



RtI  
Response to Intervention  
and  
Building Based Problem  
Solving Teams



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## RtI Terminology

### Response to Intervention (RtI)

This brochure is designed to introduce you a method of making educational decisions referred to as Response to Intervention, also referred to as RtI. Team based decision making is the foundation to this method and will also be described, as well as other terms you may have read about or heard through conversations with district and OCEC staff.

RtI is a federal and state initiative intended to meet a wide range of individual student needs through general education services. It is recognized that classroom experiences are only a part of the complete educational picture. We can use the services of additional personnel (other classroom teachers and educational specialists) to assist classroom teachers who may have questions regarding the instructional needs of individual students.

### What is RtI?

"Response to Intervention" is the problem-solving process through which school staff examines and provides for the individual learning needs of students.

A classroom teacher may realize there is an area of concern affecting a student's progress. The teacher creates an intervention plan intended to improve the student's performance. There are a variety of methods a teacher may choose to accomplish this result.

If the student continues to have difficulty, the classroom teacher meets with other staff to discuss the child's needs, consider other interventions, and outline a method to carefully monitor the student's progress. This team - often referred to as the "Student Assistance Team" - uses the insight and expertise of several different school staff members.

- **Accommodations** - The act of meeting a student's need(s) without altering what is being taught. This is not an intervention.
- **Benchmarks** - General progress of the students in the school as a whole.
- **CBM** - Curriculum Based Measurements; short timed measures that assess a student's basic skills in the areas of reading, writing, spelling, and math
- **CLOZE** - A method of assessing reading comprehension.
- **DIBELS** - Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills; assesses and progress monitors basic early literacy skills, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in comparison to grade level peers
- **Discrepancy** - The degree to which a student is performing in relation to his/her grade level peers.
- **Goal Line** - A graph line of a student's current level of performance to where the student should be performing in a given amount of time.
- **Hypothesis** - An educated guess of the cause and function of why the academic or behavioral concern is occurring.
- **Interventions** - A specific skill building strategy, behavior management program, or instructional practices that aim to increase or decrease the student's target behavior.
- **MAZE** - A method of assessing reading comprehension.
- **Modifications** - Minor changes in the curriculum that address a student's need(s). This is not an intervention.
- **ORF** - Oral Reading Fluency; the number of words read per minute
- **Progress Monitoring** - Students may be given probes in the areas of reading, writing, spelling, and math bi-weekly or weekly to assess the effectiveness of an intervention on a particular student.
- **RIOT** - Review, Interview, Observe, and Test; The information collected as part of the RtI process in order to develop an intervention.
- **SAT/RtI Team** - Student Assistance Team or RtI Team; A group of school personnel review students with concerns and develop appropriate interventions.

## Useful Websites

- [www.fsds.org](http://www.fsds.org): Website for the Illinois Flexible Service Delivery System (a precursor to Response to Intervention.) It contains resources and information from statewide districts and presentations from local and statewide speakers.
- [www.nrclid.org](http://www.nrclid.org): Contains information regarding best practices in using Response to Intervention in conjunction with learning disabilities.
- <http://dibels.uoregon.edu>: Official DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) Homepage
- [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org): Parent friendly site with home and school information for understanding and teaching reading.
- [www.educationforall.org](http://www.educationforall.org): Contains reading programs for adolescents
- [www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org): Focuses on effective instructional strategies and parent advocacy for parents and children in special education programs.
- [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org): Florida Center for Reading Research-Has information regarding scientifically-based interventions in reading
- [www.texasreading.org](http://www.texasreading.org): Vaughn-Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts-Emphasizes scientifically-based reading research and instruction.
- [www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org): Offers practical, free tools and resources to promote positive behavior and academic success
- [www.aimsweb.com](http://www.aimsweb.com): Provides assessment and data management materials in the areas of reading, math, spelling, and writing.
- [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org): Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports-Identifies, adapts, and sustains effective school-wide disciplinary practices.
- [www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org): Information regarding their publications and materials.
- [www.homepage.mac.com/markshinn](http://www.homepage.mac.com/markshinn): Mark Shinn's, Professor at National Louis University, homepage. It has his presentations and research regarding Response to Intervention practices in schools.
- [www.studentprogress.org](http://www.studentprogress.org): National Center on Student Progress Monitoring-Helps to assess student academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.
- [www.reading.org/resources/issues/focus/rti.html](http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/focus/rti.html): Contains information regarding reading and RtI.
- [www.all4ed.org](http://www.all4ed.org): This site is dedicated to reading and literacy development of adolescents. Greater attention is given to issues of vocabulary development, motivation to read, and to comprehension strategies for content areas and literature. An excellent site for teachers as well as parents.

## Parental Role in the RtI Process

Parents have an important role in this process and may be asked to participate in telephone conversations and/or team meetings. Parental insight into a child's learning and development may provide valuable information in the following ways:

- understanding the problem and why it occurs.
- planning and/or implementing an intervention plan.
- measuring and evaluating the plan's effectiveness.

The RtI approach also uses different methods of assessing student progress. We know that students demonstrate learning and understanding in different ways. As a result, various written, oral, or behavioral methods may be used as assessments. It is the student's response to interventions that is evaluated in order to determine whether to continue, discontinue, or increase the types of interventions being used.

Team members contribute in different ways to this process; offering suggestions, gathering data, communicating with other staff and/or parents. Many teams meet regularly to discuss and monitor student concerns. These team meetings use the problem solving approach described on the next page.

## Areas of Educational Concern

Children learn in different ways. Some children need more help or supervision than others. When defining a problem, the team meets to determine what the problem is and why it is occurring. Examples of various educational concerns include:

- reading (mechanics, vocabulary, comprehension)
- math (applied math, calculation, facts)
- written language (spelling, organization, grammar)
- Attention
- social behavior
- homework completion
- listening
- work quality
- following directions

## The Problem Solving Process

When a teacher observes an area of concern, he or she becomes involved in a team process we call "problem-solving". There are four steps in this process that may be repeated depending upon a student's response to assistance.

### **Define the problem and develop a hypothesis** (What is the problem and why is it happening?)

It is important to be as specific as possible about what the problem is. A review of student work samples, curriculum based assessment, and record review are very important components necessary for the team to precisely define the area of concern and under what conditions it occurs. This allows for improved understanding and development of a hypothesis about why difficulties may be occurring.

### **Develop a Intervention** (What are we going to do?)

A group decision is made regarding how to change, add, or otherwise improve educational services to the student in order to improve their learning and performance in school. This plan is laid out in detail, with delegated responsibilities for putting the plan in effect, a defined method of measuring whether the plan is working, and a date by which to meet again to evaluate any changes in the plan.

### **Implement the intervention** (carry out the plan).

The designed plan needs to be followed through with in a consistent and conscientious manner. Regular, repeated measures of student performance need to be collected as part of this plan.

### **Evaluate the intervention** (Did the plan work?)

The team meets after a predetermined amount of time to review the student progress data that was collected. Depending upon the success of the plan/intervention, the team may develop a new hypothesis (redefining any problems that may be continuing), discontinue the intervention or maintain the intervention.

## In summary:

We deeply believe that every child can learn, and that high expectations for progress and performance are critical. We also believe that school staff has the creativity, desire, and resources to provide improved opportunities for learning to each child. *Response to Intervention* and building based *problem solving teams* are formal methods to provide these services to children. Through the problem-solving process and evaluation of a student's response to interventions (using the expertise of school staff with the partnership of parents) we aspire to the following:

- to develop a clear picture of what a child knows and is able to do.
- identify barriers that interfere with progress.
- implement interventions and strategies.
- repeatedly measure student progress.
- evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions.

The goal to improve student success in school is the center of the entire RtI process.

