# RtI: The Fundamentals of Process and Practice

Lee County School District

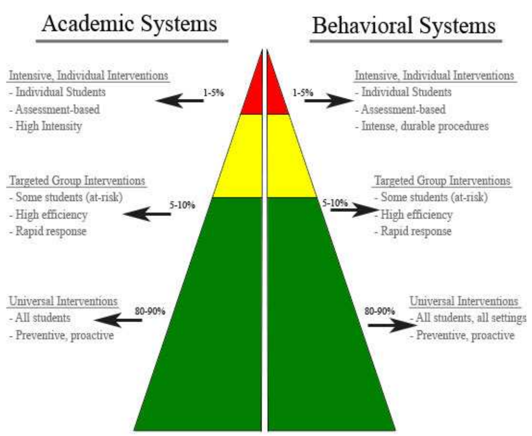
For further information please be sure to visit the district RtI website at http://learn.leeschools.net/dept/stusvc/RtI/welcome.htm.



## OVERVIEW

Response to Intervention is "an assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data" (NRCLD, 2006). As such the School District of Lee County has created a set of documents that are designed to support a school-based team through the RtI problem-solving process in order to best address student needs. These documents should be viewed as tools that assist the team in the problem-solving and decision-making process. They are comprehensive and allow the team to effectively use data to match research-based and/or evidenced-based interventions with student needs. Additionally, the process ensures that the district is in compliance with state-adopted rules and federal mandates. For further information, please refer to pp5-15 in the LCSD RtI Manual.

It is important to remember that RtI is a problem-solving process for addressing the academic and/or behavioral needs of students, not a procedure for getting students evaluated for special programs or services. However, should the need arise; RtI is part of the evaluation process for eligibility decisions. The goal of this focused attempt is to provide meaningful and specific interventions that clearly address a student's individual needs. Our mission is to ensure that every student is provided appropriate instruction using proven research-based strategies. It is also important to remember that the School District of Lee County and the State of Florida have adopted a three-tier model as shown below.




The three tiers are representative of a continuum of student support. The tiers do not represent placements or procedural steps, but rather varying levels of student support. All students receive the core instruction (Tier I). In addition to the core curriculum, some students may require more strategic (Tier II) or intensive/targeted (Tier III) levels of support in order to be successful. When addressing student needs it is always necessary to first look at the core instruction (Tier I). That being said, there are several things to consider before a team meets to look at an individual student. They are as follows:

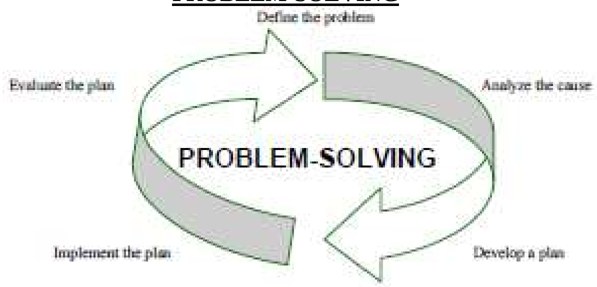
- ✓ Are at least 80% of students in the school, in the class, of the subgroup meeting the targeted benchmarks?
- ✓ Is this a school-wide, subgroup, classroom, and/or instructional concern? Or is it an individual student need?
- ✓ Has the teacher met with the parents or guardians?
- ✓ Is differentiated instruction occurring at Tier I?
- ✓ Does the team have administrative representation?
- ✓ Has the RtI team identified valid and reliable data upon which to make RtI decisions?
- ✓ Has the school-based RtI team identified how the continuum of supports will be used across all tiers?
- ✓ Are there areas of training or staff development that should be addressed before the successful implementation of the RtI process?

**Core Principles**

1. Use scientific, research-based interventions/instruction
   *Curriculum and instructional practices must have a high rate of success for the majority of students
2. Monitor classroom performance
   *Monitor rather than wait for state/district assessments
   *Gen. ed. teacher plays a vital role
3. Conduct universal screening/bench-marking
   *Can indicate individual vs. group performance
   *Must be used in conjunction with other sources of evidence
4. Use a multi-tier model of service delivery
   *Increasingly intense levels of service
   *ALL students receive instruction in the core curriculum, supplemented with strategic and intensive interventions when needed
5. Monitor progress frequently
   *Use assessments frequently that are sensitive to small changes
   *Frequent data collection
   *Curriculum based measures
6. Implement with fidelity
   *Allow sufficient time
   *Interventions applied consistently and accurately
   *qualified and trained staff

"One of the various impacts of RtI includes achieving the maximum effect of core instruction and behavioral supports for all students while targeting instruction and interventions for at-risk students. The outcome of this is significant improvements in academic achievement, pro-social behaviors, and overall school climate. With proficient implementation of RtI, schools can also expect a reduction in special education referrals" (Florida Dept. of Education, 2008).

## PROBLEM-SOLVING




RtI is a Problem-solving process for addressing the academic and/or behavioral needs of students. Therefore it is important that a team follow the 5 problem-solving steps. For more information refer to pp. 10-11 in the LCSD RtI Manual.

***Step 1: Define the problem***

*Review concern, identify problem (deficit skill areas)
*Measurable/observable terms
*Identify replacement behavior
-Data- current level of performance
-Data- benchmark level(s)
-Data- peer performance
-Data- GAP analysis

***Step 2: Identify/Analyze the cause***

*Develop a hypothesis as to why the problem is occurring (brainstorming)
*Focus on explanations that can be addressed through instruction
*Consideration of rate of learning
*Develop predictions/assessment

***Step 3: Develop a plan***

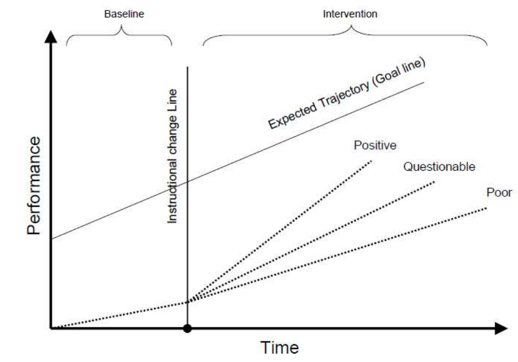
*Identify interventions to meet student's needs
*Develop interventions in those areas for which data are available and hypotheses are verified
*Create a timeframe
*Determine frequency of interventions
*Implementation support
*How to evaluate

***Step 4: Implement the plan***

*With FIDELITY by qualified staff according to process and timeframe
-Training
-Instruction delivered in the way in which it was designed
-Integrity of screening and progress-monitoring
-Document delivery of interventions

***Step 5: Evaluate the plan***

*Collect data through progress monitoring
*Frequently collected data
*Data must be charted (graphed)
*Student progress vs. aim-line
*If necessary revisit plan and make appropriate modifications and/or revisions
*Type of Response- good, questionable, poor




## DATA SOURCES

*Tier 1*: Universal Screening, accountability assessments, grades, classroom assessments, referral patterns, discipline referrals, common assessments, curriculum-based assessments

*Tier 2*: Universal Screening - Group Level Diagnostics (maybe), systematic progress monitoring, large-scale assessment data and classroom assessment, common assessments, curriculum-based assessments

*Tier 3*: Universal Screenings, Individual Diagnostics, intensive and systematic progress monitoring, formative assessment, curriculum-based assessments, other informal assessments (Batsche and Castillo, 2008)

## COMPLETING THE PAPERWORK

Active Problem Solving is the FOCUS and the driving force behind the RtI process; the paperwork is not. Information regarding all documents can be found on pp. 89-94 in the LCSD RtI Manual. Documents can be downloaded at http://learn.leeschools.net/dept/stusvc/RtI/Forms_rti.htm.
They are the official RtI forms for the district and as such are the only ones that should be used.
"A decision must be made regarding levels of effectiveness and levels of over-representation (or disproportionality). If

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evidence of lack of effectiveness or disproportionality exists, then modifications must be made to the core (Tier I) instructional programs. If the identified need lies in access to effective curricula, then barriers to access, such as excessive student or teacher absence, high student mobility rates, restrictive environments, etc., must be identified and removed (FLDOE, 2008).

Prior to scheduling a problem-solving meeting four questions must be asked and answered using valid and reliable assessment data.

1.) Is the core curriculum effective? (Are 80 percent of students making benchmarks?)
2.) Do students have and have had access to effective curriculum? (Barriers to access may include excessive student/teacher absences, high mobility rates, restrictive environments, excessive suspensions, etc.)
3.) Have students been identified are not meeting academic or behavioral expectations?
4.) Does any over-representation of particular student sub-groups (i.e., grade level, classroom, AYP subgroup) exist in those students identified at-risk? Is Tier 1 equally effective for different student subgroups?

Additionally, the team should determine if:
1.) The student has been in the CIRP for a minimum of a semester.
2.) Is the student's progress significantly below that of his subgroup?
3.) Differentiation of instruction within the core curriculum has occurred.

Once the above criteria have been met and *prior to a meeting scheduled*, the teacher should complete the Comprehensive Student Review Form. This form is designed to provide a complete picture of the student for the team and must be completed in full. Additionally, the teacher should arrange for a Colleague Observation. If there are speech and/or language concerns a Communication Skills-Teacher Checklist is completed and given to the SLP for review.

At the RtI: Problem Solving Meeting, the team reviews the above completed documents and follows the problem-solving process as outlined on the Student Improvement Plan. Again it is important that the team be as detailed and thorough as possible. At all times the team should be basing its decisions on the most current data. The RtI Team will determine the most appropriate intervention by matching research based interventions to the individual student's needs and the timeframe for implementation.

**Intervention Design**

**A good intervention is:**

**PLANFUL**: Procedures to be applied are specified clearly and completely.

**ENVIRONMENTALLY FOCUSED**: Actions taken modify the environment NOT the individual.

**GOAL DIRECTED**: The team writes an ambitious yet attainable goal statement PRIOR TO intervention design.

***Interventions should be designed to adjust WHAT is being taught and/or HOW it is taught.***

During the implementation of the intervention plan progress should be monitored and graphed in preparation for the next meeting.

After an intervention period has passed, the team should reconvene and determine the student's response to the intervention using the Student Intervention Plan Review and Decision Form. At this time the team must review the most current data and decide whether to continue the plan, modify the plan, or discontinue the plan. All changes may be noted on the form or on attachments. The Response to Intervention Problem-Solving Flowchart on page 94 in the manual should be used as a reference.

**Interventions**

**An intervention is not:**
- ✓ Moving a student to another seat.
- ✓ Referring the student to special education.
- ✓ Conferencing with the parent.
- ✓ Teaching the core curriculum.
- ✓ Retaining the student.
- ✓ Limiting the number of questions, problems,given to a student.
- ✓ Observing the student in the classroom.
- ✓ Suspending the student.
- ✓ Giving the student verbatim reading for an accommodation.
- ✓ Given the student extended time for assignments or assessments.
- ✓ Letting the student use a calculator.
- ✓ Adjusting the level of questions on an assignment or test.

**An intervention is:**
- ✓ A scientifically-researched program used in addition to the core curriculum to help students with significant deficits reach proficiency.

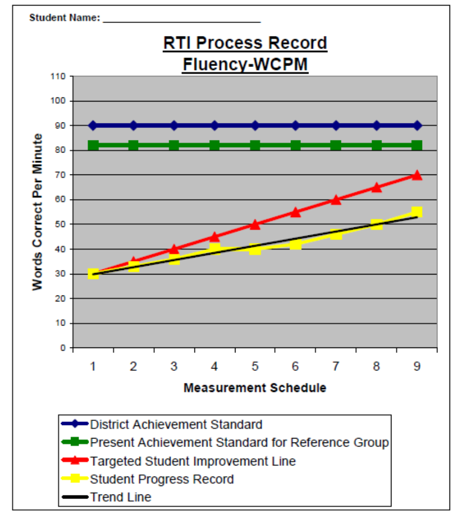
(DayOne Publishing, 2007)

## GRAPHING

Progress monitoring is a vital part of the RtI problem-solving process and as required by both state and federal law all data must be presented in graphic format. The collection of valid and reliable data displayed in a graph allows the team to determine how a student is responding to an intervention. Graphing templates are available http://learn.leeschools.net/dept/stusvc/RtI/graphs_rti.htm.

Other considerations are as follows:
- ✓ Does the graph contain the 8-12 data points necessary to accurately create a trend line?
- ✓ Does the graph show the goal-line (aim-line) or appropriate benchmark?
- ✓ Does the data correlate with the goals of the intervention plan? In other words is the graph monitoring the same need that was prioritized and addressed in the intervention plan?
- ✓ Is there a new graph for each intervention period?
- ✓ Probes should be administered bi-weekly for a supplemental (Tier II) intervention and weekly for an intensive (Tier III) intervention.

| RTI PROCESS RECORD | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District Achievement Standard | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Present Achievement Standard for Reference Group | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 82 |
| Targeted Student Improvement Line | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | 55 | 60 | 65 | 70 |
| Student Progress Record | 30 | 33 | 36 | 40 | 40 | 42 | 46 | 50 | 55 |




## NEED FOR FURTHER EVALUATION

A small percentage of students' needs will not be met with the supplemental and/or intensive supports provided. The RtI team along with the school psychologist may decide to refer the student for further evaluation through the Department of Psychological Services. A referral may be made for one of the following reasons:

-Student is not currently making progress with intensive interventions in place

-Student is making progress, however the resources (time, personnel, materials) necessary cannot be sustained in the general education setting for a extended and reasonable period of time

-Further information is needed in order to meet the needs of the student.

The team must determine if the correct problem was identified, the interventions were matched to the student's needs and were implemented with fidelity, the student was exposed to the appropriate district-wide curriculum, sufficient time has been given, and progress monitoring is complete with valid data. Ideally, the team will have an understanding of the supports necessary for the student to be successful.

The Psychologist completes the Documentation of Need for Comprehensive Evaluation with the assistance of the RtI team.

Prior to making a referral the team MUST rule out poor/lack of instruction. Points to consider are:

*Curricular access blocked by any of the following must be addressed
-Attendance
-Health
-Mobility
*Sufficient exposure to and focus on the curriculum must occur
*Frequent, repeated assessment must be conducted

The completed form with the necessary attachments is submitted to Psychological Services where the packet is checked for omissions and dates. A referral is sent to the building principal by email attachment.

The team will then meet in order to determine necessary areas for assessment. The parent must signs the referral form. Note: In many cases further assessment may not be necessary as the data collected during the intervention has answered all questions. Additionally, it is the results of the interventions used thus far that will contribute to the determination of eligibility for ESE services.

The consent form is sent to Psychological Services. Team continues with current intervention plan while awaiting evaluation. The psychologist will administer any necessary assessments and complete components of the SLD or EBD coversheet as part of his/her report. All information will be reviewed at staffing.

Jason W. Kurtz
December '09