedicated to the effective implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) in school districts nationwide. The site contains a variety of free resources for districts and other stakeholder groups including webcasts, national online forums, implementation guidelines and research summaries. Visitors can also sign up to receive a
monthly RTI Action Update newsletter.

The first national online forum provided by the RTI Action Network titled “Are you ready for RtI? What Do You Need to Do”? focuses on a dialogue with key national experts on RtI implementation and provides an excellent overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with RtI implementation. The archived video and additional reading materials are available at http://www.rtinetwork.org/Professional/Forums/June-2008

National Center on Response to Intervention

The National Center on RtI provides an assortment of briefs, fact sheets, presentations, media and training modules relevant to RtI that are divided into 18 separate categories. Many of the current resources were created by other organizations, associations, state departments or districts and center-authored resources will be added on a regular basis. Visitors can sign up to receive an online monthly newsletter, the RTI Responder.

Response to Intervention Blueprint Series  http://www.nasdse.org/

NASDSE (National Association of State Directors of Special Education) has two Response to Intervention (RtI) Blueprint documents available for free download: Response to Intervention Blueprints for Implementation: District Level and Response to Intervention Blueprints for Implementation: School Building Level. These documents provide step-by-step implementation guidelines, resources and tips from RtI implementers with many years of experience. The Blueprints are intentionally designed to provide a framework around which RtI implementation can be built.

The Blueprints were developed jointly by NASDSE and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE). To download a free copy of the District Level Blueprint, click here. To download a free copy of the School Building Level Blueprint, click here.

National Center On Student Progress Monitoring
http://www.studentprogress.org/default.asp

Progress monitoring is a scientifically based practice that is used to assess student academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and is an essential component of RtI implementation. The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring provides information and other resources on the implementation of progress monitoring that can be used at the classroom, building, local and state level. These resources include downloadable articles, PowerPoint presentations and FAQs, and additional resources about student progress monitoring, Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), applying decision making to IEPs and other researched based topics.
National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)  http://www.pbis.org/main.htm

The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports was established to address the behavioral and discipline systems needed for successful learning and social development of students. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behavior and social skills. The process is consistent with the core principles of RtI as it provides a comprehensive system of interventions based on the needs of all students. The site provides a significant number of planning and evaluation tools, research-based information on PBS, resource links, video links, and power point presentations. Visitors can also sign up to receive newsletters and new articles as they are added to the site.

Research-Based Literacy Instruction and Interventions

University of Oregon – Big Ideas in Beginning Reading  http://reading.uoregon.edu/

Provides information on the essential components of reading instruction, assessment within a comprehensive schoolwide reading model, evaluating and selecting core, supplemental and intervention reading programs and links to other helpful reading resources.

The Florida Center for Reading Research  www.fcrr.org

Provides free lesson structures for differentiated reading instruction and information on core reading activities, student center reading activities for grades K-5, interventions for struggling readers, and reading assessment at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The site also provides information targeted to parents, teachers, administrators, literacy coaches and researchers.

The Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts  http://www.texasreading.org/utcrla/materials/

The Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGC) is dedicated to improving the educational outcomes of traditionally underrepresented student populations, such as English language learners and students with learning difficulties. The Vaughn Center has more than 60 products related to effective, research-based reading instruction for prekindergarten, primary, secondary, and special education students. The professional development guides, videos, CD-ROMs, and booklets address a range of reading topics, including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Many products and publications can be downloaded and can be explored digitally through an online database, Searchlight.
Stupski Foundation – Secondary Literacy Instruction and Intervention
http://www.stupski.org/publications.htm
The Stupski Foundation is an organization committed to supporting district leaders in their efforts to transform public education. They provide numerous free publications including The Secondary Literacy Instruction Intervention Guide which outlines a district-level model incorporating evidence-based and research-validated literacy resources to meet the differentiated needs of struggling adolescents. These tools and resources are designed around the context of the University of Kansas’ Content Literacy Continuum (CLC) secondary literacy framework which reflects the RTI principles and the three-tiered model. The guide also provides detailed descriptions of secondary literacy intervention programs and screening and diagnostic tests for second students.