

## Frequently Asked Questions about Response to Intervention (RtI)

We encourage the reader to review the Illinois RtI state plan and the district self-assessment tool prior to reading through these questions and answers.

State RtI Plan: [http://www.isbe.net/pdf/rti\\_state\\_plan.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/pdf/rti_state_plan.pdf)

District Self-Assessment Template: [http://www.isbe.net/RtI\\_plan/rti\\_template.doc](http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/rti_template.doc)

There is an email link for questions specific to RtI, that email address is [rtiselfassessment@isbe.net](mailto:rtiselfassessment@isbe.net).

### **Implementation of RtI**

1. *How is it determined who will receive services under RtI?*

A student would not be “referred” to RtI the same as a student would be referred for a special education evaluation. These are two different processes. A student is identified for RtI through the data collection and analysis by a building level team. A special education request for evaluation can be “made by a parent of a child or by an employee of a State educational agency, another State agency, a local educational agency, or a community service agency” (23 IAC 226.110(b)). “Each school district shall develop and make known to all concerned persons procedures by which an evaluation may be requested” (23 IAC 226.110(a)).

In a three-tier model, a school district should administer a universal screening tool in core academic areas at the beginning of each year to identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses and to examine the effectiveness of the core curriculum and instruction. The team would then discuss which students would benefit from supplemental interventions in addition to the core curriculum.

Initially, a building level team consists of building staff members; however, once a student is identified by the team as a student who may need interventions, the parents of the child would become members of the team in order to develop an intervention plan.

2. *What subjects should RtI encompass?*

RtI should encompass the core academic areas, i.e., reading, math, writing, science, and social studies; however, when planning for the implementation of RtI, districts should focus on reading and math as their starting point and expand to include all core academic areas.

3. *Can students receive Tier II or Tier III interventions as part of the regular literacy block instructional time?*

The 90-minute Literacy Block, for example, is for Tier I or core academic instruction only. If a student is in need of Tier II or Tier III interventions those are *in addition to the 90 minutes*. Interventions are to provide *more instruction* for students.

4. *What types of supports are available to develop and implement Rtl (called "Recognition and Response") in early childhood programs?*

State and federal regulations emphasize response to intervention implementation in kindergarten through twelfth grade. However, many districts across Illinois utilize Recognition and Response in their early childhood programs.

The state will focus implementation supports on K-12 due to current requirements. Nevertheless, a district may choose to coordinate its early childhood program for Rtl and K-12 programs to ensure a seamless transition between the two.

5. *To what degree does a district have to implement an Rtl process and how much latitude is it given to implement at its own pace?*

All school districts must implement a scientific, research-based intervention model in order to comply with federal and state regulations. After completing the district self-assessment tool, a district will have a better understanding of what it already has in place and what it needs to fully implement Rtl. The district plan, due January 1, 2009, will list needs and establish a timeline of activities. District plans must explicitly outline the transition phases describing how full implementation for all grade levels and content areas will occur. Full implementation of Rtl is expected by the 2010-2011 school year.

6. *Are different curriculum programs needed for each tier?*

Instruction and program content should be aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and Assessment Frameworks. Interventions provided to a student should match his or her needs, as identified through universal screening and ongoing progress monitoring tools. These tools should utilize curriculum based measures (CBMs); therefore, different programs may not be needed.

7. *What are some math programs that are approved under the Rtl guidelines for Tiers I, II, and III?*

ISBE does not review or approve specific programs. However, several other entities do conduct program evaluations. Internet resources include:

<http://whatworks.ed.gov/>

<http://www.rti4success.org>

<http://fcrr.org/FCRRReports/index.aspx>

<http://www.studentprogress.org/>

<http://www.promisingpractices.net/default.asp>

<http://www.interventioncentral.com/>

8. *When students receive Tier II or III interventions or special education services—what subject area is missed?*

This is a scheduling issue that should be determined at the local level. All students receive the core (Tier I) instruction and interventions. Students needing additional support through Tiers II, III or special education, receive these services in addition to the core curriculum (Tier I). Literacy and numeracy intervention blocks are becoming common practice across the state. Time is found by carefully examining current master schedules to determine how time is currently allocated and how to use staff resources flexibly in order to provide interventions for students.

9. *What certification is required for staff who work with students under an Rtl model?*

There is no specific certification or endorsement for staff members working with students to provide interventions. The staff member that provides interventions should be trained in the program or curriculum that is used by the district.

10. *How should districts adequately implement Rtl at the secondary level?*

Rtl in secondary schools may have a different implementation approach. Specific universal screening tools may not be as prevalent for the secondary education setting; however, curriculum-based and/or department-level assessments could be used as universal screening tools to assist educators in making data-based decisions regarding student performance. Additionally, assessments already in place, such as ISAT, EXPLORE, PLAN, and PSAE could be used to make placement decisions.

Reading should be taught across each content area. *Every* teacher should be reinforcing reading comprehension skills and focus instruction on how students engage with the text to ensure that all students have a full understanding of it. Additionally, differentiated instructional practices need to be emphasized. Classroom teachers must use a variety of strategies to engage all students in active learning practices.

Below are links to some presentations and resources regarding this topic:

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/>

- Reading
- 4-12 (There are 3 sections: Resources, Research, and Exemplars)

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

- Events: Rtl Summit
- Summit Presentations
- Friday, December 7, 2008: presentation RTI and Secondary Education presentation

<http://www.kucrl.org/cec2007/> and <http://www.kucrl.org/sim/>

<http://www.nsd.org/connect/projects/resultsbased.cfm>

- What Works in the High School: Results Based Staff Development

11. *How does the role of special education change in Rtl?*

The role of each staff member is determined at the local level. In regards to a special educator, the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) need to ensure that they comply with the Illinois Administrative Code specific to Work Load for Special Educators 226.735 which states in part:

*In order to provide students with IEPs the free, appropriate education to which they are entitled, each entity subject to this Part shall adopt a plan specifying limits on the work load of its special educators so that all services required under students' IEPs, as well as all needed ancillary and support services, can be provided at the requisite level of intensity.*

ISBE has published a question and answer document regarding special education personnel that can be located on our website at

[http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/sped\\_personnel\\_qa.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/sped_personnel_qa.pdf).

12. *In what setting/location can interventions specific to the RtI model be provided?*

According to the federal regulations, 34 CFR 300.309(b)(1):

*Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel.*

Therefore, general education instruction and interventions must be provided in the general education setting. These include interventions specific to the RtI model since RtI is considered a general education practice.

13. *Is the implementation of PBIS a mandate?*

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is not being mandated. However, districts do need to use a district- or school-wide positive behavior intervention system to provide a tiered approach to meeting students' behavioral needs.

There are a number of assessments and screening tools available. A school-wide systems approach could include an analysis of the school data related to behavior and/or the analysis of the results from screening and assessment tools. Illinois is the national leader in the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support. The Illinois PBIS Network is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, and is a component of the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center.

Data used to determine the need for additional student behavioral support, include office disciplinary referrals, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions.

For more information on PBIS, please visit [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) or [www.pbisillinois.org](http://www.pbisillinois.org).

In the State RtI plan, ISBE supports the use of behavioral interventions and "continuous monitoring leads to responsive levels of interventions" (p. 3). State and federal regulations define the eligibility for services under the category of emotional disability.

### **Coordinated Services**

14. *How does a school coordinate the efforts of Title I, a 3 tier model of instruction, and reading specialist services?*

All of the supports and services available within the school should be coordinated collaboratively through the work of the building team rather than through the efforts of isolated departments and services.

15. *Are English Language Learners (ELL) eligible to participate in RtI? If so eligible, how does their status affect participation in RtI?*

RtI is intended to benefit all K-12 students; therefore, students who are identified as ELL would participate in RtI just as all other students would participate; this is true for a child eligible for Title I, special education, and other federal or state funded programs. Entitlement to these programs is contingent upon specific criteria and there are specific obligations that a district must conform to for this entitlement. For instance, a student who is identified to receive Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services, must receive these services from an individual that is properly certified. Therefore, the building team could determine that a student that is eligible to receive LEP services would also benefit from RtI interventions. It would be crucial for the building team to involve the specialty teacher to ensure the student receives the most appropriate support from all necessary providers without a redundancy of supports.

A valuable resource on literacy and ELL students is available on the Doing What Works website of the U.S. Department of Education (<http://dww.ed.gov/>).

16. *How do gifted students fit into the RtI model?*

All students, including those identified as gifted, can benefit from RtI because of the differentiated instructional practices. Classroom teachers that differentiate their instruction provide multiple learning opportunities at various levels of learning. Students are afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways. Further, if a student is identified as gifted but is experiencing difficulties in a specific academic or behavioral skill, that student could be considered for some type of intervention to address the targeted skill area.

Through analysis of universal screening data, students' strengths and weaknesses should be identified and instructional decisions made based on this data. Teachers need to tailor their instruction to meet the full range of student needs.

17. *How do students with disabilities already receiving special education services fit into the RtI process?*

All students need to receive instruction in the core general education curriculum, and interventions should be targeted to meet the students' identified strengths and weaknesses. The main difference for students that receive special education services is that a special educator provides services determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

18. *If a student has an IEP for behavior, can he/she still receive early intervening services (EIS) for reading?*

The response to this question depends on the funding source a district uses to provide the EIS. The federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.226(a) permit districts to use up to 15 percent of their IDEA Part B funds to develop and implement coordinated EIS for students in grades K-12 who are not currently identified as eligible for special education and related services. In January 2006 the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) published a question and answer document relevant to RtI and early intervening services (EIS). Their response regarding EIS paid for with IDEA Part B funds is as follows:

*“However, children with disabilities who are currently identified as needing... [special education and related] services may not receive RTI services that are funded with IDEA funds used for EIS...” because EIS is “... for students who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.”*

Therefore, a district may not provide EIS funded with IDEA Part B dollars to a student who already has an IEP. However, there is nothing that would prevent a district from using funding sources other than IDEA Part B to provide EIS to such a student, provided this was an allowable use of funds under the different fund source and EIS was determined to be the most appropriate means of addressing the student’s learning needs.

## **Parent Involvement**

19. *What is the role of parents in the RtI process?*

One of the main components of the RtI process is the collaborative team effort. Parents as members of this team, will be involved in data sharing and decision-making. Raw score data may be analyzed by building personnel; however, the results or conclusions drawn from this analysis should be shared with the team, which includes the parent. The information shared should be specific to the student’s progress and allow the team to make informed instructional decisions in a timely manner. The frequency of the data sharing and decision-making timeline should be established by the team when the student’s intervention plan is initially developed.

20. *How does a district/school increase parent involvement and parent education activities to implement RtI?*

Resources are available through local chapters of parent and school partnership entities and on the Internet. The Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center for Parents (formerly known as Parent and Educator Partnership) has a variety of resources to assist districts and parents with collaboration and parent involvement activities. Links to parent resources are available at:

[www.pepartnership.org](http://www.pepartnership.org)

[www.illinoisaspire.org](http://www.illinoisaspire.org).

## **Data Tools**

21. *What are the data collection requirements for RtI?*

Decisions about specific data-collection processes and tools will be made at the local level and could be considered as local assessment data for district improvement planning.

Data collection to determine student needs typically involves record reviews (e.g., student work, grades, office referrals), interviews (e.g., teachers, parents), observation of the student and the learning environment and testing (e.g., scientifically, research-based universal screening, curriculum-based measures, classroom tests, district-wide and state tests).

The universal screening tool and the curriculum-based measures should align to the district's curriculum. Additionally, the local assessments, i.e., scientifically, research-based universal screening, curriculum-based measures, classroom tests, department-level tests, and district-wide tests, need to align to the district curriculum to ensure that they can adequately measure student mastery of the core content.

With regard to data collection for progress monitoring, as stated in the State RtI Plan:

*Within a three-tier intervention model using RtI, progressively more intensive interventions and supports are coupled with more frequent progress monitoring. At Tier I data are collected and used as a general screening process for all students and to determine effectiveness of core instructional practices. At Tier II data are collected to determine the effectiveness of an intervention and determine if an instructional change is needed. At Tier III, data are collected for the same reasons as Tier II, but are collected on a more frequent basis so that educational decisions can be made in a timelier*



*manner. Data systems used for progress monitoring within an RtI model should be consistent across all three tiers and be scientifically based.*

The use of ongoing assessment tools serve three functions, 1) teachers have a consistent and relatively accurate set of goals for students, 2) expectations are consistent for all students, and 3) the data collected allows teachers to continually check on the impact that their classroom instruction has in relation to grade-level standards.

## **Team Process**

22. *What are the responsibilities of the building team in RtI?*

Building teams should use a problem solving method of decision making to match instructional resources to a student's educational needs. The team must define the problem the student is experiencing by determining the discrepancy between expected performance and the student's actual performance. Once this has been determined, the team establishes a student performance goal in the targeted area(s), and develops a plan that details specific interventions to address the goal and determines how the student's progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be ensured.

23. *What is the timeline for continuing to use the intervention before determining that a special education evaluation is needed? Is there a maximum time that a student can remain in RtI?*

A special education evaluation may be requested at any time, as the federal and state regulations maintain. Furthermore, Illinois regulations at 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.130 state "... the district shall not use any child's participation in the [RtI] process as the basis for denying a parent's request for an evaluation."

There is no set timeline or maximum amount of time that interventions should continue prior to special education referral. The team, which includes the parent, must consider each student's needs on an individual basis and use student data to determine how long an intervention should be continued. Factors they will need to consider are: Is the student progressing? Are the interventions being provided sufficient to meet the student's needs? Is the student making sufficient progress to close the gap in the identified area(s)? Can the current interventions be maintained?

## **Special Education Evaluation**

24. *After the Rtl interventions start, when does the timeline for the referral process begin and how are parents informed of their right to an evaluation?*

There is not a specific timeline for implementing interventions prior to referral for special education evaluation. This team decision should be based on student data, and parents may request a special education evaluation at any time during the intervention process. In accordance with the federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.311(a)(7)(ii)(C), districts must be able to document that the child's parents were informed of their right to make such a request, but the regulations do not specify the form of such a notice.

In terms of the 60 school-day timeline for completing a special education evaluation, this timeline does not begin until the district receives informed, written parental consent for such an evaluation.

25. *How does the Rtl process affect the evaluation process?*

The Special Education Eligibility Considerations section of the State Rtl Plan states "...eligibility decisions typically occur within Tier III when students do not respond to the most intensive interventions, but may occur at any tier." Additionally, the data collected during the Rtl process can and should be used as part of the evaluation process for determining special education eligibility.

26. *If a student is found to need an evaluation, what are the types of evaluations used to address processing deficits? Is only the Rtl data used, or is other testing included?*

Neither federal nor state regulations require assessment of processing deficits when conducting an evaluation to determine eligibility under the category of specific learning disability (SLD). The regulations do, however, require that a full and individual evaluation be conducted before the initial provision of special education and related services. The state special education regulations at 23 IAC 226.130 state the following in regard to determining SLD eligibility: "...each district shall, no later than the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, implement the use of a process that determines how the child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of [emphasis added] the evaluation procedure described in 34 CFR 300.304." Therefore, while a district must utilize an Rtl process as part of the evaluation procedures, it is expected that evaluation data will be collected from multiple sources. The decision about other types of data needed and the evaluation tools used to collect them lies with the building team, which includes the parent.

## **State Education Agency Responsibility**

27. *What technical assistance, resources and support will ISBE employ to support public awareness, parent training and personnel training to assist districts with implementing RtI?*

ISBE already has several training modules that can be utilized for professional development and support to districts, including the modules posted on the Illinois ASPIRE website at [www.illinoisaspire.org](http://www.illinoisaspire.org). ISBE is also developing additional training modules for use by Illinois districts. Module topics include:

- Overview and Use of Three-Tier Instruction and Intervention Model to Support Improved Student Performance
- Leadership Skills for Improved Student Performance
- Parental Involvement for Improved Student Performance
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners and Improved Student Performance
- Scientific, Research-Based Assessment for Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring
- Data-Based Decision-Making
- Scientifically-Based Instruction and Interventions
- Determining and Designing Effective Interventions in Literacy (kindergarten through grade 3)
- Determining and Designing Effective Interventions in Literacy (grades 4 through 8)
- Determining and Designing Effective Interventions in Literacy (grades 9 through 12)
- Determining and Designing Effective Interventions in Mathematics (kindergarten through grade 3)
- Determining and Designing Effective Interventions in Mathematics (grades 4 through 8)
- Determining and Designing Effective Interventions in Mathematics (grades 9 through 12)

28. *What funding sources are available to districts for implementing RtI?*

The State RtI Plan discusses funding options available to districts. As a state agency we are continuing to analyze other funding sources and as these become available, we will notify qualified districts.

29. *Can Title I monies be used to purchase progress monitoring tools?*

According to the USDE's PowerPoint on Implementing RTI Using Title I, Title III, and CEIS Funds:

*"Generally, Title I, Title III, and CEIS funds may be used to fund progress monitoring if the progress monitoring is used to determine the response to an intervention that is supportable with Title I, Title III, or CEIS funds."*

For further information, please see the USDE PowerPoint at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/08-0398rti.pdf>

30. *Will there be uniformity in developing student intervention plans—identifying and meeting student needs?*

No. Intervention planning documents will be created by districts to meet local needs and individual student needs. Specific components of a student's intervention plan will be based on the problem-solving model with the use of data-based decision-making and quality interventions.

31. *Will there be a template available to districts to assist them in completing the Rtl plans that are due in January 2009?*

Rather than developing a separate template, the Illinois State Board of Education used the District Improvement Plan (DIP) template available on the Interactive Illinois Report Card website (<http://iirc.niu.edu/>) for districts to incorporate objectives and activities that address the required components of the District Rtl Plan. Resources for completing the Rtl Plan components are available at [http://www.isbe.net/Rtl\\_plan/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/Rtl_plan/default.htm)