

DRAFT
The Illinois State Response to Intervention (RtI) Plan
January 2008

Introduction

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) believes that increased student learning requires the consistent practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs. In a quality educational environment student academic and behavioral needs must be identified and monitored continuously with documented student performance data used to make instructional decisions.

The process of such identification and continuous monitoring are the foundational pieces of a successful system of early interventions. When student progress towards instructional and behavioral goals is frequently monitored and that progress data is then used to determine early interventions success rates for all students in mastering the Illinois Learning Standards improve. The proposed state framework supporting the development of a system of early interventions is outlined in the remainder of this document. It is important to note that it is through the continuous use of progress monitoring and analysis of student academic and behavioral growth that proper instructional and curricular responses may be made. Districts have an opportunity to support a fluid model of response to early interventions of varying intensity to meet the needs of their students as they develop their RtI plan by January 2009.

What is RtI?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is “the practice of providing 1) high-quality instruction/ intervention matched to student needs and 2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to 3) make important educational decisions” (*Batsche, et al., 2005*). This means using differentiated curriculum-based instructional strategies for all learners, providing all learners with scientific, research-based interventions, continuously measuring student performance using scientifically research-based progress monitoring instruments for all learners and making educational decisions based on a student’s response to interventions.

RtI is part of a systematic problem solving process used to organize resources in order to provide assistance in direct proportion to student needs. This process is typically depicted as a three-tier model (see Figure 1) that utilizes increasingly more intense interventions. As Figure 1 shows, Tier 1 is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based core instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum. At Tier 2, supplemental instruction and short-term interventions are provided *in addition to core instruction* to those students who display poor response to the Tier 1 group instruction procedures. Tier 3 consists of intensive instructional interventions provided *in addition to core instruction and Tier 2 interventions* to increase an individual student’s rate of progress. Students who do not display meaningful progress in response to Tier 2 interventions or those that display progress but continue to need supports would be considered for more intensive interventions at Tier 3.

Within each of the three tiers, school teams typically use a problem solving process (see Figure 2) to:

1. Define the problem by determining the gap between the student's current performance and the expected level of performance.
2. Analyze the problem using available data to determine why the gap is occurring.
3. Establish a student performance goal, develop an intervention plan to address the goal and delineate how the student's progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be ensured.
4. Use progress monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan.

The three-tier model provides progressively more intensive interventions and supports, coupled with more frequent progress monitoring of student achievement in order to guide the educational planning of students. It is important to note that RtI within a three-tier intervention model is also a part of special education eligibility decision-making required by 34 CFR 300.309 and 23 IAC 226.130.

A successful Illinois State RtI plan establishes a framework to meet the diverse needs of all Illinois students. Therefore, the framework of this plan is designed to provide training and implementation flexibility in light of the variation that exists across districts, schools and grade levels. For example, variations in knowledge and experience with implementing RtI will influence the type and amount of training and technical assistance a district or school may need. With regard to instructional and assessment practices, RtI components such as universal screening and scientific, research-based interventions may take different forms at different grade levels. While it is not possible to address all potential variations within this plan, the framework contained herein can serve as a foundation to support comprehensive training and implementation of sound educational practices.

Figure 1. Three-Tier Model of School Supports

Academic Systems

Behavioral Systems

Tier 3: Intensive, Individual Interventions
Individual Students
Assessment-based
High Intensity
Of longer duration

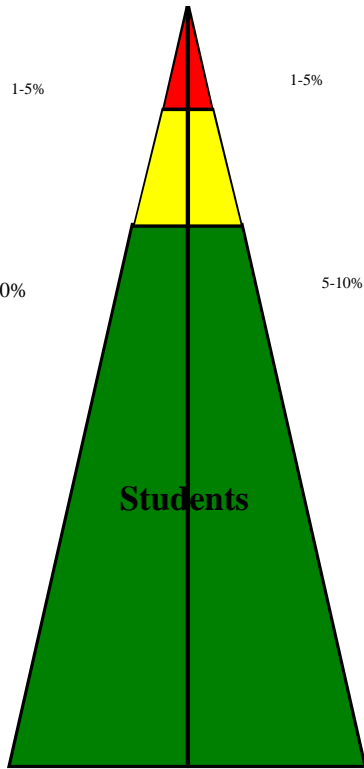
Tier 2: Targeted Group Interventions
Some students (at-risk)
High efficiency
Rapid response

Tier 1: Universal Interventions
All students
Preventive,
proactive

1-5%

5-10%

80-90%



1-5%

5-10%

80-90%

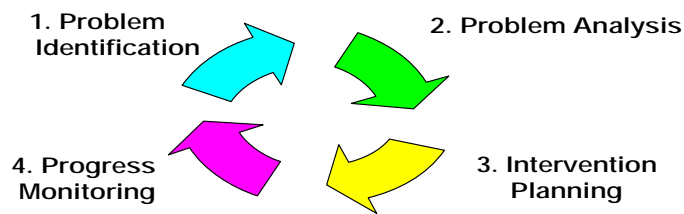
Tier 3: Intensive, Individual Interventions
Individual Students
Assessment-based
Intense, durable procedures

Tier 2: Targeted Group Interventions
Some students (at-risk)
High efficiency
Rapid response

Tier 1: Universal Interventions
All settings, all students
Preventive, proactive

Adapted from *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation* (Batsche, et al 2005).
Note: Percentage are approximations and may vary by district.

Figure 2. Steps of Problem Solving



Adapted from *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation* (Batsche, et al. 2005).

Progress Monitoring and Data Collection

RtI encompasses a three-tier process of increasingly intensive instructional interventions put in place in response to frequent progress monitoring indicating a student's academic and/or behavioral needs are not being met in the present instructional setting. Such continuous monitoring leads to responsive levels of intervention matched to the student's demonstrated academic and behavior achievement and rate of growth. In a fully implemented response to intervention model a student may move fluidly from tier to tier as a result of his/her response to the educational program.

School evaluation teams can use student progress data collected at each tier showing how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of evaluation to determine special education eligibility. Such eligibility decisions typically occur within Tier 3 but can occur at any tier. Additionally, parent requests for evaluation may occur within any of the tiers. Further refinement of the implementation of RtI and its role in eligibility determination will continue through a work group comprised of representatives from multiple statewide stakeholder groups (e.g. Illinois State Board of Education, teacher unions, special education directors, school administrators, parent advocacy groups, etc.).

Crosswalk of RtI, NCLB 2001, *Reading First*, and IDEA 2004*

	RtI	NCLB 2001	<i>Reading First</i>	IDEA 2004
Statement of Purpose	Provides a schoolwide model of integrated instruction, assessment, and data-based decision making to improve student outcomes.	Requires that all students reach high standards in reading, math, and science and graduate from high school.	Focuses on increased reading achievement for students in Grades K-3.	Improves educational outcomes for students with disabilities.
Instructional Program Coherence	Requires both horizontal and vertical alignment of instructional practices, screening, and monitoring.	Requires an integrated instruction and assessment system. Requires assessment of student progress in the state curriculum.	Requires the use of scientifically based instruction and assessment in the essential components of reading from Grade K-3, including supplemental support for students with reading difficulties.	Requires the use of research-based interventions, progress monitoring, accountability, and access to the general curriculum, as well as alignment of transition services with post-school opportunities.
Building Capacity	Focuses on schoolwide systems requires greater collaboration of teachers and staff to coordinate efforts of instructional delivery, assessment, and decision making.	Requires data collection and evaluation to determine adequate yearly progress. Requires that teachers be highly qualified.	Emphasizes capacity building through its focus on procuring instructional materials and providing professional development for K-3 teachers in the essential components of reading instruction.	Encourages capacity building through the inclusion of an early-intervening services provision that includes interventions to students at risk and related professional development for teachers.

Based on materials in: *Mellard, Daryl F., Johnson, Evelyn (2008) RTI: A Practionioner's Guide to Implementing Response to Intervention

Process for Statewide Implementation

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will:

- Develop, refine and implement RtI.
- Establish an inclusive committee of stakeholders to review the progress of statewide implementation of RtI including funding sources and professional development. Stakeholder groups could include the Illinois State Board of Education, teacher unions,

administrator organizations, parent advocacy groups, special education directors, Regional Offices of Education, higher education institutions.

- Collaborate with Illinois ASPIRE to develop and disseminate eligibility requirements guidance for special education determination.
- Identify districts that would be least likely able to implement response to intervention without assistance from the State. Variables to be considered in making this determination include, but are not limited to NCLB status, percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, severe staff shortages, financial watch status, significant disproportionality in special education and district size.
- Assist all districts with specific assistance for targeted districts in completing a District Self-Assessment to determine their “Next Steps” toward implementation of response to intervention for all learners.
- Oversee and coordinate the provision of professional development to assist districts in the development and implementation of a plan for response to intervention. (e.g., Illinois ASPIRE, the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center (ISTAC), Regional Support Providers (RESPROs), Regional Offices of Education (ROEs), institutions of higher education, and special education joint agreements/cooperatives)
- Oversee and coordinate the provision of ongoing technical assistance to districts as requested.(e.g., Illinois ASPIRE, ISTAC, RESPROs, ROEs, and special education joint agreements/cooperatives)
- Work with Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) to incorporate the necessary skill development in undergraduate and graduate coursework in the educational departments.
- Educate parent groups (PTI, PTA, etc.) about what RtI is, why it is being implemented in school districts and how parents will be involved.
- Evaluate the effects of the RtI process and activities through review of student outcomes and professional development training reviews. Sources may include LEA Profiles, District and School Improvement Plans and professional development plans.
- Disseminate resources and information across the state through conferences, workshops, web-based resources, newsletters and parent organizations.

Districts will, based on self-assessment results and in conjunction with the District Improvement Plan process, develop an RtI plan that addresses:

- A process for gathering baseline information regarding current resources and practices addressing problem solving, research-based instruction, progress monitoring, ongoing assessment and levels of interventions will be gathered.
- How baseline information regarding current resources and practices will be used to implement RtI.
- How district stakeholders will be educated on what RtI is and why they are using it.
- How district stakeholders (e.g., teacher organization leadership, parent organization leadership) will be involved in the process.
- How the district leadership (e.g., school board, district- and building-level administrators,) will be involved in plan development and implementation.
- What ongoing professional development for all administrative, instructional and student support staff is needed to implement and sustain RtI and how it will be delivered.
- What infrastructure components are necessary (e.g., problem solving process, data collection), and which of those components is already in place or may need to be developed or strengthened.

- How the district will apply state guidelines in establishing how RtI will be used for special education eligibility decision-making.
- How parents will be involved in the training and implementation of RtI in the district process.
- How the RtI plan is connected to other district initiatives and plans (e.g., School Improvement Plans (SIP), Technology, Professional Development).
- What additional training needs, guidance and policy changes are necessary.
- How a systematic problem solving process will be used to make educational decisions.
- What systemic data management tools will be used for review and analysis of student data to make educational decisions.
- What evaluation process will be used to determine the effectiveness of RtI.

Timeline for Professional Development Activities

Spring 2008

- Each district will complete a District Self-Assessment to determine its “Next Steps” toward implementation of RtI for all learners
- ISBE will identify the targeted districts that would be least likely able to implement without assistance from the State.

Spring/Summer 2008

ISBE will utilize its grant-funded training and technical assistance initiatives and other available resources as appropriate, including but not limited to Illinois ASPIRE, ISTAC, RESPROs, ROEs special education cooperatives, institutions of higher education, regional labs, and Reading First, to deliver intensive training to professional development trainers/coaches on the problem solving process, the three-tier intervention model using RtI and coaching techniques. Training resources may include but are not limited to the Illinois ASPIRE training modules (see Supporting Resources).

The Trainers/Coaches will focus their technical assistance and coaching to those districts within their region most in need of assistance. The technical assistance (TA) will take the form of face-to-face TA, Web-based TA and telephone/email communication. Regularly scheduled TA meetings are expected to assist and support district teams. Trainers/Coaches will complete intensive training.

2008-2009 School Year

Trainers/Coaches will conduct Problem Solving/RtI training for districts within their region, or districts may identify a team to send to various training throughout the year. The trainings will address such topics as:

- Overview of 3-Tier Problem Solving Model including RtI
- Scientific Research-Based Assessments for Progress Monitoring and Universal Screening
- Problem Identification
- Scientifically Based Progress Monitoring in a 3-Tier Model

- Leadership and Teaming in a Response to Intervention and Problem Solving System
- Parent Involvement in Response to Intervention

2009-2010 School Year

Trainers/Coaches will conduct Problem Solving/RtI training for districts within their region. In addition to 2008-2009 training topics these trainings will be targeted specifically to the needs of the districts within the region and will address topics such as:

- Scientifically-Based Instruction and Interventions
- Curriculum Based Measures
- Effective Use of RtI in Special Education Eligibility Determination
- Progress Monitoring Instruments
- Advanced Problem Analysis
- Parent Involvement in Response to Intervention

Planning for Costs

When planning for training, districts can anticipate needing to allocate funds for costs in the following areas:

- Substitutes for staff to participate in training
- Release time for staff for ongoing collaboration, planning and implementation
- Registration fees for regional training

Funding Sources

Districts have responsibility for aligning available resources to support the full implementation of their RtI plan. Districts are encouraged to plan for the possible use of the following funding sources to support training and implementation of the critical plan components.

Funding sources could include:

Federal Title Funds:

Title I
Title II
Title V

Title funds, under certain circumstances, can be used to help support the RtI early intervening services plan. The cost of professional development can be shared among several federal programs, Title I paid staff can assist in working with identified students to provide intervening services, and resources and materials may be shared among programs. Title II A funds designated for professional development could be used to support early intervening services. Additionally, Title V funds can be used to support innovative educational activities.

General Funds:

District general funds can be used to support implementation of the RtI plan.

Special Education Funds:

Federal IDEA Part B Dollars

Currently, districts allocate 5 percent of their IDEA Part B flow-through funds for professional development. This allocation may be used for training to support implementation of the RtI plan.

Districts may also use up to 15 percent of special education funds to support implementation of the RtI plan, i.e., to develop and implement early intervening services for students in grades K-12 not identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment. Only those districts determined to have significant disproportionality based on race/ethnicity in the identification, placement or discipline of students with disabilities must use 15 percent of their funds for this purpose. Funds may be used to:

- 1) Deliver professional development (which may be provided by entities other than the LEA) for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientific, research-based academic and behavioral interventions, including scientifically-based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software.
- 2) Provide information and training for parents.
- 3) Provide educational and behavioral evaluations and assessments, services and supports, including scientifically-based literacy instruction.

ISBE will continue to pursue funding from other sources, including general revenue funds and grant opportunities.

ISBE will assist schools identified as least likely to effectively implement RtI for all students by providing professional development opportunities and trainers/coaches to support the work of school and district implementation teams.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation process will be structured around key evaluation questions:

- 1) If people are trained, do they implement?
- 2) If they implement, do they do so with integrity/fidelity?
- 3) If they implement with integrity/fidelity, do they sustain that level of implementation?
- 4) If implementation is sustained, what is the impact on student outcomes?
- 5) Is appropriate support offered from all levels to support full implementation (e.g. ISBE, districts, ROEs, institutions of higher education, etc.)?

The following areas will be a part of the state and district level evaluation process. Many of these areas of focus involve student data that is currently collected at a local/regional and state levels.

- 1) Skill development and implementation of educators.

- 2) Satisfaction of educators and parents based on survey results.
- 3) Evaluation of training and technical assistance.
- 4) Impact on students on the following variables:
 - a. Achievement,
 - b. Behavior,
 - c. Referral rates,
 - d. Disproportionally rates,
 - e. Special education placement rates, and
 - f. Retention
- 5) The relationship between implementation integrity and student outcomes.

Supporting Resources

Guidelines for Eligibility Determinations (to be developed)
Examples of Reviewed Reading Strategies
Examples of Reviewed Math Strategies
Examples of Reviewed Limited English Strategies
Examples for Middle School Implementation
Examples for Secondary Implementation
Example of a District Improvement Plan incorporating RtI
Example of Universal Screening Instruments
ASPIRE Training Modules/Evaluation summary
Resources/Websites that provide additional information
Bibliography – NASDSE, IDEA,
NCLB/IDEA language excerpts