

The Illinois State Response to Intervention (RtI) Plan

January 1, 2008

Introduction

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) believes that increased student learning requires the consistent practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs. Response to Intervention (RtI) is a general education initiative which requires collaborative efforts from all district staff, general educators, special educators and bilingual/ELL staff. In a quality educational environment student academic and behavioral needs must be identified and monitored continuously with documented student performance data used to make instructional decisions.

The process of such identification and continuous monitoring are the foundational pieces of a successful system of early interventions. The success of all students toward the Illinois Learning Standards is improved when instructional and behavioral goals are frequently monitored. Data derived from such monitoring should then inform instructional strategies gauged to enhance success. It is important to note that it is through the continuous use of progress monitoring and analysis of student academic and behavioral growth that proper instructional and curricular responses may be made.

The proposed state framework supporting the development of a system of scientifically, research based interventions is outlined in the remainder of this document. As districts develop their RtI Plans by January 2009, their plans shall support a fluid model of response to interventions of varying intensity to meet the needs of all students.

What is RtI?

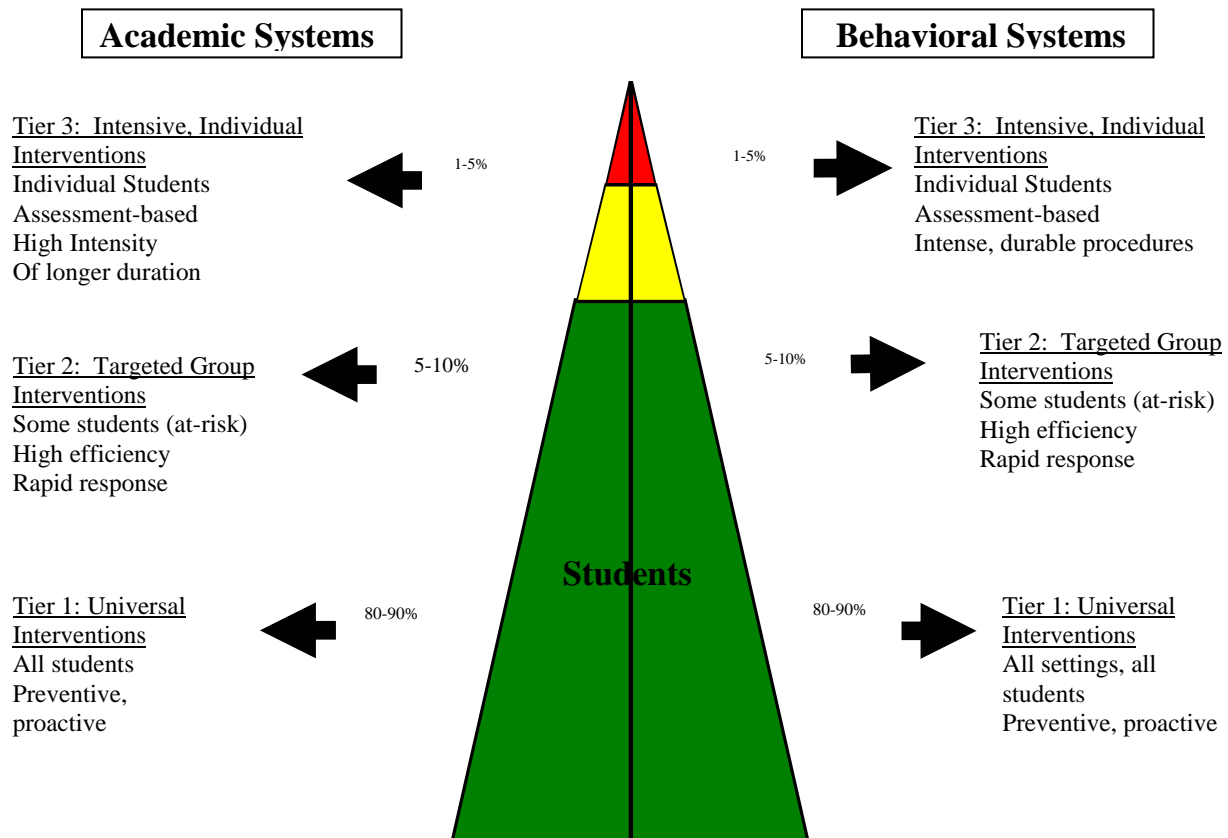
Response to Intervention (RtI) is “the practice of providing 1) high-quality instruction/ intervention matched to student needs and 2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to 3) make important educational decisions” (*Batsche, et al., 2005*). This means using differentiated instructional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

RtI has three essential components: 1) using a three tier model of school supports, 2) utilizing a problem-solving method for decision-making, and 3) having an integrated data system that informs instruction.

- 1) Three-tier model of school supports: Within an RtI framework, resources are allocated in direct proportion to student needs. This framework is typically depicted as a three-tier model (see Figure 1) that utilizes increasingly more intense instruction and interventions. As Figure 1 shows, Tier 1 is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based core

instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum. At Tier 2, supplemental instruction and interventions are provided *in addition to core instruction* to those students for whom data suggest additional instructional support is warranted. Tier 3 consists of intensive instructional interventions provided *in addition to core instruction* with the goal of increasing an individual student's rate of progress.

Figure 1. Three-Tier Model of School Supports



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

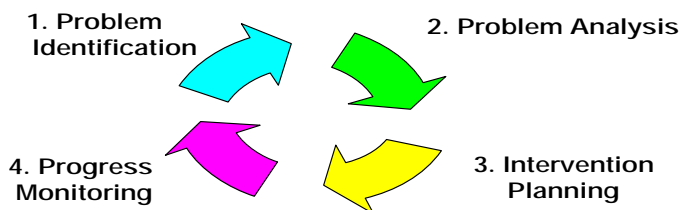
Note: Percentages are approximations and may vary by district.

2) Problem-solving method of decision-making: Across the tiers, the problem solving method is used to match instructional resources to educational need. The problem-solving method (see figure 2) is as follows:

- (a) Define the problem by determining the discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring.
- (b) Analyze the problem using data to determine why the discrepancy is occurring.
- (c) Establish a student performance goal, develop an intervention plan to address the goal and delineate how the student's progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be ensured.

(d) Use progress monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan.

Figure 2. Steps of Problem Solving



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

3) Integrated data collection that informs instruction: Within an RtI model, progressively more intensive interventions and supports are coupled with more frequent progress monitoring of student achievement in order to guide the educational planning. At Tier 1 data are collected and are used as a general screening process for all students and to determine effectiveness of core instructional practices. At Tier 2 data are collected to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and determine if an instructional change is needed. At Tier 3, data are collected for the same reasons as Tier 2, but are collected on a more frequent basis so that educational decisions can be made in a timelier manner. Data systems used for screening and progress monitoring within an RtI model should be consistent across all three tiers and be scientifically-based.

It is important to note that RtI within a three-tier intervention model is also a part of special education eligibility decision-making required by 34 CFR 300.309 and 23 IAC 226.130.

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

Progress Monitoring and Data Collection

As illustrated in Figure 1, RtI encompasses a three-tier process of increasingly intensive instructional interventions put in place in response to frequent progress monitoring indicating that a student's academic and/or behavioral needs are not being met in the current instructional program. Such continuous monitoring leads to responsive levels of intervention matched to the

student's demonstrated academic and behavior achievement and rate of growth. In a fully implemented response to intervention model a student may move fluidly from tier to tier as a result of his/her response to the educational program.

Special Education Eligibility Considerations

When implementing an RtI process, school teams use student progress data collected at each tier to document a student's response to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation process in order to consider eligibility for special education services. Such eligibility decisions typically occur within Tier 3 when students do not respond to the most intensive interventions, but may occur at any tier. It is also important to note that, a parent may request an evaluation at any point during this intervention process.

By the 2010-2011 school year, documentation of the RtI process shall be a part of the evaluation process for students when a specific learning disability (SLD) is suspected. After implementing an RtI process, a district may use a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement as part of the evaluation process for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.

The ISBE recognizes that some districts are currently further along in the implementation of RtI and may implement this process prior to the 2010-2011 school year. Additionally, the RtI process may be used as part of the evaluation process for students considered for eligibility in other disability areas.

Further refinement of the implementation of RtI and its role in eligibility determination will continue through a work group comprised of representatives from multiple statewide stakeholder groups (e.g. Illinois State Board of Education, teacher unions, special education directors, school administrators, parent advocacy groups, related service providers, general educators, special educators, and bilingual/ELL educators, etc.)

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

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

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

Process for Statewide Implementation

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will:

- Develop a Frequently Asked Question document and post it on the ISBE website
- Establish an inclusive committee of stakeholders to review the progress of statewide implementation of RtI including funding sources and professional development. Stakeholder groups could include the Illinois State Board of Education, teacher unions, administrator organizations, parent advocacy groups, special education directors,

Regional Offices of Education, Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education and higher education institutions.

- Collaborate with Illinois ASPIRE, stakeholder groups and practitioners, to develop and disseminate guidance on requirements for special education eligibility determination.
- Identify districts that would most benefit from greater assistance from the State in implementing RtI (23 IAC 226.140(b)(3)(a). Variables to be considered in making this determination include, but are not limited to, NCLB status, percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, severe staff shortages, financial watch status, significant disproportionality in special education and district size.
- Assist all districts, with specific assistance for targeted districts, in completing a District Self-Assessment (template to be provided by ISBE) to determine their “Next Steps” toward implementation of response to intervention for all learners.
- Work with district administrators and staff representing both general and special education, such as those involved in curriculum & instruction, bilingual education, professional development, etc, to reinforce their leadership and implementation roles in the RtI process.
- Oversee and coordinate the provision of professional development to assist districts in the development and implementation of a plan for Response to Intervention(RtI). (e.g., Illinois ASPIRE, the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center [ISTAC], Regional Support Providers [RESPROs], Intermediate Service Center [ISCs], Regional Offices of Education [ROEs]), Institutions of Higher Education [IHEs], and special education joint agreements/cooperatives)
- Oversee and coordinate the provision of ongoing technical assistance to districts as requested.(e.g., Illinois ASPIRE, ISTAC, RESPROs, ISCs, ROEs, Illinois Resource Center [IRC] and special education joint agreements/cooperatives)
- Work with IHEs to incorporate the necessary skill development in undergraduate and graduate coursework in the education departments.
- Educate parent groups (PTIs, PTAs, Bilingual PACs, etc.) about what RtI is, why it is being implemented in school districts and how parents will be involved.
- Evaluate the effects of the RtI process and activities through review of student outcomes and professional development training reviews. Sources may include Local Educational Agency (LEA) Profiles, District and School Improvement Plans and professional development plans.
- Disseminate resources and information (e.g. middle and high school implementation, ELL implementation) across the state through conferences, workshops, web-based resources, newsletters and parent organizations.

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

- A process for gathering baseline information regarding current resources and practices addressing problem solving, scientific, research-based instruction, progress monitoring, ongoing assessment and levels of interventions.
- How current resources and practices will be used to implement RtI and identify what additional resources are necessary to implement the district plan.
- How district stakeholders will be educated on what is RtI.
- How district stakeholders (e.g., teacher organization leadership, parent organization leadership) will be involved in the process.

- How the district leadership (e.g., school board, district- and building-level administrators,) will be involved in plan development and implementation.
- What ongoing professional development for all administrative, instructional and student support staff is needed to implement and sustain RtI and how it will be delivered.
- What infrastructure components are necessary (e.g., problem solving process, data collection), and which of those components is already in place or may need to be developed or strengthened.
- How the district will apply state guidelines in establishing the use of RtI in the special education eligibility process.
- How the district process will involve parents in the training and implementation of RtI.
- How the RtI plan is connected to other district initiatives and plans (e.g., District Improvement Plans (DIP), Technology, Professional Development).
- What additional training needs, guidance and policy changes are necessary.
- How a systematic problem solving process will be used to make educational decisions.
- What systemic data management tools will be used for review and analysis of student data to make educational decisions.
- What evaluation process will be used to determine the effectiveness of RtI and the frequency with which that evaluation process will be used.

Implementation Timelines

Spring 2008

- Each district will complete a District Self-Assessment (template provided by ISBE) to determine its “Next Steps” in the development and implementation of their RtI plans for all learners.
- ISBE will provide technical assistance and support to all districts in the implementation of RtI.
- ISBE will identify targeted districts that would most likely benefit from greater assistance from the State.

Spring/Summer 2008

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

The Trainers/Coaches will focus their technical assistance and coaching to those districts within their region most in need of assistance. The technical assistance (TA) will take the form of face-to-face TA, Web-based TA and telephone/email communication. Regularly scheduled TA meetings will assist and support district teams. Trainers/Coaches with a broad array of skills and experience in RtI, problem solving and enhancing educational programming will conduct intensive ongoing training.

2008-2009 School Year

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

- Overview of 3-Tier Problem Solving Model
- Scientific, Research-Based Assessments for Progress Monitoring and Universal Screening
- Problem Identification
- Scientific, Research-Based interventions
- Leadership and Teaming in a Response to Intervention and Problem Solving System
- Parent Involvement in Response to Intervention

2009-2010 School Year

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

- Scientifically-Based Instruction and Interventions
- Curriculum Based Measures
- Progress Monitoring Instruments
- Effective Use of RtI in Special Education Eligibility Determination
- Advanced Problem Analysis
- ELL Implementation
- Middle and High school Implementation

Planning for Costs

When planning for training and ongoing implementation, districts should anticipate fiscal needs in relation to, but not limited to, the following areas as identified in their district's self-assessment:

- Substitutes for staff to participate in training
- Release time for staff for ongoing collaboration, planning and implementation
- Registration fees for regional training
- Resource needs: review of core curriculum and assessment practices, review of school wide behavioral practices, interventions, progress monitoring tools and coaching support, etc.

Funding Sources

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

Federal Funds:

Title I
Title II
Title III
IDEA

Title funds, under certain circumstances, can be used to help support the district RtI plan. The cost of professional development can be shared among several federal programs. It is our current understanding that, because the State is not mandating particular interventions, resources and materials, and districts have the flexibility to choose district-appropriate interventions, resources and materials, Title I paid staff can assist in working with identified students to provide intervening services; and resources and materials may be shared among programs. Title II funds designated for professional development could be used to support RtI implementation. Title III funds may be used to support supplemental services for ELL students.

Federal IDEA Part B Dollars

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

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

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

General Funds:

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

ISBE Funding Opportunities

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

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

ISBE Evaluation Plan

The ISBE evaluation process of the implementation of RtI and its effects on student outcomes will be structured around key evaluation questions:

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

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

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

Supporting Resources

ISBE will make additional resources available to assist school districts through the agency website. Currently, the website to support these resources is under development. Once the website is operational, notice will be provided in the Superintendent's Bulletin. This website will be updated on an ongoing basis.

Frequently Asked Questions (to be developed based on questions raised during the public comment period and any further funding information received from the United States Department of Education)

Guidelines for Eligibility Determinations (to be developed)

ASPIRE Program Information www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/illinois-aspire.htm

District Self-Assessment (Template to be provided by ISBE)

Examples of Reviewed Reading Strategies

Examples of Reviewed Math Strategies

Examples of Reviewed ELL Strategies

Examples for Middle School Implementation

Examples for Secondary Implementation

Example of a District Improvement Plan incorporating RtI

Example of Universal Screening Instruments

ASPIRE Training Modules/Evaluation summary

Problem Solving Steps across Tiers (Batsche, et al., 2005)

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography – NASDSE, IDEA,

NCLB/IDEA language excerpts

Link to IASA and IPA websites