

Implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) in 7-PAK States: Approaches and Lessons Learned

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Introduction

Response to Intervention (RtI) refers to a schoolwide method of service delivery that integrates general, compensatory, gifted, and special education to provide high-quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. RtI is a tiered, systemic framework that employs research-based curriculum and instructional interventions in addition to frequent formative assessment (e.g., screening and diagnostic testing and monitoring of student progress aligned with a state's No Child Left Behind [NCLB] accountability system and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] federal law guidelines).

The seven states comprising the 7-PAK Consortium of Large States (California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas) are at various stages of RtI implementation. The intent of this report is to support 7-PAK state leaders by providing a summary of state approaches and lessons learned related to the following six topics:

- Rules, regulations, and policies for students with learning disabilities
- Level of statewide RtI engagement
- RtI implementation strategies
- State education agency personnel for RtI
- Collaboration between general and special education and institutions of higher education
- Technical assistance for RtI

For each topic, the summary of approaches and the lessons learned will help state staff review collective successes and challenges regarding state RtI implementation strategies used to date. In addition to these topics, the report presents information relating to cultural and linguistic considerations for RtI.

Appendix A presents the interview protocol used to collect these data. Appendix B provides specific state-by-state RtI implementation information. Appendix C contains a resource guide that identifies pertinent RtI resources, tools, models, and support materials.

Perspectives on RtI From the 7-PAK States

Rules, Regulations, and Policies for Students With Learning Disabilities

The adoption of the first Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 and the revised Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004 (also known as IDEA 2004) signaled a significant shift in the orientation of public education laws. This shift was a change from an assistance perspective (i.e., use of special programs) to an accountability perspective (i.e., focus on student achievement outcomes and scientifically based research in education).

Prior to IDEA, legal guidelines for special education focused on procedures to be used, numbers of children to be served, and appropriate expenditures. The current legal guidelines, as outlined in IDEA 2004, emphasize the following: (1) results in terms of measurable outcomes and improvements in student achievement; and (2) efforts to systemically align and integrate general education, remedial, and special education in an effort to increase achievement for all children. The NCLB Act specifies the use of scientifically based research methodologies and approaches for both instruction and assessment. Educators are currently awaiting reauthorization of both IDEA and NCLB.

These changes in law were adopted partially because new information about research-based instruction and assessment practices became available to educators and legislators. Another significant change in law and educational practice is the move away from the “discrepancy model,” which had long been used to identify individual students for special education services. In the discrepancy model, eligibility for special education services was based on a documented “discrepancy” between intelligence quotient (IQ) level and achievement according to a formula. This approach was eliminated, in part, because it was based on unreliable indicators and resulted in the overidentification of students with learning disabilities. Often referred to as a “wait to fail” model, the discrepancy model resulted in two conditions that researchers and educators have found unacceptable: (1) large numbers of students with needs not being served, and (2) the overidentification of students with learning disabilities. The discrepancy model is being replaced by RtI, which provides responsive scientifically research-based assessment and instruction for all students.

7-PAK State Approaches

Current efforts among 7-PAK states related to rules, regulations, and policies for students with learning disabilities range from reviewing regulations, to developing and adopting criteria for determining specific learning disabilities, to drafting and/or revising regulations. For example, in December 2006, one state passed legislation that includes language stipulating the use of interventions proven by scientifically based research in any evaluations.

The majority of 7-PAK states currently are in the process of holding conversations and reviewing regulations. Anticipated timelines for decision making on regulations range from early 2007 through July 2008. At least one state currently has instructions in place for districts that may encounter conflicts between current rules and federal regulations during the review period.

Several states have intentionally utilized methods for including a broad spectrum of stakeholders in conversations prior to reviewing and revising learning disabilities regulations. Examples of methods include convening work groups and holding roundtable conversations to collect input. The processes leading to the review and revision of regulations often overlaps with efforts to engage stakeholders and will be addressed further in the section titled “Level of Statewide RtI Engagement,” beginning on page 4.

One state’s review and discussion process, which ultimately led to the passage of new legislation, was described as a “very transparent, thorough, and responsive process for conversation.” It included eight to nine public meetings held around the state and a 180-day comment period, during which every comment was read, numbered, summarized, analyzed, and publicly posted. In the final stage, the state board of education received and reviewed the original comments and related responses and recommendations.

7-PAK Lessons Learned

When reviewing and/or articulating rules, regulations, and policies for students with learning disabilities, states have indicated that it is imperative to do the following:

- Invite stakeholders from all groups—including general education teachers from across disciplines, administrators, special educators, and parents as well as psychologists, social workers, and mental health staff—into conversations from the outset.
- View the RtI initiative as a collaborative endeavor between general education and special education.
- Establish ongoing discussions from the outset and deliberately plan for and allow for a process that cultivates collaboration.
- Avoid underestimating the magnitude of these changes. There may be controversy regarding the transition away from a discrepancy model.
- Plan support for any confusion that may arise around the use of RtI. At first, special educators and general educators alike may misinterpret the RtI approach to intervention as a prereferral for special education services.
- It may be necessary to continually clarify that the purpose of RtI is to provide high quality to all children and that ongoing formative assessment and responsive intervention are considered part of the integrated whole-school structure.
- It is important to be explicit about the roles that educators, psychologists, and others play in implementation and to assist interdisciplinary teams in developing collaborative work structures.

Level of Statewide RtI Engagement

RtI is intended to be a systemic approach to improving student achievement for all students—both at local school levels and at state levels, as outlined by IDEA and NCLB. However, state education agencies (SEAs) are allowed broad leeway in selecting whether to focus RtI implementation at the statewide level or at local levels as well as the approach they take to engagement. Such a systemic approach to increasing achievement calls for a coordinated effort to collective resources and expertise across general and special education and at school, district, and statewide levels. In order to maximize insights gained, dialogue and practice sharing regarding engagement is helpful to state directors and contributes to efficiency relating to engagement for implementation.

7-PAK State Approaches

Levels of statewide RtI engagement vary widely among 7-PAK states. In some states, the level of engagement is small and growing throughout the state. In these states, RtI initiatives are emerging simultaneously at the district level and in individual schools. States in this category provide general information on RtI and best practices to all districts and schools. They then provide more intensive support for RtI initiatives to schools and districts targeted for improvement under NCLB and to schools and districts that elect to participate in RtI.

In other states, RtI is considered a major state initiative; engagement is statewide and large scale. These states use the RtI conceptual framework recommended by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE, 2005) tailored to state needs. There is a coordinated, regionalized structure for RtI implementation based on a system of regional resource centers. RtI is viewed as a broad school reform effort with a sharp focus on improving achievement for all students and is a collaborative effort between general and special education departments. In the statewide efforts, RtI addresses both academic and behavioral domains schoolwide. At least one state in this category has established formal RtI pilot programs with university teams that are conducting research on outcomes. Another state has large numbers of schools already in their third year of implementation and a majority of schools at some level of implementation. States implementing RtI statewide have partnered with institutions of higher education and groups such as the school psychologist association in significant ways to further coordinate and extend support for the RtI conceptual framework throughout the education system.

One method for engaging stakeholders is the use of webcast conversations. Webcast conversations are informal presentations by experts communicating to live audiences of cross-discipline professionals. The webcast conversations are recorded and made accessible to all on a public website and in DVD format. Some states also have engaged interdisciplinary stakeholders through presentations, open forum conversations, and informational DVDs. Additionally, one state RtI summit included more than 70 cross-disciplinary stakeholders to provide shared conversation and a context from further collaboration.

Many states support RtI implementation initiatives through state improvement grants. Some states have awarded significant grant monies to establish regional resource centers, which act as RtI technical assistance resources and as hubs of collaborative cross-discipline work.

Ongoing communication across stakeholder groups from all disciplines is a top priority among all 7-PAK states. States that use a regionalized, coordinated approach also make efforts to communicate clear expectations and consistent messages intentionally and frequently to all stakeholders to ensure consistent implementation. Mechanisms for communication include holding regular meetings and/or open forums, publishing a quarterly newsletter, and using websites.

7-PAK Lessons Learned

States provided the following suggestions for statewide engagement:

- Work across departments, both at the state and local level.
- Plan for strategic engagement of key stakeholders, including school psychologists and institutions of higher education. Coordinating with school improvement and mental health also is crucial to supporting statewide implementation.
- Develop and provide a clear conceptual framework for RtI implementation using available guidelines and experience.
- Communicate frequently and concisely with all stakeholders to ensure clear expectations and consistent messages regarding all aspects of implementation.
- Prepare school principals to facilitate initiatives, develop teams, and use personnel innovatively.
- Be prepared for resistance among entities such as the local bargaining unit or other groups.
- Be prepared to redirect misunderstandings about implications for RtI implementation, specifically regarding the notion of an integrated system that serves all children.

RtI Implementation Strategies

RtI Implementation strategies used by SEAs involve a number of steps, including but not limited to the following: assessing state readiness, providing training and professional development, rolling out implementation, reviewing policies and procedures, deciding on tools and materials for assessments and progress monitoring, and identifying proper data management systems. All strategies for implementation require understanding of RtI core principles, key components, and the notion of a tiered framework for intervention.

As an approach to teaching and learning, RtI constitutes a break with the traditional dual systems of special and general education and, as such, calls for careful planning implementation on a systematic basis as well as attention to the changes it entails.

Following is an overview of these aspects of RtI, drawn from two main sources: (1) *Response to Intervention: NASDSE and CASE White Paper on RtI* (National Association of State Directors of Special Education [NASDSE] & Council of Administrators of Special Education [CASE], 2006); and (2) *Core Principles and Essential Components of RtI* (Witt, 2006), a presentation made at the Response to Intervention Symposium in April 2006.

“RtI is based on the following core principles:

- ... Intervene early.
- Use a multi-tier model of service delivery.
- Use a problem-solving method to make decisions within a multi-tier model.
- Use research-based, scientifically validated interventions/instruction to the extent available.
- Monitor student progress to inform instruction.
- Use data to make decisions.
- Use assessments for three different purposes: (1) ... to identify those who are not making progress at expected rates [through screenings of all children]; (2) to diagnose what children can and cannot do in important academic and behavioral domains; and (3) [to monitor progress] to determine if academic or behavioral interventions are producing desired effects.” (NASDSE & CASE, 2006, p. 3)

Following are the three key components of RtI:

- **High-quality instruction and interventions.** This component is defined as research-based instruction or interventions matched to student needs in order to produce high learning rates for most students (i.e., 80 percent to 85 percent of students). Teachers assess individual student responses and modify instruction, interventions, or goals, depending on the results.
- **Learning rate and level of performance.** These are “the primary sources of information used in ongoing decision making. Learning rate refers to a student’s growth in achievement of behavior competencies over time compared to prior levels of performance and peer growth rates. Level of performance refers to a student’s relative standing on some dimension of achievement or performance compared to expected performance (either criterion- or norm-referenced). Decisions about the use of more or less intense interventions are made using information on learning rate and level. More intense interventions may occur in general education classrooms or pull-out programs supported by general education, compensatory, or special education funding.” (NASDSE & CASE, 2006, p. 3)
- **Educational decisions about intensity and likely duration of interventions.** These decisions “are based on individual student response to instruction across multiple tiers of intervention. Decisions about the necessity of more intense interventions, including eligibility for special education, exit from special education, or other services are informed by data on learning rate and level.” (NASDSE & CASE, 2006, p. 3)

A three-tiered problem-solving framework supports integrated, systemic instruction and intervention. A key mechanism across all tiers is the use of formative evaluation.

- **Tier I.** This is the foundation level that contains the core curriculum (both academic and behavioral). The core curriculum is provided to all students and should be effective with 80 percent to 85 percent of the students. It keeps them on course to reach important benchmarks. Universal screening is used to assess the effectiveness of core instruction.
- **Tier II.** This level of intervention serves approximately 15 percent of students. Interventions are targeted to student needs and include pull-out interventions for small groups (three to four students) with eligibility for intensive services considered if student response is insufficient. Students continue to receive Tier I instruction in addition to Tier II interventions. Based on performance data, students move fluidly between Tier I and Tier II instructional support.
- **Tier III.** This level of intervention serves approximately 5 percent of students. Students receive intensive individual interventions. Intensity of support is adjusted according to response. Students continue to move fluidly between tiers.

7-PAK State Approaches

All 7-PAK states promote the three-tiered model of instruction and intervention in academic and behavioral domains as presented by NASDSE. The framework may be referred to as the Tilly model, tritiered model, integrated systems model, or a comprehensive problem solving and multitiered intervention framework.

All states recognized the importance of strategic involvement of key stakeholders in the planning and implementation stages and indicated that such involvement is required for success. Several 7-PAK states used state improvement grants to establish deliberate implementation plans. One state described generating interest in RtI through wording in grant opportunities, which were tied to broader school reform efforts. This state awarded grants to seven RtI pilot sites for whom ongoing technical assistance is provided. One state spotlights schools implementing RtI as model schools. States approaching RtI in a statewide manner invested in extensive collaboration with university partners. IHE partners support research projects, align preservice teacher preparation programs, and restructure certification expectations and training programs for school personnel to coordinate with RtI efforts. All states encourage sharing practices in open forums such as team training or other specialized training sessions. In addition, development of training networks in regionally based, district-focused structures was common to statewide implementers.

Many states have developed tools for implementation, such as printed training materials, team surveys, data collection instruments for progress monitoring and data team discussions, readiness surveys, and implementation checklists. One state that has extensive experience in statewide implementation cited training for teams as the most important “tool” because it ensures that instructional tools and new knowledge are used in context, which helps strengthen effectiveness and fidelity of implementation.

7-PAK Lessons Learned

According to the states interviewed, successful RtI implementation is supported by the following:

- Participation by key stakeholders during planning and implementation stages.
- Strong administrative support in staff development, instructional integrity, and data collection.
- Clear articulation of administrator and teacher roles and the expectation for collaboration between special education and general education.
- Collaboration with institutions of higher education to align preservice programs.
- In-depth, ongoing professional development (e.g., mentoring, modeling, coaching) with follow-up support.
- Intentional, frequent communication with participant stakeholders to ensure clarity of expectations and fidelity of implementation.

State Education Agency Personnel for RtI

Experts at centers and universities across the country recommend two strategies for success regarding personnel: (1) encourage participation by key stakeholders during both planning and implementation, and (2) implement strategic training of personnel. In particular, administrators and instructional leaders need to provide strong administrative support for staff development, instructional integrity, and data collection. Teachers and specialists need leadership support to develop collaborative approaches (e.g., teaming) to implement RtI schoolwide in addition to receiving in-depth, ongoing professional development.

7-PAK State Approaches

All 7-PAK states agree that it is necessary to help stakeholders understand that RtI requires a collaborative partnership. In other words, RtI should be viewed as a joint general education and special education initiative in service to all children. At least two states have RtI facilitators who are placed in general education curriculum and instruction departments but funded with special education dollars. One state, which has been implementing RtI statewide, noted that it had dedicated enough people in the state office to support the initiative in order for it to be successful both inside and outside the agency. In another state, staff members from policy and professional development units are working collaboratively to align efforts with NCLB guidelines. In a third state, staff members from all bureaus in the department of education have worked collaboratively on projects. Interdisciplinary regional network support teams are responsible for statewide planning and implementation.

7-PAK Lessons Learned

States recommended the following actions related to SEA personnel.

- Always present RtI as a general education and special education collaboration.

- Ensure that RtI is understood to be an initiative that serves all children.
- Place RtI support positions in general education and, if necessary and appropriate, fund with special education dollars.
- Utilize interdisciplinary teams to generate collaborative presentations for RtI activities throughout the process.

Collaboration Between General and Special Education and Institutes of Higher Education

Across the nation, collaboration for shared implementation of RtI initiatives is seen as crucial to successful implementation. The IDEA partnership suggests bringing diverse organizations into a working relationship around common interests; making deliberate efforts to bring stakeholders into the work of state education agencies as allies; and bringing fresh perspectives on persistent problems by uniting decision makers, practitioners, and consumers around a common goal. The IDEA partnership also ensures that when stakeholders become allies with state agencies to improve the existing system, great things become possible.

7-PAK State Approaches

All 7-PAK states indicate that collaboration between general education and special education is a crucial component for successful RtI implementation. Collaboration with general education, psychologists, and institutions of higher education in the RtI implementation effort seems to parallel the overall level of RtI engagement statewide. States that are implementing RtI as a state initiative seem to have established a closer integration with cross-discipline stakeholders and view facilitating collaboration as necessary and a key to success.

One form of collaboration includes using a cross-departmental approach at the SEA. In this approach, the SEA ensures that all RtI presentations throughout the state are presented by joint general education-special education teams. In addition, all RtI meetings are attended by representatives from both departments. This approach is intended to develop an interdisciplinary perspective and to communicate that the state department is working collaboratively. Some state departments have placed special education within the general education curriculum and instruction departments. In at least two states, the special education department funds an RtI facilitator position housed in the curriculum and instruction department.

Another form of collaboration involves working with institutions of higher education in various capacities. For example, in one state, 11 universities have been awarded grants to undertake a review of their internal structure and align program offerings to current RtI practices. The intention is to adequately prepare providers such as school psychologists and mental health specialists to meet the needs of all children in the RtI context. The universities in that state that are certified to train school psychologists have adopted the state RtI framework as the organizing structure for their training programs. In addition, all intern school psychologists in the state are evaluated based on their performance in conducting activities within the state RtI framework. Further, due to the key role that school psychologist play in RtI, the state's school psychologist association has adopted the state's RtI framework as the conceptual model for delivering training

and professional development to their members on RtI. In this state, two statewide conferences are held each year to provide additional information on various components of the framework and to allow sharing from districts that are involved in the process of implementation or that are interested in beginning that process. One final effort to collaborate in this state includes a statewide RtI council, which coordinates and disseminates information, resources, products, and training about the state's RtI framework.

7-PAK Lessons Learned

In regard to collaboration between general education and special education and with institutions of higher education, all states concur on the following:

- RtI must be seen by general educators as a validated framework for serving all children.
- RtI must be seen as a general education initiative.
- Efforts to establish collaborative partnerships must be ongoing, consistent, and allow for the entire RtI planning and implementation process.
- Support must be anticipated and provided for any concerns about the loss of the discrepancy model or concerns about future employment by various educator groups.
- RtI support positions should be placed in general education and utilize innovative means to generate collaborative attendance and presentation for RtI activities throughout the process.

Technical Assistance for RtI

RtI is intended to provide all students with opportunities to achieve through the use of research validated practices. RtI implementation requires the use of many new instructional and assessment components as well as new approaches for systemic education (e.g., collaborative decision making based on data regarding student response to instruction and intervention). This enormous shift in paradigm and practices demands a strategic cross-discipline approach to professional development.

Professional development needs should be assessed and training designed so that instructional leaders, general and special education teachers, school psychologists, and mental health workers can obtain the knowledge and skills needed to implement RtI reliably and validly. The quality of professional development and preservice teacher preparation programs determine the extent to which RtI is implemented successfully. NASDSE recommends that successful RtI professional development must address three dimensions: (1) beliefs and attitudes, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills.

7-PAK State Approaches

Across 7-PAK states, technical assistance has played a large role in successful RtI implementation. States that have implemented RtI statewide utilize a regionalized system for providing technical assistance. At least two states use a training and technical assistance network approach. One state also provides specific support for elementary and secondary school administrators in addition to

regional network support. The network approach utilizes regional service teams, which consist of consultants and university partners, to serve multiple school districts. Professional development is provided using a trainer-of-trainers model to establish an infrastructure for training that is intended to reach all participants. Network support also includes RtI training modules that address RtI critical features and allow for delivery of consistent messages and clear expectations across the state.

Other states deliver technical assistance through the use of webcast conversations or DVD lectures. This strategy makes presentations by leading experts and conversations among stakeholders accessible to wide audiences. Several states have interactive websites that offer information and support to stakeholders. Ongoing coaching and mentoring also form a part of the support. The audience for assistance includes general education, special education, Title I, and English as a second language staff.

In one state, one of the regional resource centers has been designated as a focus center for RtI activities and has been charged with developing professional development, resources, and other products (e.g., an informational DVD) that are disseminated to regional centers and districts across the state. In addition, an updated website will soon be available and will allow districts to access tools, e-learning, modules, resources, and training information. Another state has created a statewide RtI council to coordinate and disseminate information, resources, products, and training statewide.

7-PAK Lessons Learned

States identified the following lessons learned related to RtI technical assistance:

- The importance of training cannot be underestimated.
- During professional development, be sure to:
 - Address the roles of administrations, principals, and teachers in special education and general education.
 - Provide information for developing beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and skills about:
 - The use of progress monitoring tools.
 - Organizing, understanding, and using data gathered from progress monitoring to make instructional decisions.
 - Collaboration with institutions of higher education to align preservice programs and professional training programs.
 - Provide ongoing support through the use of mentoring, modeling, coaching, and follow-up.

Cultural and Linguistic Considerations for RtI: Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Many 7-PAK state directors expressed urgency regarding how cultural and linguistic considerations play into RtI frameworks for English language learners and students from diverse backgrounds. In a recent position paper, the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt, 2005) cites the work of Klinger et al. (2005) and states that “educational systems must become culturally responsive in order for culturally and linguistically diverse students’ needs to be met” (p. 2). This position paper also suggests various principles and questions for reflection and discussion as educational teams sort through these issues. Specifically, it states that “researchers must become aware of how their assumptions and understandings about the role of culture in learning shape the questions addressed in their studies and the ways in which data collection is carried out” (p. 2). In addition, the paper recommends that educators engage in dialogue about how culture mediates learning, inquire into the cultural relevance of task criteria, and examine notions about disability and culture within their full sociocultural and historical contexts.

Following are some of the questions from the NCCRESt (2005) position paper:

- “How do we account for culture when designing interventions and conducting research?
- What practices can we adopt in the design and reporting of research to make visible the cultural assumptions of researchers?
- How can we design research that transcends the view of culture as independent variable and instead relies on practice-based models of culture?” (p. 2)
- “How do school literacy practices interrelate with students’ social practices, cultures, and differential power?” (p. 4)
- “When we observe in classrooms:
 - What do we notice about the nature of the relationship between a teacher and students?
 - How are students supported?
 - How does the teacher promote interest and motivation?
 - What can we conclude about the culture(s) of the classroom?
 - What can we conclude about students’ opportunities to learn?
 - How can we make sure that instruction is culturally responsive to all children?” (p. 4)

Conclusion

As a schoolwide method of service delivery, RtI is intended to transform widespread student failure into success in academic, social-emotional, and behavioral domains for all students. RtI demands a well-integrated system that connects general, compensatory, gifted, and special education to provide high-quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' needs.

Denton, Vaughn and Fletcher (2003), authorities in the field of RtI, provide the following statement:

Real change will require the combined efforts of researchers, educational practitioners, teacher educators and policymakers. Those of us who care deeply about the education of students for whom learning is difficult have a clear choice. We can continue to implement programs in which large numbers of students are allowed to fail, or we can collaborate in initiatives that have the potential to result in the widespread implementation of effective instructional practices. If models for the identification of students who are provided with special services are to take into account their responsiveness to high-quality classroom instruction and intervention, effective practices must go beyond the research setting and be routinely integrated into everyday practices. (p. 209)

As an approach to teaching and learning, RtI constitutes a break with the traditional dual systems of special and general education. It offers a break in traditional ways of thinking about serving students that crosses the traditional restrictive programmatic structures. RtI is a reallocation or redirection of resources. It also involves a great deal of change for the stakeholders who are invested in the previous model which was very compliance oriented.

The magnitude of this shift calls for careful planning and implementation on a systematic basis. Equally important, this transformation calls for explicitly addressing the difficulties in the cultural changes inherent in such a shift. The dialogue and collaborative efforts regarding RtI implementation constitute stalwart efforts by 7-PAK states to support all dimensions of this significant educational transformation.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Summary of State Responses to RtI Interview Questions

The following table summarizes responses to response to the RtI interviews conducted with 7-PAK states in December 2006 and January 2007. It is not a transcript of responses but rather a summary of statements from the interviewees.

1. What approach(s) is your state taking with regard to rules and regulations for students with learning disabilities?
<p><i>California</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The state education agency is currently reviewing rules and regulations for determining eligibility for learning disabilities.• Webcast conversations have recently started. There will be five “live” conversations, which include representatives from all stakeholders groups, including teachers and psychologists. These webcasts will be archived and accessible for others to review.• Next steps include convening a work group to look at regulatory processes.• The state education agency is working to intentionally and clearly establish origin for RtI in the general education curriculum.
<p><i>Florida</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Districts are currently required to use a severe discrepancy formula or “process” assessment for the identification of students with severe learning disabilities.• Districts may use, and are encouraged to develop and use, RtI procedures to develop and implement effective interventions and to identify students with severe learning disabilities.• The Florida Department of Education will be sending a memo to all district superintendents, directors of special education, and student services directors identifying “interim” procedures to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The memo will clarify the problems associated with the use of the discrepancy/processing approach and indicate that the use of RtI methods would be required in the future.
<p><i>Illinois</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The State Board of Education passed legislation (December 2006) stating evaluations “shall use” scientifically based research interventions. This will be reviewed by Joint Committee on Agency Rules for final approval.• Steps preceding legislation: Illinois established a very transparent, responsive, and inclusive process, which utilized a detailed system for documenting and replying to stakeholders’ concerns. (For details, please see responses to Question 12.)

New York

- The state education agency is currently drafting regulations to include the use of an RtI process to determine learning disability eligibility and alternative research-based procedures (alignment of NCLB and IDEA). It also is allowing the use of alternative research-based procedures and is incorporating federal language relating to additional procedures to determine learning disabilities.
- Currently, the state education agency is drafting regulations to align with IDEA regulations. It is working on state statutory changes for IDEA alignment for 2007. It already has included language that allows RtI and moves away from the discrepancy model.
- Priority is developing an understanding of relationship of learning disabilities to RtI. (There is a misconception that RtI begins upon referral.) These interventions must already be in place based on information collected all along and must be incorporated into basic school systems: what it is and how it's going to work. The following must be determined: time frame for referral, when to stop or not to stop referral.
- Some confusion still exists regarding who has responsibility for RtI (general education and special education), timing, and logistics of referral. Developing an understanding that RtI is a general education initiative and not just a prereferral step for special education is crucial to success.
- This is a very large change—"the concept of what will we require vs. what we will allow." There is confusion surrounding these changes and concerns about implications regarding changes in the roles of special educators, psychologists, and general education teachers.

Ohio

- The state education agency is currently revising Operating Standards for Students with Disabilities, including eligibility criteria. It anticipates that updated rules will be effective by July 1, 2008.
- It is convening a task force after January 1, 2007, to review and revise Ohio's criteria for disability and further outline state policy on RtI implementation.
- Currently, instructions are in place for districts that may encounter conflicts between current rules and federal regulations (ODE rules in Chapter 3301-51 of the Ohio Administrative Code).
- Regarding the learning disability discussion, details must be worked out for decision making around interventions, including the number and length of interventions.

Pennsylvania

- The state education agency is currently engaged in developing and adopting criteria for determining severe learning disabilities.
- It is looking at special education regulations for changes that will be made in conjunction with IDEA.
- It will add to revisions of Chapter 14 (Pennsylvania special education regulations).
- It has held three to four public roundtables/focus groups in order to collect input on RtI. It will complete this task in first weeks of January 2007 and then move on to set next steps.

Texas

- The state education agency is in the process of drafting rules for learning disability eligibility.
- It anticipates completion of RtI guidelines in 2007–08.
- It is making a concentrated and extensive effort to work with all stakeholders and enlist all in conversation.
- Conversation and cross-discipline engagement is seen as critical for successful ongoing implementation.

2. Please describe the level of engagement around RtI practices in your state.

California

- Engagement of RtI practices are small but growing throughout the state on district levels and in schools. Right now, it is primarily within districts—not statewide but includes both large and small districts.
- Through the state improvement grant, there is a model practices component. The state education agency is able to look at implementation at different sites.
- It has established an effective open forum (meeting setting) for discussion of what they are doing, sharing practices, how they got started, what they are doing, and how they are doing it.
- *Special Edge*, a quarterly newsletter, provides ongoing communication and updates throughout state.
- Districts/schools to watch include the following: Glen County, Elk Grove Unified School District, Long Beach (large school), Hesperia.

Florida

- The state education agency has presented information at state conferences (directors, supplemental instruction, curriculum and instruction) for the past three years.
- It disseminated a technical assistance paper on RtI in 2005.
- The Florida Association of School Psychologists, Florida Association of School Social Workers, and the State Network of Association Presidents has made RtI a training priority for the past two years.
- Many school districts have designated RtI initiatives, demonstration/pilot schools, and staff dedicated to those initiatives.
- RtI is not a new concept to district personnel in Florida. The basics of RtI are understood. The “consensus” stage of implementation and engagement has moved along very well.
- At the present time, districts are seeking implementation and infrastructure strategies. Districts no longer have to be “convinced” to use RtI—they need the support to create the infrastructure and to implement the strategies.

Illinois

- There is strong engagement and strong commitment. RtI is considered a major state initiative in Illinois.

- The state education agency has awarded grants to four regional centers in order to increase the capacity of school districts to provide early intervention services to at-risk students and students with disabilities.
- This coordinated regionalized system, Illinois ASPIRE (Alliance for School-Based Problem-Solving and Intervention Resources in Education), is responsible for engaging in activities that support the following:
 - The delivery of standardized research-based professional development in problem solving, RtI, scientifically based reading instruction, and standards-aligned instruction and assessment.
 - The increased participation of parents in decision making.
 - The incorporation of the professional development content into institutions of higher education, general and special education, preservice, and graduate curricula.
 - The activities that evaluate the effectiveness of project.

New York

- The state education agency has convened stakeholders, including organizations representing teachers (general and special education), school administrators, school psychologists, reading teachers, learning disability association, school boards, higher education teacher preparation institutions, parents, and general education staff from within the state education agency. These workgroups gather recommendations as they develop policy and regulations in this area. In addition, the state education agency plans to ask these groups to provide assistance in developing a guidance document and professional development that will further assist local schools with implementing this process.
- It is planning to bring workgroups back in January 2007 and continue to speak to groups (i.e., psychologists, technical centers, and institutions of higher education) about RtI in general.
- In January 2007, it plans to review draft regulations, speaking on RtI to various stakeholders groups and institution of higher education forums.

Ohio

- There is a very strong level of engagement.
- Conceptual framework for RtI is called Ohio Integrated Systems Model (OISM), which reflects components described in the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) publication titled *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation*.
- Currently, 137 school buildings are in their third year of implementing the OISM framework as part of a state improvement grant.
- Currently, 229 school districts in the state are involved in some level of implementation of the OISM framework.
- So far, 11 Ohio universities have been awarded grants to undertake a review of their internal structure and program offerings as related service providers to meet the needs of all children.
- All 9 Ohio universities certified to train school psychologists have adopted the OISM framework as the organizing structure for their training programs.

- All intern school psychologists in the state are evaluated based on their performance in conducting activities within the OISM framework.
- Due to the key role that school psychologist play in RtI, the Ohio School Psychologist Association has adopted the OISM framework as the conceptual model for delivering training and professional development to their members on RtI.
- All 16 special education regional resource centers (SERRCs) provide training on OISM to the districts in their region. They also have three tri-lead OISM coaches who coordinate OISM activities with the SERRCs in three regions of the state in order to ensure that all activities are coordinated statewide.
- A statewide OISM Council has been created to provide a statewide support network that can coordinate and disseminate information, resources, products, and training about the OISM framework.
- One of the SERRCs has been designated as the Innovation Center for Enhancement of OISM activities and has been charged with developing professional development, resources, and other products, such as the OISM informational DVD that has been disseminated to districts across the state.
- An OISM website will soon be available. It will allow districts to access tools, e-learning, modules, resources, and training information.
- Two statewide OISM conferences are held each year to provide additional information on various components of the framework and to allow sharing from districts that are involved in the process of implementation or are interested in beginning that process.

Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania's model for RtI is a comprehensive problem solving, multitiered intervention strategy including early identification and early intervention for all students who are at risk—either academically or behaviorally.
- Pennsylvania has done a lot of broad level of engagement around RtI.
- The state education agency is moving forward to support schools and implementation of RtI to improve student performance.
- It is encouraging schools to implement RtI within the broader school reform package in order to improve effort and learning achievement for all students.
- Pennsylvania's perspective is that it is important to focus on all students while they focus on meeting NCLB requirements.
- RtI Core Team has technical assistance consultants and a university consultant model. The team is called the Pennsylvania Technical and Training Assistance Network (PATTAN).
- An RtI model was identified, and seven site pilots were funded through state improvement grants. (Interest was generated through the state improvement grants.)
- RtI implementation framework includes an RtI advisory committee and works in a statewide training model. There are 10 RtI training modules, with each module addressing an RtI critical feature. There are 29 intermediate training teams. These teams all have multiple school districts identified using a trainer-of-trainers model. The state is divided up into 29 intermediate units (IUs) and 501 school districts. Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are their own IUs. IU teams provide technical assistance.

Texas

- Texas held a statewide RtI summit, which included 70+ cross-discipline participants from all stakeholders (including parents, special education teachers, and general education teachers).
- This summit provided a springboard for conversation across stakeholder groups, which is critical for success.
- A website has been created to provide resources for RtI guidance, discussion points, and links for all stakeholders as a central point.
- Helpful Links: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/rti/> and <http://rt3home.texasreading.org/3tier/>
- For widespread engagement, conversation involving all stakeholders is critical to success. Creating opportunities for stakeholders to discuss and learn from each other as well as share ownership generates enthusiasm and breaks down barriers.

3. What RtI implementation strategies/processes have been utilized in your state?

California

- (Please see responses to Question 1.)

Florida

- The following strategies/process have been used:
 - Presentations at state-level conferences for the past three years
 - Technical assistance paper
 - Regional training (Institute for Small and Rural Districts)
 - District-level training
 - State-level task force on severe learning disabilities
 - Statewide project: Florida Problem-Solving/RtI Statewide Project
 - Website
 - Webcasts
 - Coordination with state-level initiatives: Reading First, Positive Behavior Support

Illinois

- There is standard, broad implementation. Roles of administrators, principals, and teachers in special education and general education are addressed. There is collaboration with higher education with at least one Illinois university.

New York

- Some individual districts are already implementing RtI, especially those funded by Reading First under NCLB. Some of the professional development networks are already providing technical support and workshops on RtI, using consultants in progress monitoring, student assessment, and literacy (not much on math yet).
- State Board of Regents is involved in discussions. Special education and general education are discussed across deputies through the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) and the Office of Elementary, Middle, and

Secondary Education (EMSC).

- NCLB reauthorization must be aligned with IDEA.
- The state education agency began by engaging general education colleagues and works very closely with the State Board of Regents. They are working together on NCLB reauthorization. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) needs to be aligned with special education.

Ohio

- The state improvement grant initiated the implementation of this framework in Ohio. The development of the training network (as indicated in Question 2), as well as the strategic involvement of key stakeholders (e.g., school psychologists, higher education, school improvement, mental health) has been crucial in supporting the statewide implementation of this framework.

Pennsylvania

- The wording of the grant generated interest in RtI process. Seven grants were awarded for 7 RtI pilot sites. University partners are Lehigh University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- RtI implementation framework includes RtI Advisory Committee work, which is a statewide training model.
- The state education agency provides training through 29 intermediate training teams (intermediate units). These are regional service teams, which all have multiple school districts identified. IU teams provide technical assistance.
- State is divided up into 29 IU (intermediate units) and 501 school districts. Pittsburg and Philadelphia are their own IU.
- A trainer-of-trainers model is being used.
- Each RtI training module addresses an RtI critical feature. Pennsylvania has 14 developed RtI training modules. Some of these are as follows: (1) Intro: A Brief Overview Linking RtI to Other State Improvement Efforts (1 hr to full day), (2) Principal Module, (3) Universal Screening Module, (4) Data Analysis Teaming Module, (5) Cores Program Module, (6) Tier 2 and Tier 3 Standard Protocol Intervention Module, (7) Progress Monitoring Module, (8) RtI Schoolwide Module, (9) Positive Behavior System Module, and (10) Eligibility Determination Module.
- Focus is on all staff—general education, special education, Title I, ESL—to get them to take an active role in student assessment and instruction. Getting all involved is critical.

Texas

- The state offers a variety of services.
- Focusing on RtI is a natural fit with early intervention services, behavior/discipline programs, and other associated concepts. The state is referring to this model as Braided Services.
- Agency RtI facilitator will be in Curriculum Division, funded with special education dollars.
- The Vaughn-Cross Center for Reading and Language Arts, at the University of Texas, is a key player in the work of the state.
- The three-tiered model for implementation is being used.

4. Please describe the models, assessments, and tools you have utilized in your implementation process

California

- Most districts and schools are primarily focused on the three-tiered model, the Tilly model.
- RtI must begin in general education departments and be seen as a general education initiative.
- RtI will always be seen as a special education initiative if special education department takes the lead.

Florida

- Model: The state education agency funded a multiyear, statewide project on Problem-Solving/RtI. The primary goals of the project are as follows:
 - Development of instructional modules
 - Statewide training coordinated by three regional coordinators/trainers
 - Creation of demonstration sites/schools funded by the DOE and coordinated by building-level coaches
 - Evaluation model to assess impact of PSM/RtI in demonstration sites
- Assessments: The state education agency began funding statewide projects focusing on curriculum-based assessment and curriculum-based measurement more than 10 years ago. As a result of that early work and the more recent work of the Florida Center for Reading Research and the Florida Positive Behavior Support Project, Florida uses the following tools:
 - Statewide administration of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
 - Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) norms in reading through Grade 8
 - Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
 - Schoolwide Information System (SWIS) data collection for student behavior
 - Progress Monitoring Reporting Network (PMRN): a statewide database used to organize and report reading data.

Illinois

- The state is in different places regarding implementation process. Illinois began initially by seeking buy-in through a “this is great idea for all who would like to learn” invitation (an invitation to join in).
- Curriculum-based interventions and progress monitoring tools (DIBELS, AIMSweb formative assessment system) are used.

New York

- The state education agency does not have an implementation process as of yet. It intends to include recommendations on these areas in its guidance and professional development. For example, it may encourage schools with effective practices to share their work and experiences with other schools targeted for improvement (employing the strategies as per the new state professional development grant). It is not far along in making recommendations on curriculum or methodologies but would rather provide information and describe best practices. It refrains from heavy dictating of procedures.

- Under IDEA, schools that have been identified as in need of intervention (under NCLB improvement) may receive more direction from the state.

Ohio

- Model: The model (OISM) that has been adopted is a systems model that has the following core components:
 - A belief that all children can be taught effectively.
 - A focus on a unified system of education, which includes general, remedial, and special education.
 - A focus on both academics and behavior. (Research has indicated that addressing both results in greater improvement in both areas.)
 - A strong belief in the importance of prevention and early intervention.
 - A three-tiered model of service delivery, which provides a strong core foundation for all students, and increasingly intense interventions, based on student need. In Ohio, the most intensive tier is not considered to be special education because any student can require intensive intervention for a period of time without being determined eligible for special education. As student would be considered for intense individualized intervention provided within special education only if the student requires significant supports in order to respond successfully to an intervention and these supports cannot be provided solely within the general education environment.
 - The use of a problem-solving method to make decisions within the three-tier model.
 - The use of research-based, scientifically validated intervention/instruction to the extent available.
 - The importance of monitoring student progress in order to inform instruction.
 - The use of data to make decisions at the district, building, classroom and student levels.
- Assessments: Within this framework, assessment is used for three purposes:
 - Screening of all students to identify any student who is not making expected progress.
 - Diagnostic testes to further identify specific academic or behavior skills and deficits.
 - Progress monitoring to determine if an intervention is having the desired effect.

Within this framework the primary purpose of assessment is to inform instruction—not to establish eligibility.
- Tools: A significant amount of tools have been developed to assist with the implementation of this framework, including training materials, team surveys, and implementation checklists. However, the most important “tool” is the training for teams to actually implement the process. The tools taken out of context could still be used by districts; but without training and the understanding of how the tools relate to the other key components of the integrated systems framework, the effectiveness of the tools would likely be weakened.

Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania’s model for RtI is a comprehensive, problem solving, multitiered intervention strategy including early identification and early intervention for all students who are at risk—either academically or behaviorally.
- The state education agency is encouraging schools to implement RtI within the broader school reform package in order to improve effort

and learning achievement for all students.

- Pennsylvania’s perspective is that it is important to focus on all students while focusing on meeting NCLB requirements.
- RtI Core Team has technical assistance consultants and a university consultant model. The team is called Pennsylvania Technical and Training Assistance Network (PATTAN).
- The model closely parallels the NASDSE model. There are three tiers: Tier 1 is schoolwide with universal screening in reading, math, behavior; data-analysis teaming; differentiated instruction in regular classroom. Tier 2 is targeted to small groups of students at academic risk and encourages use of standard protocols. Tier 3 is focused on intensive intervention for students at great risk—risk that could lead to eligibility determination for those students who are not responsive.
- Assessments: Grades 3–11 use Pennsylvania Benchmark Assessment; Grades K-3 use DIBELS.
- RtI training modules contain references and criteria and allow choice in screening and diagnostic assessment tool—so they are not stuck if they want to use it.
- Each module addresses tools and criteria for implementation.

Texas

- Spotlight Schools Program, see website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/rti/> and <http://rt3home.texasreading.org/3tier/>
- Regional Service Center will provide trainings, support, and technical assistance to districts.
- There is a concerted effort to hold many conversations with all stakeholders. This is critical to success.
- Texas has funded an agency facilitator position for RtI.

5. Please describe the professional development activities you have provided to administrators and teachers to support implementation of RtI practices.

California

- In the California Department of Education, Special Education is centered in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction as one of seven areas. This is important because it has set the tone for RtI to be a collaborative, general education-based initiative.
- The state education agency sponsored RtI webcast series (available on DVD) with topics such as “RtI, Why Now?” “RtI: What is RtI?” “Administrative Issues in RtI,” “Instruction in RtI Systems,” and “RtI: Getting Started.”

Florida

- The state education agency has funded a multiyear, statewide implementation project to conduct training to all districts in the state. Focused training and a statewide evaluation study will be conducted in approximately 10 percent to 20 percent of the 67 school districts in the state. (See response to Question 3.)
- It will support these activities through the discretionary project grant.

Illinois

- The state education agency created training teams for the state personnel development grant.
- It used IDEA discretionary money.
- State funding for staff development will be required.

New York

- As noted in responses to previous questions, the state education agency will engage its networks to provide technical assistance and professional development to schools.
- As previously noted, the state's various professional development networks (both special and general education.) will be the main vehicle to support the field implementation of this initiative.
- The state is in the process of reviewing and bringing together special education and general education resources. Special education training and resource centers (SETRCs) provide special education training funded thru IDEA discretionary funds. Bilingual Technical Assistance Teams (BTACs) are striving for more coherence to avoid one school with two to three efforts in place. Special education networks are being trained in RtI and PBIS

Ohio

- Training
 - Since RtI is primarily implemented in the regular education environment, the importance of training cannot be understated. The implementation of RtI changes the role of general educators, as well as special educators, in significant ways and would require both to be able to implement progress monitoring tools; organize, understand and use the data gathered from progress monitoring to make instructional decision; and provide standardized implementation of evidence-based instruction and deliver these interventions with fidelity.
 - Although training has primarily been provided through SERRC network, training also has been supported and provided by Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA) and the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators (OASSA).
 - Many Ohio educators have acquired skills for implementation as evidenced by the widespread integrated systems model and Reading First initiative in significant number of buildings and districts. Skills required to implement these practices have been outlined in Ohio's new proposed educator and principal standards in order to build expectations of skills as necessary for all educators.
- New Educational Regional Service Systems will be developed in 16 regions. They are required to address how they will support an integrated systems model, which should ensure further training and support in the implementation of this framework.

Pennsylvania

- (Please see earlier responses.)

Texas

- There is widespread skepticism both among special educator and general educator groups regarding the use of this model.
- Reading First schools laid groundwork for RtI.

6. What policy changes need(ed) to occur in order for the state to move forward with a statewide RtI initiative?

California

- The first policy must be that general education must embrace RtI first and it has to go into the NCLB reauthorization language. Component parts are in NCLB where scientifically based research strategies are discussed.
- The state education agency must begin by convening stakeholders across departments and areas.
- It must model this collaboration at the state level first.
- RtI must also be tied into curriculum and, therefore, must also be considered at the outset in curriculum adoptions. Publishers must be encouraged to offer intervention options.

Florida

- The process must be launched as a general education initiative.
- Existing initiatives (e.g., Reading First, Positive Behavior Support, Low-Performing Schools) must be included.
- Student academic and behavior outcome data must be used in the program evaluation model as the primary measure of impact.
- Effectiveness of core instruction must be a primary focus.
- Policies must support training and infrastructure development.
- Policies must support the use of technology to facilitate implementation.

Illinois

- (For state legislation, see response to question 1).

New York

- At this time, the state education agency is focusing on proposing regulatory changes.
- It is important to establish a more systematic approach and explain proposed changes and reasoning.
- It is important to ensure that the state education agency provides a clear and consistent message and promotes the approach that this is a joint effort between special education and general education at the state and local levels.
- The state education agency is ensuring that all stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in providing their recommendations regarding RtI, and that it is able to identify and benefit from other initiatives such as PBIS and Reading First.

Ohio

- The biggest challenges at state level is the perception that OISM/RtI is a special education initiative; this is less true in districts that funded OISM activities with general education funds because they see that it impacts all learners.
- Some educators have difficulty viewing the three-tier framework as a conceptual model and seem to see it as a program. This perception hinders their ability to see how initiatives can enhance an already well established framework. As a result, attempts are made to create something “new,” which is often confusing to districts that have asked the state to do a better job of connecting state initiatives.
- It is important to take into consideration the following:
 - Parameters around criteria for determining effective intervention models (e.g., length of interventions, time limits for decision making, definitions of adequate progress).
 - Definition of “appropriate instruction” (required to identify student with any disability condition), including how this applies to students new to the district, students who attend private schools. and students who are home-schooled.
 - Criteria for determining how districts can provide “data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals” (which is required to identify a student with a severe learning disability) for students new to the district, students who attend private schools, and students who are home-schooled.

Pennsylvania

- The need to see the RtI initiative as an all-education initiative for all students—regular and general education, remedial, and special education—is a challenge.
- In particular, it has been difficult to help people differentiate between RtI and the former Instructional Support Teams (special education regulatory model) and to move from a student-specific to a whole-school initiative.
- There are policies inhibiting the implementation of RtI. You have to really amend, identify and try to get it passed. For example, Title I or special education policies might hinder the innovative role within RtI.
- One suggestion is to use earlier meeting dollars to support the implementation of some of these processes.
- Involvement of all stakeholders should be emphasized early and throughout the implementation process.
- Language should be common, not foreign to any of the key stakeholder groups. Such communication is critical.
- Linkages between key initiatives should be emphasized. All those programs work across departments and work to keep the integration of school improvement initiatives together.

Texas

- The state is providing guidance for RtI through leadership and technical assistance.

7. How has your state agency organized department personnel to address/support RtI practices?

California

- The chief deputy is very supportive. Special education is placed in the Curriculum and Instruction branch as one of seven areas.
- The expectation has been established that all are participating together around RtI issues, which impacts support in a positive way.
- All presentations on RtI are copresented collaboratively between general education and special education. All requests for presentations are responded to in a copresentation manner.

Florida

- Department personnel have not been organized differently. However, department personnel must appropriately incorporate the PSM/RtI principles into the focus of their particular program area.
- A state level, task force has convened to guide the rules revision process. One state-level individual is responsible for the coordination of the PSM/RtI process for the state education agency.

Illinois

- Illinois perspective on personnel is that they understand RtI is a special education and general education initiative—a collaborative partnership—and staff have been working together.
- One person (specially funded position) has spent bulk of time focused on RtI for several years.

New York

- Staff from the Policy and Professional Development units, with the collaboration and assistance from staff from Reading First and School Improvement (NCLB-driven offices) are working together to implement the RtI initiative.
- Technical assistance network: The state's interdisciplinary units play an important role in providing ongoing sustained help.

Ohio

- The state education agency has not yet dedicated enough people in the office to support this initiative in order for it to be successful both inside and outside the agency.
- Work on OISM/RtI is usually an “add on” to another full-time role, which unfortunately can cause key pieces to sometimes fall through the cracks and also results in missed opportunities to build partnerships within their own agency around this initiative. The state education agency wants to be as strategic internally as it has been externally in promoting this initiative.

Pennsylvania

- The SEA is responsible for any regulatory compliance role.

- It has tried to involve staff members from all of the bureaus—the Bureau of Special Education, Bureau of Teaching and Learning, Bureau of Accountability—so that they work collaboratively and all are involved in the process. Also, PATTAN is responsible for statewide planning and implementation when the agency rolls them out, so it tried to get involvement through that process.

Texas

- The Learning Disability Association is skeptical of the model.
- This skepticism relates to concerns about implementation of the new concepts.
- They are holding dialogue to share information and help develop understandings.

8. How, specifically, has your state approached collaboration between general and special education leaders?

California

- The collaboration across special education and general education is modeled and supported in trainings.
- Presentations are done across special education and general education.
- The state education agency needs to model and promote this as a general education initiative.

Florida

- The PSM/RtI initiative involves the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services as well as the Office of School Improvement (general education side).
- For the past two years, the state education agency has sent a team to the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities national meeting and to the Innovations Conference comprised of individuals from the RtI project; Exceptional Education; Student Services; School Improvement; Reading First; Just Read, Florida; and Positive Behavior Support.
- The State Advisory Committee has been aware of and briefed on all activities involving PSM/RtI

Illinois

- Not covered.

New York

- Deputy Commissioners from both VESID and EMSC are considering a joint presentation to the Board of Regents on this topic, and the staffs are working together on the initiative. The state education agency is also stressing the general education core of RtI at presentations to school leaders and others in the field.
- Including general education at the federal and state levels is strong. Assistant Secretary Hagar and others are clear and supportive;

reauthorization of NCLB is congruent.

- Dialogue must take place to ensure at other levels.
- Higher education discussions taking place regarding incorporating preservice and inservice at the higher education level.

Ohio

- The state education agency has collaborated with Office of School Improvement and the regional school improvement facilitators in each region of the state, the SERRCs, the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators, Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators, State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC), and the Ohio Mental Health Network for School Success in order to focus on the academic and behavioral needs of all students within this framework.

Pennsylvania

- It is important to invite people from all the bureaus in the department. Having curriculum and instruction and special education from the intermediate units is really critical.
- In addition, it is helpful to target training modules in regular education as opposed to having them in special education.

Texas

- Education service centers provide technical assistance for the state.
- Three-tier models for both mathematics and literacy are being utilized.

9. What approach is your state taking regarding providing technical assistance and data collection?

California

- Videos
- Conversations
- *Special Edge* Newsletter
- Various presentation at the state conference on curriculum

Florida

- Technical assistance:
 - Technical assistance papers
 - Interactive CD-ROM training
 - Webcasts

- Regional coordinators/trainers
- School-level coaches in demonstration sites
- Technology support
- Statewide training
- Regional technical assistance meetings
- Data collection:
 - 36 schools comprise the initial demonstration sites. Each of these sites has committed to contribute to the data collection process.
 - The state education agency has a data clearinghouse in which all of the student outcome, demographic, and district-based data are warehoused. The clearinghouse data will be used in the statewide evaluation study.

Illinois

- The big Illinois projects are ASPIRE (Alliance for School-Based Problem-Solving and Intervention Resources in Education) and Flexible Service Delivery System (FLEX) service, which include delivery, data collection, and data reporting.
- ASPIRE staff people are spending time on professional development—presentation as well as coaching.

New York

- The state education agency plans to use the various NYSED-supported networks to provide technical assistance and professional development. All of the NYSED staff will become knowledgeable on RtI as they move forward.

Ohio

- Although training has been provided primarily through SERRC network, training also has been supported and provided by OAESA (Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators) and OASSA (Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators).
- Many Ohio educators have acquired skills for implementation as evidenced by widespread integrated systems model and Reading First initiative in significant number of buildings and districts; skills required to implement these practices have been outlined in Ohio’s new proposed educator and principal standards in order to build expectations of skills as necessary for all educators.
- New Educational Regional Service Systems, to be developed in 16 regions, are required to address how they will support and integrated systems model. This requirement should ensure further training and support in the implementation of this framework.
- With regard to data collection: Evaluation of the state incentive grant is conducted through an evaluator at the University of Cincinnati, and the final three-year evaluation data will be available at the end of this year. The SERRCs are primarily responsible for monitoring the integrity of implementation of OISM. Districts and buildings must complete the OISM Implementation Evaluation Tool (IET), which is designed to provide an assessment of the extent to which participating schools are implementing the model. These implementation data are used along with student performance data (DIBELS, Schoolwide Information System, State Achievement Measures) to examine the effects of OISM implementation on student performance over time.

Pennsylvania

- (Please see notes about technical assistance model in the answers to Question 2.)
- Modules identify options that can be used to generate data required for implementation.
- The state education agency is still working on tools specific to data collection on RtI implementation. These tools are being developed in pilot schools.

Texas

- Spotlight Schools Project is an extensive effort.

10. How does the state plan to monitor the integrity of implementation in an RtI system?

California

- Part of their monitoring verification review is incorporated in special education self-review.
- They are monitoring and using the forums to discuss how they could use RtI.

Florida

- The PSM/RtI Project has developed integrity-monitoring tools that will be disseminated during both the statewide and demonstration site training.
- Building-level coaches will monitor the integrity of implementation in the demonstration sites at two levels: integrity of the RtI “process” and integrity of intervention implementation. These data will be used to answer particular research questions in the evaluation study.

Illinois

- Illinois is in the process of developing new on individualized education program (IEP) forms, which is planned to be a fundamental special education document. The structure/questions of the IEP will naturally lead people there.
- Emphasis is on early intervention before referral: No IEP identification until schools are sure that general education provides earlier intervention across areas.

New York

- Not yet determined. However, the state education agency will have more information from corrective action districts and schools since they are more closely monitored.

Ohio

- SERRCs are responsible for monitoring the integrity of the OISM implementation. (See response to Question 9 for more information.)

Pennsylvania

- There is not a process in place yet. Theory to process (trainer of trainers) provides support to local school districts to ensure integrity and training for staff for the implementation of RtI and technical assistance.
- It is important to make sure district school psychologist is well versed in regulations and in tools used in evaluation processes.

Texas

- Not sure at this time.

11. How is the state working with institutions of higher education on this topic?

California

- Not as much right now, but the state hopes for more interaction as it moves into discussions about teacher preparation.
- The state education agency is involved with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Florida

- The state education agency used state improvement grant funds to support nine grants to universities training school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses. Each of these institutions developed training modules (cross-disciplinary) in Problem-Solving/RtI that were incorporated into preservice education curricula.
- The statewide PSM/RtI project was awarded to an institution of higher education.
- The state education agency will pursue adding PSM/RtI skills to the list of “accomplished practices” that each institution of higher education must demonstrate are achieved prior to graduation/certification.

Illinois

- Illinois is working with at least one university.

New York

- During the past 10 years, the New York higher education community has been served by a VESID-supported network (the Higher Education Task Force) coordinated by the Higher Education Support Center at Syracuse University. They have participated as both stakeholders and experts in two workgroups and will have access to all materials and professional development developed by NYSED. The agency values their input and participation in all of their work and is a true partner in all of their activities.
- The Board of Regents establishes certification requirements.
- Building in concept of RtI progress monitoring.

Ohio

- Currently, 11 Ohio universities have been awarded grants to undertake a review of their internal structure and program offerings as related to the framework of OISM in order to better prepare future teachers, principals, and related service providers to meet the needs of all children.
- All nine Ohio universities certified to train school psychologists have adopted the OISM framework as the organizing structure for their training programs.
- All intern school psychologists in the state are evaluated based on their performance in conducting activities within the OISM framework.
- In addition, the state education agency plans to include institution of higher education representation on the task force that will be further refining Ohio’s policy on RtI implementation.

Pennsylvania

- The state education agency has used university partners. Lehigh University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania have been involved in the development of the materials, in the trainer-of-trainer series, and technical assistance. The state education agency is conducting research on the process(es) that have been implemented. It also encourages IUs to include individuals from higher education as part of their RtI training teams.

Texas

- Institutions of higher education are included as stakeholders.

12. What advice would you provide your colleagues about engaging key stakeholders, including parents?

California

- It needs to be a collaborative effort right from the beginning. If you don’t have the buy-in from the Deputy that both areas will be included, it really is not going to work.
- One needs to make sure that collaboration agreements happen.
- One challenge is that the professional organizations of the general education teachers, the special education teachers, and the psychologists are trying to protect their own territory. Many are concerned about themselves, but the focus needs to be on the children.

Florida

- The full range of all potential stakeholders should be included in all planning conferences, rules revision meetings, and policy studies.
- Parents and those representing advocacy groups should be included in each planning/governance activity sponsored by the state education agency.

- The State Advisory Committee should be aware of all activities involving PSM/RtI.

Illinois

- Advice: The broader the group of stakeholders involved, the better.
- The state education agency is surprised at depth, transparency, responsiveness, and thoroughness of process used for engaging stakeholders. (Illinois utilized a process for engagement that is notable in terms of depth, transparency, responsiveness, and thoroughness.) This process included eight to nine public meetings around the state.
- It established a 180-day comment period. Every comment was read, numbered, summarized, analyzed, and publicly posted. Then the State Board of Education received comments and related responses/recommendations.

New York

- Ensuring that all stakeholders—especially parents and other advocacy groups with an interest in this topic—have an opportunity to participate in providing the department with their recommendations regarding RtI is critical to ensure that the final product represents a consideration of all points of view. Once developed, implementation at the local level will be accomplished with fidelity.
- Outreach must be purposeful. It is important to request integrated audiences from the outset.
- There was a level of surprise at state level about apparent concern from bargaining unit. State must be deliberate and reach out to concerned individuals and groups such as psychologists, social workers, special education positions.
- Initial conversations must be cross-department.

Ohio

- This is essential to the success of any initiative but particularly one that attempts to bring general, remedial, and special education together to focus on common goals and practices. Parents are members of the state advisory panel (SAPEC), and the model specifically includes parents as part of the district and building OISM leadership teams.

Pennsylvania

- Open communication!
- It is imperative that stakeholders are involved as early as possible.
- Once the model is defined, it has to be communicated consistently. There cannot be any variation in the message.
- People need to be continually updated—about progress, expectations, and their roles throughout the process.

Texas

- RtI resource facilitator position in Curriculum and Instruction Department is funded by special education. General education will lead this effort in the state. Also, the state education agency is looking to include other key divisions in the agency such as NCLB and student

assessment.

- Parents should be included from the beginning—not brought in after the fact.

13. What advice would you provide your colleagues about leveraging resources for RtI implementation?

14. What are the primary “lessons learned” thus far, as related to rolling out RtI practices?

California

- If it is clear from the beginning that this is a collaborative initiative, funding will not be as big of an issue. If this is clear, then as you move up, one does not have to leverage resources. It can be a joint discussion about the need because the focus is the child.
- The behavior piece needs to be attended to. Many times that is not addressed. This is a way to interest general education people.

Florida

- Resources can be leveraged across diverse groups when those groups share a common goal. The research on PSM/RtI clearly indicates that it improves the academic and behavior performance for all students.
- Accountability is a primary concern at the state, district, school, community, and home levels. PSM/RtI is a method to integrate all services in a school and maximize their impact. Resources can be consolidated around this process by focusing on student outcomes and relating those outcomes to the inclusion of PSM/RtI.
- Challenges included the following: implementing the infrastructure at a school level, ensuring that technology support is available, bringing people out of their silos (e.g., Title I, reading, special education), focusing on student outcomes rather than student problems, intervention support, and consistent use of data.
- It is important to launch this as a general education initiative.

Illinois

- People continue to do what they’ve always done and perceive RtI as something additional to do on top of everything else. This is an enormous paradigm shift, which requires a reallocation of resources, time, and personnel.
- The state must practice what it preaches. It must do what it expects districts to do. That is, if general education and special education are expected to be working together sharing resources and sharing expertise, special education and general education collaboration must occur first at state level and therefore be a model for other level entities.
- RtI is a visionary idea. Visionary ideas are sometimes implemented with missionary zeal.
- The state needs to make it happen but must start where it is and realize the realities of the real world.

New York

- Since the foundation of this initiative is not special education but begins with effective instruction for all students in general education, the braiding of resources from all areas (e.g., Reading First, Title I, IDEA early intervening services) should be considered. Braiding

resources from general education and special education promotes an integrated base of support.

- At the state level, it is important to develop clear and useful policies and regulations that can be implemented in the field. It is important to coordinate all efforts with general education.
- At the local level, focus should be on ensuring that school districts, school administrators, teachers, and other related professional staff (school psychologist, reading and math teachers) are adequately prepared to support the emphasis on preventative services rather than waiting for students who are struggling with reading and math to fail.
- As well as teacher preparation (preservice higher education professionals), there must be administrator preparation for instructional leadership. The psychologist role must change from psychometrician in order to focus on interaction with others and curriculum.
- There are other issues and challenges related to RtI:
 - ELL students
 - Transient students
 - Older students (Grades 4 through secondary)
 - Impact on teacher preparation in both general and special education programs
- This is a systemic change requiring the involvement of both general and special educators, school leaders, parents, and related service providers. The state education agency wants to move deliberately but carefully to ensure that this initiative is successful from the start. Ongoing conversations are a must.

Ohio

- The state education agency provides funding to the SERRCs to conduct OISM training and to provide technical assistance to districts. It also provided grants to districts to implement OISM. It is beginning to see that districts are willing to allocate other funds that they receive, including general education funds, to support this initiative.
- Because the implementation of OISM through a state improvement grant was initiated by the Office of Exceptional Children several years ago, it is seen by some as a special education initiative. This has also been a challenge for a number of states that were early implementers. However, a growing national perspective that this is truly an initiative that benefits all children will likely help to modify this impression over time.
- Some individuals still seem to lack understanding of the significance of having two major federal laws, NCLB and IDEA, aligned in support of a seamless integrated system of instruction and interventions for all students. Both laws allow the flexibility needed for the development of this integrated system.
- Research-based interventions are clearly established in the areas of early literacy and behavior. Some individuals have the impression that this model is applicable only at the elementary level and is specific to reading. In actuality, research-based interventions are available in all subjects at all levels (although, at this time, the predictors of early mathematics performance that can be used to inform decisions about interventions in math are not as well established as they are for early literacy). In addition, the Positive Behavior System (PBS) has been successfully implemented at all levels.
- It is important to include stakeholders internally in the Department of Education as well as externally. As many stakeholders as possible

must be included in the implementation of RtI. The importance of having strong support from both general and special educators cannot be overstated.

- The state education agency cultivates a view of intervention as a system.
- It facilitates discussion among stakeholders with the intention to bring about common understandings and distribute common messages.

Pennsylvania

- The state education agency puts to rest any misconceptions about RtI. It must be seen as a general education—not a special education prerogative thing.
- Implementation is a multiyear process—not something a school can do in a one year.
- All stakeholders must be involved.
- A consistent RtI model must be implemented across all districts in state. In a local-control state, it is challenging.
- A unified core of training materials should be developed and used as a base for all training staff. This training can help get rid of those issues of inconsistency at the local level.
- If this is a state model schoolwide, eligibility should be presented as byproduct of the process—not the focus.
- A variety of tools should be developed to inform districts of their status and needs in each of the critical areas of implementation of RtI.
- Technical assistance and support for data analysis should be provided to inform instruction and differentiated instruction.
- RtI should be linked to as many other school improvement initiatives as possible.

Texas

- An ongoing dialogue is critical to the success of this project. Everyone must be able to internalize the concepts associated with this framework.
- Everyone should be included and allow for the process over time.

Appendix B

RtI Interview Protocol

1. What approach(s) is your state taking with regard to rules and regulations for students with learning disabilities?
2. Please describe the level of engagement around RtI practices in your state.
3. What RtI implementation strategies/processes have been utilized in your state?
4. Please describe the _____ you have utilized in your implementation process.
 - a. Model(s)
 - b. Assessments
 - c. Tools
5. Please describe the professional development activities provided to administrators and teachers to support implementation of RtI practices.
 - a. What training is or will be required to ensure the proper implementation of RtI in a local education agency (LEA)?
 - b. How will the state department support these activities?
6. What policy changes need(ed) to occur in order for the state to move forward with a statewide RtI initiative?
 - a. What challenges, if any, have occurred at state and local levels as new policies have been introduced?
 - b. Based on your experience, what are some of the key aspects that need to be taken into consideration with regard to state policies that will support RtI practices?
7. How has your state agency organized department personnel to address/support RtI practices?
8. How, specifically, has your state approached collaboration between general and special education leaders?
9. What approach is your state taking regarding:
 - a. Providing technical assistance?
 - b. Data collection?
10. How does the state plan to monitor the integrity of implementation in an RtI system?
11. How is the state working with institutions of higher education on this topic?
12. What advice would you provide your colleagues about engaging key stakeholders, including parents?

13. What advice would you provide your colleagues about leveraging resources for RtI implementation?
14. What are the primary “lessons learned” thus far, as related to rolling out RtI practices?
 - a. Challenges (at various stages)
 - b. Suggestions to other states, *do's / don'ts*

Appendix C

7-PAK Special Education Directors Respondents

<p><u>California Department of Education</u> <u>Special Education Division</u> Mary Hudler 1430 N. Street Suite 2401 Sacramento, CA 95814 916-445-4602</p>	<p><u>Ohio Department of Education</u> <u>Office of Exceptional Children</u> Sandy Vasu-Sarver 25 South Front Street Mail Stop 202 Columbus, OH 43215-4183 614-752-1462</p>
<p><u>Illinois State Board of Education</u> <u>Specialized Programs</u> John Herner 100 N. First Street Mail Code N-243 Springfield, IL 62777-0001 217-782-4870</p>	<p><u>Pennsylvania Department of Education</u> <u>Bureau of Special Education</u> John Tommasini 333 Market Street 7th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333 717-783-6134</p>
<p><u>Florida Department of Education</u> <u>Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services</u> Bambi Lockman 325 West Gaines Street, Ste. 614 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400 850-245-0475</p>	<p><u>Texas Education Agency</u> <u>Special Education Unit</u> Kathy Clayton W.B. Travis Building, Room 6-127 1701 N Congress Avenue Austin, TX 78701-1494 512-463-9414</p>
<p><u>New York State Education Department</u> <u>Vocational & Educational Services for Individual with Disabilities</u> Rebecca Cort & Barbara Miller One Commerce Plaza Room 1606 Albany, NY 12234 518-474-2714</p>	

Appendix D

Response to Intervention (RtI) Resource Guide

January 2007

Many states are working to develop and implement models for response to intervention (RtI) and are in different stages of carrying out their initiatives. The following RtI resource information is offered to those policymakers, administrators, and other educators seeking relevant information in order to develop and implement a model that best suits the unique and individual needs of their educational organizations and states. It presents resources in the following areas:

- Articles, papers, and publications relating to RtI
- Informative RtI websites
- RtI efforts in various states

In order to present a more holistic overview of the topic, this guide includes resources that have divergent views about RtI practices and implementation strategies. Great Lakes West does not endorse one view or perspective over another. The resources are provided for the benefit of educational professionals seeking useful information and research data on the topic. Such data include journal articles, policy papers, presentations, and Internet links to RtI-oriented websites. Citations are followed by brief summaries of either the cited article or the pertinent website. Readers are encouraged to seek out the cited original sources in order to obtain greater clarity and depth in the specific RtI area described.

For ease of access, an electronic version of this document with active hyperlinks is available through the Great Lakes West website at <http://www.learningpt.org/greatlakeswest/rti/>.

Articles, Papers, and Publications Relating to RtI

Canter, A. (2006). Problem solving and RtI: New roles for school psychologists. *Communiqué*, 34(5). Retrieved January 9, 2007, from <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/cq345rti.aspx>

This four-page article presents a systematic intervention model for assisting general education teachers in their efforts to prevent school failure. The model is based on four pillars: initial teacher planning, comprehensive teacher professional development, team collaboration, and a focus on small student groups.

Denton, C. A., & Vaughn, S. (2003). Bringing research-based practice in reading intervention to scale. *Learning Disabilities and Practice*, 18(3), 201–211.

The authors suggest that meaningful RtI reform related to reading instruction must come as a result of collaboration among educational practitioners, researchers, parents, policymakers, and other key stakeholders.

Garcia, S. B., & Ortiz, A. A. (2004). *Preventing disproportionate representation: Culturally and linguistically responsive prereferral interventions*. Denver, CO: National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. Retrieved January 9, 2007, from http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Pre-referral_Brief.pdf?v_document_name=Pre-Referral%20Brief

This publication is part of the Practitioner Brief series from the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. It offers a focus on those students who may present unique challenges when implementing RtI. The authors highlight four key elements of culturally and linguistically responsive prereferral intervention for culturally and linguistically diverse students: (1) preventing school underachievement and failure, (2) early intervention for struggling learners, (3) diagnostic/prescriptive teaching, and (4) availability of general education problem-solving support systems.

Fuchs, L. S. (2003). Assessing intervention responsiveness: Conceptual and technical issues. *Learning Disabilities and Practice, 18*(3), 172–186.

The author introduces and discusses three specific assessment components for identifying and treating students with learning disabilities: (1) correctly timing the student response measurement to the designated intervention treatment, (2) employing the best criterion for assessing learning adequacy, and (3) accurately describing the nature of the disability. Alternative methods of identifying students with learning disabilities also are discussed.

Fuchs, L. S., Mock, D., Morgan, P. L., & Young, C. L. (2003). Responsiveness-to-intervention: Definitions, evidence, and implications for the learning disabilities construct. *Learning Disabilities and Practice, 18*(3), 157–171.

The authors describe and assess the merits of the two most popular RtI models currently in use: the “problem-solving” and the “standard-protocol” models. These two models are examined and contrasted by how they each identify and then treat students with learning disabilities in an educational setting.

Marston, D., Muyskens, P., Lau, M., & Canter, A. (2003). Problem-solving model for decision making with high-incidence disabilities: The Minneapolis experience. *Learning Disabilities and Practice, 18*(3), 187–200.

The problem-solving model (PSM) for RtI is currently used in the Minneapolis Public Schools system. This model guides decision making in most of the district’s intervention scenarios. The authors discuss the limitations and barriers to using the PSM research methodology in actual school settings. They also suggest ways to overcome these inherent problems in order to enhance treatment integrity.

National Association of State Directors of Special Education. (2005). *Response to intervention: Policy considerations and implementation*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

This 64-page book provides policy and implementation options relating to RtI. It also discusses the law and policy predating IDEA 2004 to provide a historical background and then focuses on an array of implementation issues. The book is available from NASDSE for \$15 for a single copy. (Discounts are offered for multiple copies). Order form is available online at <http://www.nasdse.org/documents/RtI%20Order%20Form.pdf>.

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). (2006). *Myths about response to intervention (RtI) implementation*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved January 9, 2006, from <http://www.nasdse.org/documents/Myths%20about%20RtI.pdf>

This short paper addresses 11 commonly held misconceptions about the implementation of RtI and briefly explains the misunderstandings.

New roles in response to intervention: Creating success for schools and children. (2006). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists. Retrieved January 9, 2007, from <http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/New%20Roles%20in%20RTI.pdf>

This 52-page collection of position papers on RtI represents the collaborative work of the contributing organizations listed below. As such, their combined thoughts do not necessarily yield a consensus for how to best define or approach the issue of RtI. Instead, they provide readers with an appreciation of the depth and breadth of the ongoing field research and reveal the challenges of instituting an RtI program.

Contributing Organizations: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD), International Dyslexia Association (IDA), International Reading Association (IRA), Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), National Education Association (NEA), School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA)

Speece, D. L., Case, L. P., & Molloy, D. E. (2003). Responsiveness to general education instruction as the first gate to learning disabilities identification. *Learning Disabilities and Practice*, 18(3), 147–186.

The authors reviewed three research papers to assess the validity of students with learning disabilities as they respond to general education reading instruction. One finding was that children who participated in specially designed general education reading interventions had better outcomes than did similar students who did not participate.

Vaughn, S., & Fuchs, L. S. (2003). Redefining learning disabilities as inadequate response to instruction: The promise and potential problems. *Learning Disabilities and Practice*, 18(3), 137–146.

The authors provide an overview to a response to instruction approach and how learning disabilities are identified within the context of a school setting. They discuss the need for validated interventions and assessment methods which best suit the identified student.

Informative RtI Websites

Focus on Response to Intervention: RTI Resource Library

(developed by the International Reading Association)

http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/focus_rti_library.html

This website is a resource library that provides a wide array of RtI-related journal articles, relevant Internet links, policy papers, and presentations.

National Center on Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt)

<http://www.nccrest.org>

NCCRESt offers its position paper on *Cultural Considerations and Challenges in Response-to-Intervention Models* at

http://www.nccrest.org/PDFs/rti.pdf?v_document_name=Culturally%20Responsive%20RtI.

It also offers website visitors an opportunity to post papers and presentations as well as to download information regarding RtI. This portion of the site is available at

http://www.nccrest.org/clearing_house/downloads.html

Regional Resource and Federal Center (RRFC) Network

http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/

The six regional resource centers (RRCs) for special education and the Federal Resource Center (FRC) have a common and extensive database from which to obtain information regarding RtI and many other topics. A search for information at this website or any of the RRC websites will draw from a combined and common FRC resource bank. Under the topical area RtI, one will find information about statewide initiatives. California and Florida are among the states highlighted.

Response-to-Intervention—The Promise and the Peril

(developed by the Council on Exceptional Children)

<http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=7600>

In this website, the initial information on RtI covers many important topics. It offers a number of papers, PowerPoint presentations, and other information on RtI that has been drawn both from within the Council on Exceptional Children and from other sources.

Responsiveness to Intervention and Learning Disabilities

(posted at the National Center for Learning Disabilities [NCLD])

<http://www.nclld.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=497>

This June 2005 report, prepared by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, represents the contributions of 11 national and international organizations. It examines the concepts, potential benefits, practical issues, and unanswered questions associated with RtI and learning disabilities.

Responsiveness-to-Intervention Evaluation, Technical Assistance, and Dissemination Activities

(developed by the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities [NRCLD])

<http://www.nrclld.org/research/rti.shtml>

This website offers the results of meetings, conferences, and papers, as well as a link to the Model Site Research being carried out with the national network of Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) in this field.

RtI Resource Center

(developed by Autoskill)

<http://www.autoskill.com/intervention/rti.php?gclid=CJyJq4r9nIkCFRF3SAodxTJ-MQ>

This resource center website, developed by AutoSkill, is a clearinghouse for useful RtI academic research sites, relevant RtI associations, RtI presentations/seminars, and recommended additional RtI resource links. It offers educational administrators, researchers, teachers, and other practitioners a productive departure point for gaining greater insight into RtI.

Special Education: Grades K–12

(developed by the Center on Instruction)

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=specialEd>

Under its “Special Education” menu on the home page, the Center on Instruction offers a useful collection of materials, PowerPoint presentations, and papers from multiple sources on RtI.

RtI Efforts in Various States

The following individual state efforts are offered (in alphabetical order) to provide new perspectives and approaches to those seeking to develop, implement, or improve a plan. They provide an array of approaches and manners in which RtI has been planned, developed, and implemented at the state level. A feature from one state’s work may serve as inspiration for another state’s design.

Colorado

- **Response to Intervention (RtI)**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/RtI.asp>

Minnesota

- **Guidelines for a Minnesota Model for Responsiveness to Intervention**
<http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/SpecialEd/documents/Announcement/009253.pdf>

Nebraska

- **Response-to-Intervention Consortium**
<http://rtinebraska.unl.edu/index.html>
- **Response to Intervention Video Conference**
<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ResponsetoInterventionVideoConference.htm>

New Jersey

- **English Language Learners and Special Education** (PowerPoint)
www.state.nj.us/njded/bilingual/resources/ell.ppt

New Mexico

- **Response to Intervention: A Systematic Process to Increase Learning Outcomes for All Students** (Guidance Document for New Mexico Schools)
<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/acc.assess/assess/dl/misc/RtIManualFinalCombo2006%2012-06.pdf>

North Carolina

- **Response to Intervention in North Carolina: Implementation of a Problem Solving Model** (PowerPoint)
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/dec.ppt>
- **Response to Intervention Training Materials**
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/ec/development/learning/intervention/rtimaterials>

Oregon

- **Oregon's Response to Intervention Initiative**
<http://www.ode.state.or.us/initiatives/idea/rti.aspx>

Washington

- **Response to Intervention, Universal Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Model Programs, Policies and Procedures**
<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/RtI.aspx>

Wisconsin

- **Response to Intervention**
<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/rti.html>