South Carolina Response to Intervention:
A Framework and Technical Assistance Guide for Districts and Schools

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Revised October 2011

Contents

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview for Response to Intervention (RTI) practices in South Carolina. This guidance document assists school districts and the South Carolina Department of Education staff in understanding RTI vocabulary and concepts, its origins in educational practice and research, its usefulness and value, and the process for RTI implementation. This document is our vision and is framed on the following guiding principles:

- We believe quality instruction is the key to student success and we can effectively teach all students.

- We believe early intervention for struggling students is the key to student success.

- We believe implementing research-based instruction and interventions benefits students.

- We believe monitoring student progress informs instruction.

- We believe using multiple sources of data informs decision-making about student performance.

- We believe working in partnership with parents maximizes student performance.

RTI is the practice of using data to guide high-quality instruction, together with academic and behavior interventions matched to student need, frequent progress monitoring to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and carefully examining students' responses to instruction to make critical educational decisions (Batsche et al., 2005, p. 3). Successful implementation of RTI involves all of these components. School teams use the results of reliable and valid indicators of student outcomes to evaluate and adjust instructional practices. If any component is missing, the process breaks down.

RTI derives its name from the practice of offering interventions provided by the general education teacher, including additional instruction and targeted, small group instruction, and then systematically evaluating the student's response to more customized instruction. Highly trained interventionists within the school can also deliver this supplemental instruction. Many teachers and schools already provide these activities. The strength of RTI is that instruction is continually adjusted to better meet each student's needs, beginning at the earliest signs of a student's failure to show adequate progress with appropriate classroom instruction. Close monitoring of student progress is used to gauge the effectiveness of interventions and is essential in these efforts.

In addition to academic difficulties, interfering behavior is often a factor when a student is not performing at a satisfactory level or projected rate of learning. The RTI model recognizes the connection between academics and behavior and addresses both areas simultaneously. Schools screen and monitor students exhibiting interfering behaviors just as they do those experiencing academic difficulties.

RTI provides a framework for effectively utilizing best instructional practices within a scientific, research-based instructional model. The goal is to deliver early intervention for every student who struggles to attain or maintain grade-level performance. Thus, RTI requires an ongoing, systematic process of using student performance and response data to guide instructional and intervention decisions.

What is RTI?

RTI is an opportunity for educators and parents to come together to improve student learning by focusing on students' instructional needs in academics and behavior. In an RTI model, eligibility for special education is considered only after substantial efforts have been made to modify instruction and to provide additional instruction and support. RTI focuses first on *what* will be done instead of *where* it will be done. It is more about *how* modifications to instruction and additional support will be accomplished and less about *who* will accomplish these changes. RTI works toward evaluating student progress over time using age-based comparisons and rates of learning instead of identifying deficits within the student.

RTI is intended to accomplish the following:

- function as a general education initiative that supports school improvement goals;

- focus primarily on effective instruction to enhance student growth;

- help as many students as possible meet proficiency standards without special education;

- unify general and special education in order to provide greater continuity of services;

- address issues of over-identification of students suspected of having specific learning disabilities by ensuring timely, appropriate, effective instruction to accelerate achievement; and

- address issues of disproportional identification of students in particular socioeconomic and ethnic groups for special education by ensuring timely, appropriate, effective instruction to accelerate achievement.

Benefits of RTI

RTI identifies and addresses the learning and behavioral needs of all students. Furthermore, RTI practices strengthen communication between home and school. Schools inform parents frequently of their child's progress, and parents become more active and meaningful participants in the school's educational efforts. An RTI system also does the following:

- documents learning rates for cohorts of students;

- communicates the school's expectations for monitoring student academic performance and behavior;

- increases collaboration, communication, and cooperation among all teachers;

- provides a global picture of instructional practices in the school;

- guides professional development efforts;

- coordinates existing intervention efforts; and

- provides more accurate identification of students with disabilities.

A well-implemented, research-based RTI process ensures earlier, more relevant help for students not meeting grade-level expectations and provides critical information about student instructional and behavioral needs in order to create effective interventions.

Essential Components of RTI

The successful implementation of RTI requires five important components:

1. a school-wide, multi-level instructional and behavioral system for preventing school failure,

2. universal screening to identify students, who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes,

3. progress monitoring to gather the data necessary to adjust and improve instruction as it is occurring to obtain better responses to instruction,

4. data-based decision making for instruction and movement within the multi-level system, and

5. collaboration and communication between students, families, teachers, and administrators to ensure that every student receives the best possible instruction.

Many schools have existing practices and procedures that form a strong beginning for an RTI system and can be extended through grade levels and across content areas. The following sections of this document will assist districts and schools in understanding the essential components of RTI and the implementation of the RTI process:

- Section I gives an overview of a Multi-leveled Instructional and Behavioral System.
- Section II provides a list of administrative roles essential for successful implementation of RTI.
- Section III indicates some research and evidence-based best practices for quality instruction.
- Section IV defines and provides examples of progress monitoring.
- Section V defines and provides examples of universal screening.
- Section VI provides support documents such as a parent guide, glossary, funding sources and legislation, English Language Learners, South Carolina Department of Education Resources, and International Reading Association Guiding Principles for RTI.

SECTION 1

A Multi-Tiered Instructional and Behavioral Systems Model

A Three Tier Model

Academic Systems		Behavioral Systems

Tier III Intensive, Individual Interventions
- Individual students
- Assessment-based
- High Intensity

1 - 5%

Tier III Intensive, Individual Interventions
- Individual students
- Assessment-based
- Intense, durable procedures

Tier II Targeted Group Interventions
- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response to student needs

5 - 10%

Tier II Targeted Group Interventions
- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response to student needs

Tier I Universal Instruction/ Interventions
- All students
- Preventative, proactive

80–90%

Tier I Universal Instruction/ Interventions
- All students
- Preventative, proactive

Table 1: A Three-Tier Instruction and Intervention Model

RTI SC recommends a three-tier, service-delivery model in which all students receive high-quality, scientific, research and evidence -based instruction, and behavior strategies. General education teachers and other professional staff deliver core instruction with fidelity and promote appropriate behavior expectations in classrooms and school-wide. Staff members conduct universal screenings 2-3 times a year and monitor students' progress regularly. Parents actively participate in their children's education and, at all tiers, help to implement instructional and behavior strategies.

Tier I is the foundation of a tiered instructional delivery model and refers to the universal instruction provided to all students in the school. The development and support of Tier I strategies are critical to a functioning RTI system. In Tier I, teachers deliver research-supported, differentiated instruction with fidelity. Universal screening 2-3 times a year helps to document the progress of all

students in this core instruction. If a significant number of students do not succeed with quality classroom instruction, the staff examines all variables (e.g., attendance, class size, behavior observations, instructional fidelity, staff development issues, curriculum choices, and student progress monitoring data) to determine how to strengthen Tier I instruction. Quality Tier I programs should assist between 80 and 90 percent of students in meeting grade-level standards and behavioral expectations. To implement RTI with fidelity, school staff must critically evaluate and improve implementation of Tier I instructional and behavior programs so that the vast majority of students are successful.

Once the school has ensured that Tier I instruction is effective in meeting the needs of 80-90 percent of students, supplemental instruction is provided in Tier II. Tier II consists of research-and evidence based small group interventions for students not meeting grade-level academic and behavior expectations. Approximately 15 percent of students will need Tier II intervention in addition to effective Tier I instruction. Hallmarks of Tier II include increased collaboration among parents, interventionists, classroom teachers, instructional leaders, and other stakeholders as well as more frequent progress monitoring to facilitate teachers in making data-based adjustments to instruction in response to student needs.

Tier III provides research-supported, individualized, intensive instructional intervention, and even more frequent progress monitoring for students not responding to Tier II interventions. Two to five percent of students will need Tier III intervention in addition to instruction at Tier I and/or Tier II. Collaboration and support among professionals increases in Tier III to reflect the level of services needed by students. Tier III interventions are not necessarily special education; however, if a disability is suspected, school staff inform parents of their procedural safeguards and initiate a referral to determine if the student meets 504 or special education (IDEA) eligibility. For more information on eligibility for special education, refer to the State Board of Education Regulation 43-243.1.

Any student may receive services in any tier given their academic and behavior needs. Students are not placed permanently in a tier of instruction and will move between tiers as needed. A student with a disability or with other identified special considerations may be served at any tier during the process based on individual needs.

SECTION II

Administrative Roles for Supporting RTI

Response to Intervention (RTI) provides support for all students with research and evidence-based interventions whenever any student struggles academically or behaviorally. Because all students may require academic or behavioral support from time-to-time, RTI requires leadership and broad-based participation from multiple district and school personnel. The following school leaders and educational specialists offer important expertise for the successful implementation of RTI. The purpose of this support document is to clarify the roles of district- and building-level school personnel from the district level curriculum, instruction, and assessment personnel to the principal, instructional specialists, and school counselors. Leadership is essential for the successful implementation of instructional improvement in general and to RTI in particular.

Figure 1: Lists the District and School Members Needed for the Implementation of RTI.

LEA Leadership Roles in RTI	
District –Level Administrators	• Assistant Superintendent/Director of Curriculum and Instruction • Director of Assessment • Director for English Language Learners (ELL) • Director of Special Education • Speech and Language Pathologist • School Psychologist • Social Worker • Title I Coordinator

School Building Leaders	• Principal/Assistant Principal
	• School Counselor
	• Instructional Coach/Subject Area Specialist/Literacy Coach
	• Teams
	    o RTI School Leadership Team
	    o RTI Grade-Level/Department/ Subject Area Team
	    o RTI Student Intervention Team
	• Interventionist
	• General Education Teachers
	• Special Education Teachers

General Education and RTI: Law and Policy Principles

In 1975, the United States Congress enacted legislation that guaranteed access to public education for students with disabilities. In the ensuing years, schools throughout the United States have implemented these fundamental principles to varying degrees:

- Zero Reject – Regardless of the severity of physical or emotional disabilities, all students are eligible for public education.

- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) – Public school systems must offer educational services for every disabled student commensurate with developmental, corrective, or supportive needs.

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – To the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities must be educated with their peers without disabilities (Yell, 2006, pp. 91-94).

Even though most schools have addressed special education as a different program from the general education program experienced by all students, two legislative actions by Congress during the decade of the 2000s have led to increasing alignment of practices in both programs. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 focused the attention of all schools on the academic performance of their students with disabilities in comparisons with general education students. Then in 2004, when reauthorizing the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Congress permitted the application of "scientifically-based instruction" interventions for any struggling student as remedies not only for early identification, but also as prevention of over identification and unnecessary referrals (P.L. 108-446, § 613 (f) (1), § 614 (b) (6) (A)). This provision is commonly called Response to Intervention (RTI).

The provisions of both laws, NCLB and IDEA 2004, including RTI, apply to all students, those students with disabilities as well as their peers without disabilities. Thus, RTI is an initiative that applies equally to regular and special education programs as both sets of teachers work collaboratively to address the needs of each and every student who struggles academically and/or behaviorally.

In addition to academic deficit, interfering behavior is often a factor that must be considered when trying to determine why a student is not performing at a satisfactory level (or rate of learning). Academics and behavior are closely connected and need to be addressed simultaneously. Students who exhibit interfering behaviors should be screened and monitored just as those who are experiencing academic difficulties.

Components and Roles

Universal Screening

Instruction in the core area is effective when a significant number of students meet proficiency levels based on the results of universal screening tools. As part of implementing RTI, schools conduct universal screening at least two to three times during the school year, such as fall and winter or fall, winter and spring. District personnel assist school leaders in identifying, administering, scoring, and interpreting universal screening instruments. School leaders focus on the data that indicate areas of successful instruction, areas of instructional weakness, and areas in which teachers need to modify instructional strategies. For social development, school leaders use data on effective classroom management and school-wide systems for improving student conduct. School leaders use the data to identify behavioral supports for teachers to improve behavior management. School RTI teams analyze the universal screening results to consult on individual student academic needs as well as to identify students struggling with pro-social behaviors.

Figure 2: An Overview of LEA Administrative Involvement in Universal Screening.

LEA Administrative Roles in Universal Screening for Each Tier of Instruction – District Level	
Assistant Superintendents, Directors of Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendents, Directors of Curriculum and Instruction	• Provide curriculum maps/syllabi for all courses, subject areas, and grade levels with benchmarks for student proficiency (All Tiers) • Provide professional development in implementing curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for diverse learners (All Tiers) • Provide professional development for all teachers on instructional strategies, including flexible grouping, for ensuring diverse learners meet proficiency benchmarks established in the adopted curriculum (All Tiers) • Develop the systemic monitoring of curriculum and instruction to ensure the fidelity of implementation of the adopted curriculum (All Tiers) • Adequately prepare instructional supervisors and principals to implement the curriculum and instructional monitoring system (All Tiers) • Collaborate with Director of Assessment in identifying formative and universal screening assessments aligned with the adopted curriculum and its proficiency benchmarks (Tier I) • Monitor assessment results to ensure curriculum pacing and instructional strategies meet the needs of at least 80% of students for all courses, subject areas, and grade levels (Tier I) • Work with Director of Assessment in the identification and/or development of curriculum-based progress monitoring assessments (Tier II and III) • Work with Director of Assessment in the identification and/or development of curriculum-based progress monitoring assessments (Tier II and III) • Prepare principals, team leaders, department and grade level chairs in monitoring instructional and behavioral intervention plans and implementation (Tier II and III)
Directors of Assessment	• Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to obtain benchmarked formative screening assessments that are reliable, valid, and appropriate (All Tiers) • Provide resources for administering universal screening assessments a minimum of two times per year per school (Tier I) • Provide resources for administering assessments in every school (All Tiers) • Provide resources for the administration of universal academic and social development screening assessments for every school a minimum of two times per year (Tier I) • Provide professional development for all teachers, principals, and other instructional personnel in administering and interpreting assessment results (All Tiers) • Calibrate the reliability of assessment administration on a regular basis by observing testing sessions (All Tiers) • Provide professional development for principals and other instructional supervisors for participating in calibration and reliability studies on assessment administration (All Tiers) • Work with school psychologists, social workers, school counselors, principals, and assistant principals in developing or obtaining reliable and valid benchmarks in school behavior and discipline data to monitor behavior and social development in the district and schools (All Tiers)

LEA Administrative Roles in Universal Screening for Each Tier of Instruction – District Level	
Directors for English Language Directors for English Language Learners	• Coordinate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to enhance curriculum maps to include ELL across all courses, subjects, and grade levels. (All Tiers) • Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in providing professional development for general and special education teachers on implementing the curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for diverse learners (All Tiers) • Work with Directors of Assessment to identify reliable, valid, and benchmarked formative assessments appropriate for use with ELL (Tier I) • Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to enhance curriculum maps/syllabi for all courses, subject areas, and grade levels (Tier I) • Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to enhance curriculum maps/syllabi for all courses, subject areas, and grade levels providing alternative interventions for groups and/or individuals struggling with specific aspects of the curriculum (Tier II and III) • Work with Directors of Assessment to identify progress monitoring assessments appropriate for use with ELL (Tier II and III) • Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to provide focused professional development on flexible grouping for ELL with Tier II and III interventions (Tier II and III) • Participate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in the preparation of principals, team leaders, department chairs, and grade-level chairs in monitoring ELL-focused instructional and behavioral intervention plans and implementation (Tier II and III)
Directors of Special Education	• Coordinate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to enhance curriculum maps across all courses, subjects, and grade levels (All Tiers) • Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in providing professional development for all teachers on implementing the curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for diverse learners (All Tiers) • Work with Directors of Assessment in setting benchmark indicators for the universal screening of students struggling with academic or social development (Tier I) • Coordinate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to enhance curriculum maps across all courses, subject, and grade levels for struggling learners (Tier II and III) • Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in providing professional development for general and special education teachers in implementing curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for struggling learners (Tier II and III) Work with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to ensure curriculum and performance standards are addressed in all IEPs (Tier II and III)
Title I Coordinators	• Coordinate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in providing supplementary professional development for teachers in Title I schools to support research and needs based activities (All Tiers) • Coordinate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction to enhance opportunities for professional development as part of the District Improvement process (All Tiers) • Work with Directors of Assessment to support the use of reliable, valid

LEA Administrative Roles in Universal Screening for Each Tier of Instruction – District Level

Title I Coordinators	formative and summative assessments to assist in the implementation of Title I programs (Tier I) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of Title I requirements, student progress, and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)
School Psychologists	• Work with Directors of Assessment to identify benchmarked formative assessments that are reliable, valid, and appropriate for screening academic and pro-social skill development (Tier II and III) • Work with principals and assistant principals in identifying student behavior and discipline data indicators for screening pro-social skill development (Tier I) • Coordinate with Directors of Curriculum and Instruction in providing professional development for general and special education teachers in implementing classroom management and pro-social skills development (All Tiers) • Participate with Curriculum and Instruction in preparation of principals, team leaders, and department and grade level chairs in monitoring instructional and behavioral intervention plans and implementation (Tier II and III) • Work with RTI Student Intervention Teams on developing action plans and measures of implementation fidelity and progress monitoring (Tier II and III)
Principals/ Assistant Principals	• Participate in district coordination of professional development for RTI strategies, and procedures in addressing struggling students' academic and pro-social development (All Tiers) • Participate in professional development for RTI strategies for addressing struggling students' academic and pro-social development (Tier I) • Coordinate universal academic screening activities a minimum of two times per year, including the development of an administration schedule, securing classroom coverage for teachers, and communicating with parents (Tier I) • Monitor behavior and disciplinary data and screening benchmarks at least three times per year (Tier I) • Schedule for instruction, intervention, and teaming (All Tiers) • Coordinate and/or provide embedded professional development (All Tiers) • Develop a system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instructional and behavioral interventions that ensure program fidelity (All Tiers) • Understand the data analysis component of RTI and ensure sound decision-making for all students (All Tiers)
Principals/ Assistant Principals	• Establish a communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)
School Counselors	• Participate in the interpretation of student screening data to effect systemic change within the school so every student receives the benefit of the school's academic and counseling programs (Tier I) • Participate with the RTI School Leadership Team in developing action plans for prevention and intervention services defining the desired student competencies and achievement results for RTI tiers (All Tiers)

LEA Administrative Roles in Universal Screening for Each Tier of Instruction – District Level	
School Counselors	• Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers) • Develop a system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instructional and behavioral interventions that ensures program fidelity (All Tiers) • Participate in the RTI Student Intervention Team to develop specific action plans for groups and individual students identified as struggling in the universal screening (Tier II and III)
Instructional Coaches/ Subject Area Specialists/ Literacy Coaches	• Participate in the interpretation of student screening data to effect systemic change within the school so every student receives the benefit of the school academic programs (Tier I) • Coordinate and/or provide embedded professional development (All Tiers) • Participate in the system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instructional interventions (Tier I) • Participate in the RTI Student Intervention Team to develop specific action plans for groups and individual students identified as struggling in the universal screening (Tier II)
RTI School Leadership Teams	• Coordinate universal academic screening activities at a minimum of two times a year, including the development of an administration schedule, securing classroom coverage for teachers and communicating with parents (Tier I) • Monitor behavior and disciplinary data and screening benchmarks at least three times per year (Tier I) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers) • Coordinate and/or provide embedded professional development (All Tiers)
Grade Level/ Department/ Subject Area Teams	• Participate in the interpretation of student screening data to effect systemic change within the school so every student receives the benefit of the school academic programs (Tier I) • Ensure the appropriate application of instructional and behavioral strategies that ensures student progress (Tier I) • Participate in a communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)
Student Intervention Teams	• Participate in the interpretation of student screening data to effect systemic change within the school so every student receives the benefit of the school academic programs (Tier I) • Develop specific action plans for groups and individual students identified as struggling in the universal screening (Tier II and III) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)

Progress Monitoring

All tiers require regular, specific, and reliable measures of students' progress to academic and social proficiency. Universal screening is one approach for Tier I. In addition, all teachers must use progress monitoring in their classes. Teachers use brief standardized or curriculum-based measures to observe students' academic progress to proficiency as often as bi-weekly. Working with parents and other

teachers, they monitor students' social development and regularly check students' ability to follow classroom and school rules. School leaders provide teachers training on reliable and valid measures and observe teachers regularly to check for the reliable administration and interpretation of results. School leaders work with teachers and parents in addressing students' social development and appropriate behavioral management. District leaders provide support to schools in assuring that scores are accurately recorded, and given the instrumentation, provide appropriate regular checks for inter-rater reliability. District leaders assist school leaders in monitoring behavior, discipline data, and other measures of development to identify students who struggle socially and behaviorally.

At Tier II and III, progress monitoring is tied to the specific interventions to determine if the intervention is working. Depending on the intervention, the measurement instruments must be sensitive to incremental change in student performance. These instruments must be benchmarked, reliable, and valid measures of progress and must be administered frequently. The frequency of the assessments depends on the intensity of the intervention. Students receiving more intensive intervention require more frequent monitoring. District leaders provide support to schools in identifying and/or developing progress monitoring instruments for Tiers II and III. School leaders support teacher training and their use of these instruments. They also develop schedules for the proper frequency of monitoring for the interventions.

Figure 3: Illustrates Roles of LEA Administrators for Progress Monitoring across Tiers

LEA Administrative Roles in Progress Monitoring for each Tier of Instruction – District Level	
Assistant Superintendent/ Directors of Curriculum and Instruction	• Enhance curriculum maps/syllabi for all courses, subject areas, and grade levels providing alternative interventions for groups and/or individuals struggling with specific aspects of the curriculum (All Tiers) • Provide benchmarks for student performance for all courses, subject areas, and grade levels (Tier I) • Provide professional development for general and special education teachers in implementing curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for diverse learners (Tier I) • Provide focused professional development on flexible grouping for Tier I, Tier II and III interventions (All Tiers) • Prepare principals, team leaders, department and grade level chairs in monitoring instructional and behavioral intervention action plans and implementation (Tier II and III) • Work with Assessment in the identification and/or development of curriculum-based progress monitoring assessments (All Tiers) • Work with school-level instructional supervisors in monitoring instructional quality through observation data and the aggregate analysis of progress monitoring data (Tier II and III) • Work with school-based RTI leadership and grade level teams in monitoring curriculum pacing and adequacy of instructional strategies through aggregate analysis of progress monitoring data (Tier II and III)
Directors of Assessment	• Work with Curriculum and Instruction to obtain reliable, valid, and curriculum-based progress monitoring assessments (All Tiers) • Provide resources for administering progress monitoring assessments at least bi-weekly (Tier I) • Provide professional development for all teachers (general and special education), principals, and other instructional personnel in establishing baselines, progress monitoring, analyzing, and interpreting assessment data (All Tiers)
Directors of	• Prepare school personnel to properly administer and interpret progress

LEA Administrative Roles in Progress Monitoring for each Tier of Instruction – District Level

Assessment	monitoring assessments (Tier II and III) • Work with RTI School Leadership Teams on action plans and progress monitoring measures for social development interventions (Tier II and III) • Calibrate the reliability of assessment administration on a regular basis by observing testing sessions (All Tiers) • Provide professional development for principals, instructional supervisors, and teachers in the use of progress monitoring (All Tiers)
Directors for English Language Learners	• Work with Assessment to identify reliable, valid, and benchmarked progress monitoring assessments appropriate for use with ELL (Tier II and III) • Work with Curriculum and Instruction to provide professional development for general and special education teachers in implementing curriculum with appropriate, research, based instructional strategies for ELL (All Tiers) • Work with Curriculum and Instruction to provide focused professional development on flexible grouping for Tier I, Tier II, and III interventions (All Tiers) • Participate with Curriculum and Instruction in the preparation of principals, team leaders, department- and grade-level chairs in monitoring instructional and behavioral intervention plans and implementation (Tier II and III)
Directors of Special Education	• Coordinate with Curriculum and Instruction to enhance curriculum maps across all courses, subjects, and grade levels for struggling learners (All Tiers) • Work with Curriculum and Instruction in professional development for general and special education teachers in implementing curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for struggling learners (All Tiers) • Work with Assessment in setting benchmark indicators and curriculum-based progress monitoring of struggling with academic or social development (Tier I) • Work with Curriculum and Instruction to provide focused professional development on flexible grouping for Tier I, Tier II, and III interventions (All Tiers) • Participate with Curriculum and Instruction in the preparation of principals, team leaders, department and grade- level chairs in monitoring instructional and behavioral intervention plans and implementation (Tier II and III) • Work with Curriculum and Instruction to ensure that curriculum and performance standards are addressed in all Individual Education Plans (IEPs). (Tier II and III)
Title I Coordinators	• Work with Curriculum and Instruction to provide supplementary professional development for teachers in Title I schools that support curricular based instructional strategies (All Tiers) • Assist Assessment in coordinating progress monitoring efforts in Title I schools (All Tiers) • Work with Assessment to support the use of reliable, valid, and appropriate progress monitoring assessments for Title I programs (Tier II and III)
Title I Coordinators	• Participate in the communication system to inform parents in Title I schools of progress monitoring initiatives and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers) • Work with school personnel in Title I schools by monitoring curricular and instructional programs through aggregate analysis of progress monitoring data (Tier II and III)
	• Coordinate with Curriculum and Instruction in professional development for

LEA Administrative Roles in Progress Monitoring for each Tier of Instruction – District Level

School Psychologists	general and special education teachers in implementing classroom management and pro-social skills development (All Tiers) • Work with Assessment to identify reliable, valid, and benchmarked progress monitoring assessments appropriate for screening academic and pro-social skills development (Tier I) • Work with principals and assistant principals in identifying student behavior and discipline data indicators for progress monitoring of pro-social skills development (Tier I) • Participate with Curriculum and Instruction in the preparation of principals, team leaders, department, and grade-level chairs in monitoring instructional and behavioral intervention plans and implementation (All Tiers) • Work with RTI Student Intervention Teams on developing action plans and determining measures of implementation fidelity and progress monitoring (Tier II and III)
Social Workers	• Work with Assessment to identify reliable, valid, and benchmarked progress monitoring assessments appropriate for academic and pro-social skills development (Tier I) • Work with school psychologists, principals, and assistant principals in identifying student behavior and discipline data indicators for progress monitoring of pro-social skills development (Tier II and III) • Work with RTI Student Intervention Teams on developing action plans and determining measures of implementation fidelity and progress monitoring (Tier II and III) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)
Speech and Language Pathologists	• Coordinate with Curriculum and Instruction in professional development for general and special education teachers in implementing curriculum with appropriate, research-based instructional strategies for diverse learners (Tier II and III) • Work with Assessment to identify reliable, valid, and benchmarked progress monitoring assessments appropriate as indicators of successful speech and language development (Tier II and III) • Work with RTI Student Intervention Teams on developing action plans and determining measures of implementation fidelity and progress monitoring (Tier II and III)

LEA Administrative Roles in Progress Monitoring – School Level

Principals/ Assistant Principals	• Participate in district coordination and professional development for RTI strategies and procedures in addressing struggling students' academic and pro-social development. (Tier I) • Schedule for instruction, intervention, and teaming (All Tiers) • Develop a system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instructional and behavioral interventions that ensures program fidelity (All Tiers)
Principals/ Assistant Principals	• Supervise teams and teachers in planning for and implementing progress monitoring (All Tiers) • Establish a communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)
School	• Participate with the RTI School Leadership Team in developing action plans for

LEA Administrative Roles in Progress Monitoring for each Tier of Instruction – District Level

Counselors	prevention and intervention services defining the desired student competencies and achievement results for RTI tiers (All Tiers) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers) • Develop a system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instructional and behavioral interventions that ensures program fidelity (All Tiers) • Work with RTI Student Intervention Teams on developing action plans and determining measures of implementation fidelity and progress monitoring (Tier II and III)
Instructional Coaches/ Subject Area Specialists/ Literacy Coaches	• Participate with the RTI School Leadership Team in developing action plans for prevention and intervention services defining the desired student competencies and achievement results for RTI tiers. • Coordinate and/or provide embedded professional development on flexible group interventions required at Tier II and III (Tier II and III) • Participate in the system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instructional interventions (All Tiers) • Work with RTI Student Intervention Teams on developing action plans and determining measures of implementation fidelity and progress monitoring (Tier II and III) • Assist teams and teachers in planning for and implementing interventions and progress monitoring (Tier II and III)
RTI School Leadership Teams	• Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers) • Coordinate and/or provide embedded professional development on progress monitoring procedures (All Tiers) • Assist teams and teachers in planning for and implementing progress monitoring (Tier II and III) • Review progress monitoring data to ensure the effectiveness of tiered instructional and behavioral interventions (Tier II and III)
Grade Level/ Department/ Subject Area Teams	• Participate in professional development for action planning, implementing, and progress monitoring (All Tiers) • Ensure the appropriate application of instructional and behavioral strategies that ensure student progress across all tiers (All Tiers) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)
Student Intervention Teams	• Develop specific plans for groups and individual students identified as struggling academically and/or socially (All Tiers) • Monitor the fidelity of the implementation of the plans and the effectiveness of the interventions and progress monitoring for each group or individual student identified as struggling academically and/or socially (Tier II and III) • Participate in the communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement (All Tiers)

District personnel play significant roles in assuring the collaboration between general and special education staff in adopting and implementing RTI. School personnel take their cues from district leadership in implementing the teamwork necessary to operate all three tiers of the model.

RTI requires changes in the ways resources are used. Educators need to understand the approach and why all students need close monitoring—especially those students who are developing early academic and behavior skills.

Implementation

Leadership

District Leadership Teams should examine policies and resources to determine what gaps exist in the foundation to support a successful RTI process. They should ask such questions as the following:

- Is the core model meeting the needs of 80 percent of the students?

- Does the school operate from an "all students can learn" philosophy?

- Is there is a willingness to allow data to guide decision making?

- Is there true collaboration among all entities, such as general education, district office administration, special education, interventionists, and other affected personnel?

- Is there an adequate system, including technology, to support data collection and analysis that provides timely feedback to teachers?

- Are supplemental programs and the capacity to match those programs to the needs identified in the universal screening and progress monitoring practices available?

- Can support be provided with respect to research-based interventions and progress monitoring methods?

- Can flexible staffing be achieved to accommodate the delivery of Tier II and Tier III interventions?

- Can resources be committed and obtained for screening, assessment, and interventions?

The Role of the School Principal

The success of RTI is determined at the school level, and the principal plays a major role in this success. In order for an RTI process to work effectively, the principal must be the instructional leader. The principal oversees the following components:

- coordinating universal screening activities three times per year, including the development of an administration schedule, securing classroom coverage for teachers and communicating with parents;
- scheduling for instruction, intervention, and teaming;

- coordinating and/or providing embedded professional development;
- developing a system for the continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instruction to ensure program fidelity;
- understanding the data analysis component of RTI and ensuring sound decision-making for all students; and
- establishing a communication system to inform parents of student progress and opportunities for parental involvement.

Teaming

RTI School Leadership Team

The School Leadership Team provides the leadership and oversight required to implement the RTI model. It may include a school administrator, general and special education teachers, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, the speech-language pathologist, the school psychologist, school social worker, curriculum specialist, project coordinator and district level staff as needed. Preliminary team activities include (1) developing a school schedule that facilitates common planning and intervention times for Tiers II and III, (2) attending state and regional meetings, (3) communicating information to district and school staff, (4) re-teaching and reinforcing assessment procedures as needed, (5) analyzing school level assessment data, and (6) disseminating information to staff, parents, and local and state stakeholders. The primary function of this team structure is to oversee implementation fidelity. Quality classroom reading and math instruction based on scientific research-based instruction is the keystone of the tiered intervention model. The School Leadership Team must understand and monitor not only *what* instruction and interventions are provided, but also *how* instruction and intervention are provided. The School Leadership Team meets, at least, monthly to discuss the school's implementation of RTI. Topics for discussion include principal's observations obtained during walk-throughs, classroom-level student achievement data, core reading and math program issues, professional development needs, resource needs, teacher-generated questions and concerns, and other issues specific to the school. There is a direct relationship between the level of understanding and involvement of the School Leadership Team and the effectiveness of the RTI process.

Grade Level/Department or Subject Area Teams

Grade-level, department, or subject-area teams consist of general education teachers and interventionists. The principal and other school personnel may also participate. They focus on student progress by (1) identifying students who are not performing satisfactorily, (2) grouping students according to specific skill needs and setting intervention goals, and (3) monitoring student progress. This collaborative effort provides support, expertise, and a common language for making instructional decisions about students not meeting grade level expectations.

Grade-level, department, or subject-area teams meet every one to two weeks. The meetings can occur before school or after school and/or during common teacher planning times. Resourceful scheduling that maximizes teacher time is essential and varies from school to school.

School Intervention Team

In the RTI process, the School Intervention Team may include the principal, school counselor, student's teachers, interventionists (such as reading specialist, math specialist, special education teacher, behavior specialist), parents, school nurse, speech-language therapist, school psychologist, ESOL educator, school social worker, and others. This team's primary function is to analyze academic and/or

behavior data for individual students to make important instructional adjustments and to determine research-based interventions targeted to specific student needs.

Supervision and Monitoring

The implementation of RTI suffers when staff members do not supervise and monitor implementation to insure fidelity to the adopted model. Administrators, such as principals and their superiors must adequately monitor instruction, assessment, and curricular strategies. RTI requires collaboration and interaction among programs that have tended to operate in isolation from one another. Typically, time constraints and schedules partially prevented this collaboration. Administrators may need to adjust schedules to ensure that all involved in RTI have adequate opportunities to analyze assessments and other data, identify students who struggle academically or socially, design and implement plans, and coordinate services. Time, however, is one of many scarce resources that administrators must leverage for the successful implementation of RTI.

Role-Based Resources

District-Level Administrators

Assistant Superintendents/Directors of Curriculum and Instruction
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, http://www.ASCD.org
National Center on Response to Intervention, www.rti4success.org
National Staff Development Council, http://www.nsdc.org
International Reading Association, http://www.reading.org

Directors of Assessment
National Council on Measurement in Education, http://www.ncme.org/

Directors for English Language Learners
National Council for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems,
http://nccrest.org/publications/briefs.html

Directors of Special Education
Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children, http://www.teachingld.org
Learning Disabilities Association of America, http://www.LDAamerica.org
National Association of State Directors of Special Education, http://www.nasdse.org
National Center on Response to Intervention, www.rti4success.org
National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, http://ldonline.oprg/njcld
National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, http://www.nrcld.org
Regional Resource and Federal Centers (RRFC) for Special Education
Network, http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/

Speech and Language Pathologists
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, http://www.asha.org

School Psychologists
National Association of School Psychologists, http://www.nasponline.org

Social Worker

National Association of Social Workers, http://www.socialworkers.org
School Social Work Association of America, http://www.sswaa.org

School-Level Leadership

Principals/Assistant Principals
National Association of School Psychologists Resources for Principals,
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/nasp_rti.pdf
National Center on Response to Intervention, www.rti4success.org
Regional Resource and Federal Centers (RRFC) for Special Education
Network, http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/

School Counselors
American School Counselor Association, http://www.schoolcounselor.org/

Instructional Coaches/ Subject Area Specialists/Literacy Coaches
National Council of Teachers of English http://www.ncte.org

Teams
o RTI School Leadership Team
o RTI Grade-Level Team
o RTI Student Intervention Team

National Center on Response to Intervention: To meet these challenges, the American Institutes for Research and researchers from Vanderbilt University and the University of Kansas, through funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), have established the National Center on Response to Intervention. The Center's mission is to provide technical assistance to states and districts and builds the capacity of states to assist districts in implementing proven models for RTI/EIS. http://www.rti4success.org

The What Works Clearinghouse was established in 2002 by the Institute of Education Sciences at the US Department of Education to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence about "what works" in education. The What Works Clearinghouse offers a range of publications that evaluate beginning reading interventions for students in grades K-3. These interventions and strategies are intended to increase skills in alphabetics, reading fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Position Papers on Response to Intervention for Educational Leadership

International Reading Association, *Response to Intervention: Guiding Principles for Educators*, www.reading.org

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Cantley, Ron. Project Coordinator, Stanaford Elementary School, Raleigh County Schools

W. David Tilley, and Batsche ,George M. 2006. Problem Solving and RtI-Advanced Training Workshop, December

The American Speech-Language- Hearing Association, et al. New roles in response to intervention: Creating Success for schools and children. 2006.
http://www.reading.org/downloads/resources/rti_role_definitions.pdf

Yell, M. L. 2006. *The law and special education, 2nd edition.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Additional Resources for Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions

Several web-based libraries have been created to assist school personnel in selecting evidence-based interventions. The following websites are among those most popular.

International Campbell Collaboration. The International Campbell Collaboration maintains an online registry of reviews of evidence-based social, behavioral, and educational interventions. www.campbellcollaboration.org

Promising Practices Network.
The Promising Practices Network website provides descriptions of research-supported programs for improving child, youth, and family outcomes. www.promisingpractices.net

SECTION III

Quality Instruction

In South Carolina, ***quality instruction*** means engaging students in learning and problem solving while meeting the diverse needs of all students. Good instruction is creative and motivating yet is carefully thought out with the interests and abilities of the students in mind. It is flexible and individually challenging for gifted students and for those who learn at a slower pace. For these reasons, Response to Intervention (RTI) SC recommends a three-tier, service-delivery model in which all students receive high-quality, research- supported, differentiated academic instruction with fidelity as well as research-supported behavior strategies.

Quality instruction does not happen by chance. There is no single best practice in delivering quality instruction. Delivery methods depend on the content, the specific learning objectives, and the needs of the learners in the classroom. Therefore, quality instruction is a matter of planning, of delivery, and of evaluating the effectiveness of instruction and its impact on student learning. The overall goal is for students to master concepts and skills. Mastery learning involves sequencing, monitoring, and control of the learning process. RTI is a comprehensive delivery model that encompasses all of the needs mentioned in this section on Quality Instruction. For a more detailed description of the model please see ***Section 1*** in this document. Also refer to ***[Literacy Matters, the SC Comprehensive Literacy State Plan](#)***, and the Effective Practice section.

Planning Quality Instruction

Quality instruction facilitates learning when it is aligned to the internal learning processes of students. Therefore, instruction is a planned set of external events that support learning processes. Educational learning theorist Robert ́Gagné (1985) developed instructional design principles of planning for instruction that lead to efficient learning. Some of those principles are as follows:

1. The goals of the instruction, the resources available, and the learning time allotted are made explicit.

2. A framework for the academic content to be taught, including the learning goals and objectives, is developed.

3. Learning goals are broken down into major units of instruction with skills and concepts to be learned.

4. The skills and concepts to be learned are sequenced into cumulative lessons.

5. Lessons are broken down into specific instructional activities, and the characteristics of the learner are taken into account.

6. The procedures for the assessment of learning are determined.

7. The various instructional methodologies are reviewed and chosen.

8. Instruction is evaluated for its effectiveness, and revisions are made as needed.

In *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction,* Robert J. Marzano includes these questions to guide the development of a teacher's instructional practice:

- What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?

- What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?

- What will I do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?

- What will I do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?

- What will I do to engage students?

- What will I do to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?

- What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?

- What will I do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?

- What will I do to communicate high expectations for all students?

- What will I do to develop effective lessons organized into a cohesive unit?

(Marzano, 2007)

High Progress Classrooms

A key feature of high progress classrooms is high quality instruction. Rigorous academic standards and content are not enough. Teachers create and maintain a high progress classroom during the course of the school year. High progress classrooms feature high- quality instruction that encourages **students to interact purposefully with the content.**

Various instructional strategies may be used to involve students in their own learning. Often these strategies use real-world examples of the concepts presented. In addition, **instruction is on the appropriate level for students**.

Teachers take into account what students already know and challenge them to learn more. Teachers use a variety of experiences to access multiple ways of learning concepts. The teacher's role is to ensure that no students slip between the cracks.

Finally, high quality instruction is a critical element in creating an **environment that is conducive to learning.** Teachers encourage students to ask questions and challenge them to engage deeply with the content. Teachers ask questions that inspire thinking and help students make connections among concepts. A teacher provides clear explanations during the lesson. Effective lessons engage students in meaningful, intellectual work, as the teacher guides to ensure that students make sense of key academic concepts.

Delivering Quality Instruction

There are several methods of delivering quality instruction. These methods depend on the content being taught and the needs of the learners in the classroom. All instructional methodologies have certain characteristics that have been found to facilitate learning. The chart below details these characteristics, or 'instructional events,' and their purposes:

Instructional Event	Purpose
1. Gain the learner's attention and provide motivation for learning	Direct the learner to the purpose and relevance of the lesson
2. Present the learning objective(s)	Make the expectation of performance explicit
3. Review prerequisites and establish prior knowledge	Provide the foundation for new learning related to what a student already knows
4. Present new content clearly and precisely	Present procedures, processes and tasks to be learned while maintaining connection to prior knowledge
5. Guide the learning process	Elaborate the content by examples, descriptions, stories to provide a rich knowledge structure
6. Perform skills and apply concepts	Detect learner misunderstandings (formative assessment)
7. Provide feedback about performance	Inform learner of the accuracy of his knowledge
8. Assess performance	Test the knowledge and skills of the learner
9. Guide retention and transfer	Strengthen knowledge by practice and application in different contexts or situations

(From Gagné *Principles of Instructional Design*, reprint 2005)

Methods of Delivering Instruction

The following is a list, in alphabetical order, of methods and skills for delivering quality instruction. This list is not exhaustive and does not recommend one method over another.

Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction (DI) is a model for teaching that emphasizes well-developed and carefully planned lessons designed around small learning increments and clearly defined and prescribed teaching tasks. It is based on the theory that clear instruction eliminating misinterpretations can greatly improve and accelerate learning.

"Reading instruction is most effective when teachers provide students with direct and explicit teaching in the specific skills and strategies that are necessary for reading proficiency. The finding holds for students across grades and ages (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000; Torgesen et al., 2007). Although such instruction is effective for teaching a range of reading skills and strategies, it is especially effective in helping students comprehend fully what they read (Nokes & Dole, 2004)."

Effective teachers, those who beat the odds in preventing student failure, combine direct, explicit instruction of strategies and concepts with other teaching approaches, nesting it within complete programs of literacy development (Graves, 2004; Langer, 2002). They provide students with content-rich materials, interact with them in meaningful discussions, and engage them in purposeful writing, all of which afford students opportunities to explore how to use the strategies and clarify concepts across diverse contexts, and so make the strategies and concepts their own.

The exemplary model of direct, explicit instruction consists of five phases that allow teachers to scaffold instruction, gradually shifting and releasing responsibility for completing a task from themselves to students (Joyce & Weil, 2000; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983;Rosenshine & Meister, 1992;Vygotsky, 1978).

The five phases include the following:
- Orientation
- Presentation
- Structured Practice
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice

Initially, in direct, explicit instruction, teachers activate students' relevant prior knowledge and experiences and help them to connect it to the new knowledge they will gain from the lesson.

The basic philosophy of DI is found in the following statements:

- All children can be taught.
- All children can improve academically and in terms of self-image.
- All teachers can succeed if provided with adequate professional learning opportunities.
- Low performers and disadvantaged learners must be taught at a faster rate than typically occurs if they are to catch up to their higher-performing peers.
- All details of instruction must be controlled to minimize the chance of students' misinterpreting the information being taught and to maximize the reinforcing effect of instruction.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is inductive, learner-centered, and activity-oriented. Personalized reflection about an experience and the formulation of plans to apply learning to other contexts are critical factors in effective experiential learning. Experiential learning emphasizes the process of learning and not the product.

Experiential learning can be viewed as a cycle consisting of five phases, all of which are necessary:
- experiencing (an activity occurs),
- sharing or publishing (reactions and observations are shared),
- analyzing or processing (patterns and dynamics are determined),
- inferring or generalizing (principles are derived), and
- applying (plans are made to use learning in new situations).

Some examples of experiential learning are as follows:

- **Narrative essays** are told from a defined point of view, often the author's, so the writer shares feelings as well as specific and often sensory details to get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. Since a narrative relies on personal experiences, it is often in the form of a story. When the writer uses this technique, he or she must be sure to include all the conventions of storytelling: plot, character, setting, climax, and ending. It is usually filled with details that are carefully selected to explain, support, or enhance the story. All details relate to the main point the writer is attempting to make.

- **Simulations** are instructional scenarios where the learner is placed in a "world" defined by the teacher. They represent a reality within which students interact. The teacher controls the parameters of this "world" and uses it to achieve the desired instructional results. Simulations are, in a way, a lab experiment where the students themselves are the test subjects. Students experience the reality of the scenario and gather meaning from it. This strategy fits well with the

principles of constructivism. Simulations promote the use of critical and evaluative thinking. The ambiguous or open-ended nature of a simulation encourages students to contemplate the implications of a scenario. The situation feels real and thus leads to more engaging interaction by learners. The activities are motivating and enjoyable to students of all ages. The industry and commitment of the participants usually determine success. The goal is not to win but to acquire knowledge and understanding.

- **Role playing** asks students to act out characters in a predefined "situation." Role playing allows students to take risk-free positions by acting out characters in hypothetical situations. It can help them understand the range of concerns, values, and positions held by other people. Role playing is an enlightening and interesting way to help students see a problem from another perspective.

Independent Study

Independent study refers to the range of instructional methods purposefully provided to foster the development of individual student initiative, self-reliance, and self-improvement. While independent study may be initiated by student or teacher, the focus here is on planned independent study by students under the guidance or supervision of a classroom teacher. In addition, independent study can include learning in partnership with another individual or as part of a small group.

The following are examples of independent study:

- **Computer-assisted instruction (CAI)** is a learning tool presented on a computer that allows students to progress at their own pace and work individually or problem solve in a group. Computers provide immediate feedback, letting students know whether their answer is correct. If the answer is not correct, the program shows students how to answer correctly. Computers offer a different type of activity and a change of pace from teacher-led or group instruction. Also, computer-assisted instruction moves at the student's pace and usually does not move ahead until he has mastered the skill.

- **Journal writing** is a learning tool based on the idea that students write to learn. Students use journals to write about topics of personal interest, to note their observations, to imagine, to wonder and to connect new information with things they already know. Using journals fosters learning in many ways. Students who use journals are actively engaged in their own learning and have the opportunity to clarify and reflect upon their thinking. When students write in journals, they can record ideas and feelings, special words and expressions they have heard, interesting things that have happened to them or information about interesting people. Journal writing offers opportunities for students to write without the fear often associated with marking. Every journal entry is individualized.

- **Research projects** are effective for developing and extending language arts skills as students learn in all subject areas. While doing research, students practice reading for specific purposes, recording information, sequencing and organizing ideas, and using language to inform others. A research model provides students with a framework for organizing information about a topic. Research projects frequently include these four steps:
  - determining the purpose and topic,
  - gathering the information,
  - organizing the information, and
  - sharing knowledge.

Indirect Instruction

In contrast to the direct instruction strategy, indirect instruction is mainly student-centered although the two strategies can complement each other. Indirect instruction seeks a high level of student involvement in observing, investigating, drawing inferences from data, or forming hypotheses. It takes advantage of students' interest and curiosity, often encouraging them to generate alternatives or solve problems.

In indirect instruction, the role of the teacher shifts from lecturer/director to that of facilitator, supporter, and resource person. The teacher arranges the learning environment, provides opportunity for student involvement, and, when appropriate, provides feedback to students while they conduct the inquiry (Martin, 1983).

Some examples of indirect instruction are the following:

- **Problem solving** is reflective and creative. Regardless of the type of problem solving a class uses, problem solving focuses on knowing the issues, considering all possible factors and finding a solution. Because all ideas are accepted initially, problem solving allows for finding the best possible solution as opposed to the easiest solution or the first solution proposed. The process is used to help students think about a problem without applying their own pre-conceived ideas. Defining what the problem looks like is separated from looking at the cause of the problem to prevent premature judgment. Similarly, clarifying what makes an acceptable solution is defined before solutions are generated, preventing preconceptions from driving solutions. Some people argue that problem solving is the art of reasoning in its purest form. In the classroom, problem solving is best used to help students understand complex ethical dilemmas, think about the future, or do some strategic planning.

- **Inquiry** provides opportunities for students to experience and acquire processes through which they can gather information about the world. This requires a high level of interaction among the learner, the teacher, the area of study, available resources, and the learning environment. Students become actively involved in the learning process as they do the following:
    - act upon their curiosity and interests,
    - develop questions,
    - think their way through controversies or dilemmas,
    - look at problems analytically,
    - inquire into their preconceptions and what they already know,
    - develop, clarify, and test hypotheses, and
    - draw inferences and generate possible solutions.

    Questioning is the heart of inquiry learning. Students must ask relevant questions and develop ways to search for answers and generate explanations. Teachers place emphasis on the process of thinking as this applies to student interaction with issues, data, topics, concepts, materials, and problems. Activities encourage and nurture divergent thinking as students recognize that questions often have more than one "good" or "correct" answer. Such thinking leads in many instances to elaboration of further questions. In this way, students come to the realization that knowledge may not be fixed and permanent but may be tentative, emergent, and open to questioning and alternative hypotheses.

- **Concept map** is a special form of web diagram for exploring knowledge and gathering and sharing information. Concept mapping is the strategy employed to develop a concept map. A concept map consists of nodes or cells that contain a concept, item, or question and links. The links are labeled and denote direction with an arrow symbol. The labeled links explain the

relationship between the nodes. The arrow describes the direction of the relationship and reads like a sentence. Concept maps can be used for the following reasons:

- to develop an understanding of a body of knowledge, to explore new information and relationships,
- to access prior knowledge,
- to gather new knowledge and information,
- to share knowledge and information generated,
- to design structures or processes such as written documents, constructions, web sites, web searches, multimedia presentations, and
- to create problem-solving options.

Interactive instruction

Interactive instruction relies heavily on discussion and sharing among participants. Students can learn from peers and teachers to develop social skills, to organize their thoughts, and to develop rational arguments.

The interactive instruction strategy allows for a range of groupings and interactive methods. The teacher outlines the topic, the amount of discussion time, the composition and size of the groups, and reporting or sharing techniques. Interactive instruction requires the refinement of observation, listening, interpersonal, and intervention skills by both teacher and students.

The success of the interactive instruction strategy and its many methods is heavily dependent upon the expertise of the teacher in structuring and developing the dynamics of the group.

Some examples of interactive instruction are the following:

- **Peer partner learning** is a collaborative experience in which students learn from and with each other for individual purposes. Students reflect upon previously taught material by helping peers to learn and, at the same time, develop and hone their social skills. Students work together as partners, one functioning as a "doer," and the other as a "helper." The doer performs a task or answers questions; the helper observes and provides feedback and helping information. The doer is the student and the helper takes on the role of teacher. Later, the partners reverse roles.

- **Discussion** involves an oral exploration of a topic, object, concept, or experience. All learners need frequent opportunities to generate and share their questions and ideas in small and whole class settings. Teachers who encourage and accept students' questions and comments without judgment and clarify understandings by paraphrasing difficult terms stimulate the exchange of ideas. Discussions have the following purposes:

  - to help students make sense of the world;
  - to stimulate thought, wonder, explanation, reflection and recall;
  - to provide opportunities for students to clarify and expand their ideas and those of others;
  - to promote positive group interaction and conversation; and
  - to demonstrate questioning techniques.

- **Cooperative learning** is an instructional strategy that simultaneously addresses academic and social skill learning by students. It is a well-researched instructional strategy reported to be highly

successful in the classroom. Citizens have an ever-increasing need for interdependence in all levels of our society. Providing students with the tools to work effectively in a collaborative environment should be a priority. Cooperative learning provides students the opportunity to learn from each other within a well-defined framework. Students work toward fulfilling clearly stated academic and social skill goals. In this team approach, the success of the group depends upon everyone's pulling his or her weight.

Instructional Skills

Instructional skills are the most specific category of teaching behaviors. Teachers need these skills for procedural purposes and for structuring appropriate learning experiences for students. A variety of instructional skills and processes exist.

- **Explaining**

Student resource materials typically do not provide extensive explanations of concepts. The teacher may need to spend classroom time further explaining concepts or generalizations to the whole class, a small group, or an individual.

Some explanations help students acquire or deepen their understanding of a concept, while others help students understand generalizations. Concerning the former, the teacher must select an appropriate concept definition and appropriate examples and non-examples. Regarding the latter, Shostak (1986) suggests that an explanation can show the following:

- o a cause and effect relationship (for example, to show the effect of adding an acid to a base);
- o that an action is governed by a rule or law (for example, to show when to capitalize a noun);
- o a procedure or process (for example, to show the operation of solving a mathematical equation); or,
- o the intent of an activity or process (for example, to show the use of foreshadowing in drama).

- **Demonstrating**

The teacher spends much classroom time explaining or demonstrating something to the whole class, a small group, or an individual. Student resource materials typically do not provide extensive explanations of concepts, and students often need a demonstration in order to understand procedures.

Much student learning occurs through observing others. A demonstration provides the link between "knowing about" and "being able to do." Research reveals that demonstrations are most effective when they are accurate, when learners are able to see clearly and understand what is going on, and when brief explanations and discussion occur during the demonstration (Arenas, 1988).

Richard Allington (2002) reports in his article "The Six Ts of Effective Elementary Literacy Instruction", that exemplary teachers routinely offered direct, explicit demonstrations of the cognitive strategies used by good readers when they read. In other words, they modeled the thinking that skilled readers engage while they attempt to decode a word, self-monitor for understanding, summarize while reading, or edit when composing. The "watch me" or "let me demonstrate" stance they took seems quite different from the "assign and assess" stance that dominates in less-effective classrooms (e.g., Adams, 1990; Durkin, 1978-79).

- **Questioning and Wait Time**

Among the instructional skills, questioning holds a place of prominence in many classrooms. When questioning is used well, the following are observed:

  o a high degree of student participation occurs as questions are widely distributed,
  o an appropriate mix of low and high level cognitive questions is used,
  o student understanding is increased,
  o student thinking is stimulated, directed, and extended,
  o feedback and appropriate reinforcement occur,
  o students' critical thinking abilities are honed, and,
  o students' creativity is fostered.

Good questions should be carefully planned, clearly stated, and to the point in order to achieve specific objectives. Teachers must understand questioning techniques, wait time, and levels of questions. Teachers should also understand that asking and responding to questions are viewed differently by different cultures. The teacher must be sensitive to the cultural needs of the students and aware of the effects of his or her own cultural perspective in questioning. In addition, teachers should realize that direct questioning might not be an appropriate technique for all students.

The teacher should obtain the attention of the students before the question is asked. The question should be addressed to the entire class before a specific student is asked to respond. Calls for responses should be distributed among volunteers and non-volunteers, and the teacher should encourage students to speak to the whole class or small group when responding.

While the need for factual recall or comprehension must be recognized, teachers also need to challenge students with higher level questions requiring analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. The consideration of level is applicable at all grade levels and in all subject areas. All students need the opportunity to think about and respond to all levels of questions. Teacher probes or requests for clarification may be required to move students to higher levels of thinking and deeper levels of understanding.

Wait time is defined as the pause between asking the question and soliciting a response. Providing additional wait time after a student response allows all students to reflect on the response prior to further discussion. Increased wait time results in longer student responses, more appropriate unsolicited responses, more student questions, and increased higher order responses. It should be noted that increased wait time is beneficial for students who speak English as a second language.

The Reading and Writing Workshop

The purpose of reading and writing workshop is to promote literacy in the classroom. The purpose is set for students by focusing on text and promoting the enjoyment and love of reading through meaningful interactions with the printed word. This is true for writing as well. By making their own responses to reading or responding in some written context to what they have read, students begin to understand what they read.

The foundational element present in every high-progress classroom is an intense focus on extensive and diverse reading and writing. The research on high progress literacy classrooms makes clear that supporting and challenging students to reach proficient and advanced levels of literacy requires that educators dramatically increase the time students are expected to read and write in South Carolina

classrooms. Numerous studies (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Duffy-Hester, 1999; Langer, 2001; Pressley et al., 2001; Pressely, Rankin, Yokoi, 1996; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Allington, Block, & Morrow, 1998; Taylor & Pearson, 2004; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodrigues, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998) indicate that high-progress literacy classrooms consistently feature the following:

- o   significant time devoted to actual reading and writing,
- o   high-quality instruction in reading skills and strategies,
- o   a prevalence of small group and individualized instruction,
- o   numerous books matched to the students' reading levels, and
- o   increased instructional focus and intensity based on the changing needs of students.

In terms of reading, Guthrie's research states that high engagement must be viewed as both a means and an end in reading instruction. "Because engaged reading and reading achievement are mutually causal, they both must be cultivated in school. A neglect of one is a neglect of both" (Guthrie, 2004).

Concepts for Successful Reading and Writing Workshops

- •   Student talk is an important concept that allows the reader to anticipate what line of story or information the text might convey. What matters is that students talk about the reading and talk about the writing, both their own and that of good storytellers, and authors.

- •   The focus of writing workshop is to support the reading and to help students make connections with text, the world, and their own experiences. Students must use their own language to come to an understanding of literature, and then they may begin to craft their own writing.

- •   Conferencing is a large part of the workshop philosophy, both teacher-to- student and peer coaching. Classrooms will be active, not noisy or disorganized. During conferencing sessions a teacher observes, re-teaches, clarifies, and coaches students. During conferencing teachers want students to take ownership of their reading or writing.

Structures to Support Readers and Writers

Research suggests that high-progress literacy classrooms (Pressley et al., 1996, 1998, 2001) should include the following:

- •   Many, many *books* to read at students' instructional and independent reading levels, fiction and nonfiction, of interest to readers.

- •   Students fully engaged with "extensive and diverse" reading and writing opportunities. Most of the time allocated for literacy in the school day is devoted to reading and writing.

- •   Much *small group and individualized* instruction

- •   More instruction and *support for struggling readers*

- •   Extremely *positive environments*

- •   Teaching of *self-regulation* and decision-making

- •   *Engaging* instruction: positive, low-risk, encouraging, accepting, and conveying goals, self-selection, and ownership of reading and writing topics.

Based on research by Allington and Johnston, (2002), significant time must be devoted to actual reading. Their study of exemplary fourth grade teachers noted that high progress classrooms maximized the amount of time students read by fully engaging students in reading and writing text most of the time.

In exemplary High Progress classrooms for each hour of reading instruction the following is evident:

- Teachers spend 5-10 minutes preparing students to read.
- Students read 40-45 minutes.
- Teachers spend 5-10 minutes engaging students following the reading.
- While the students read, the teacher works with students in small groups or individually side by side at their seats.

Less effective classrooms minimize reading time in the following ways:

Spend 15-20 minutes preparing students to read
Spend 20-25 minutes after reading with students engaged in a variety of follow-up activities including
- Responding to questions
- Completing workbook pages
- Reviewing the story
- Checking on vocabulary, etc.

In less effective classrooms, students typically read for only 15-20 minutes for each hour allocated to reading lessons. And in some classrooms, students read even less.

Research by Pressley et al., (1996, 1998, and 2001), indicates High Progress Classrooms have at least:

- 20 books per student
- 400 books per classroom of 20 students
- books at or above grade level along with books below grade level
- varied genres

High-progress classrooms are well-stocked with a variety of interesting books and materials at students' reading levels.

The following structures provide opportunities for students to be actively engaged in reading and writing.

Read Aloud provides daily opportunities for children to delight in text. It enables children to hear the right language of texts they cannot yet read on their own or might not have chosen to read. Teachers choose books thoughtfully to share for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. Read alouds are even more effective when surrounded by rituals – gathering together on a rug, lighting a story candle, reciting a poem together.

Shared Reading provides opportunities for children to learn what good strategic readers do and how the reading process works in the context of a large group with the teacher demonstrating and orchestrating the process. Children are invited to participate by reading along and responding to reading strategy prompts within the security of a large group.

Independent Reading provides opportunities for children to practice independent reading strategies with just-right books. During this time to read large quantities of text of their choosing, students get to know themselves better as readers. Paired with conferences, independent reading encourages students to take responsibility in their growth as readers.

Reading Conferences offer teachers and children opportunities to learn and apply reading strategies in an intimate setting. During reading conferences, teachers use running records, miscue analysis, interviews, self-assessments, and/or kid watching notes to gain insight into children's strengths, needs and interests as readers. Reading conferences also provide opportunities for teachers to match readers with texts and to hold conversations about the reading process and content of the book, reader-to-reader.

Guided Reading provides opportunities for children to apply the skills and strategies that are inherent in strategic reading with increasing independence. Teachers continue to guide the process but expect children to take more responsibility and to engage in independent problem solving within a small group setting. Teachers support individuals and the group by matching books to readers and scaffolding the reading process.

Literature Study Groups provide opportunities for children to hold grand conversations about books they choose. Consequently, children learn the value of responding to literature both aesthetically and efferently (Rosenblatt, 1995). They learn about language through author studies, genre studies, and craft studies. Through rich conversations about high quality literature, children learn that literature can be both informative and transformative.

Shared Writing provides opportunities for teachers and children to work together to compose texts with the teacher serving as the scribe. It allows the teacher to demonstrate how the writing process works by focusing on features of composing, written expression, and print conversations while modeling a variety of text types. The co-created text can then serve as written language references for the classroom.

Interactive Writing provides opportunities for teachers and children to collaboratively develop text and "share the pen" to write it. Children learn about and participate in the process of writing, learn concepts of print, and understanding that reading and writing are reciprocal processes. This structure allows children to apply letter-sound knowledge and spelling patterns in context. It also provides texts that children can revisit and read independently.

Independent Writing provides opportunities for children to develop their own writing processes while composing their own texts. Children are given opportunities to write in different genres for a variety of purposes and audiences. This structure allows children to apply their knowledge of print conventions and writer's craft. Children are given opportunities to generate ideas, draft, revise, edit and publish. They also learn to articulate their decisions and processes as writers through conferring with other writers.

Writing Conferences offer teachers and children opportunities to learn and share their experiences with the writing process. Conferences are conversations, writer-to-writer, that allow teachers to assess and teach children individually in a continual effort to move them forward. Conferences also provide opportunities for teachers to match children with mentor writers and texts.

Mini-Lessons offer teachers the opportunity to provide short, focused lessons (5-10 minutes) based on students' needs. During mini-lessons, teachers offer advice that works into what students are doing as readers and writers. Teachers may choose to demonstrate a strategy, to build background knowledge, to

highlight well-crafted writing, or to model a procedure. The effectiveness of these focused lessons may be increased by connecting a string of mini-lessons.

Sharing provides students an opportunity, after reading and writing, to reflect on and articulate what they have noticed about the work they have done and the strategies they have used. Students may also choose to talk about the books they are reading or the pieces they have written. Sharing also offers teachers the opportunity to follow up on mini-lessons and to give students recognition for trying or doing something.

Based on Guthrie et al., (2001) the benefits of having opportunities to read and receiving balanced instruction found the following true:

- For 9-year-olds who took the NAEP in 1998, the correlation between engaged reading and reading comprehension achievement was higher than any demographic characteristic such as gender, income, or ethnicity.
- Students whose family background was characterized as low income and low education ***but who were engaged readers*** substantially outscored students from family backgrounds with higher education and income.
- "Based on a massive sample, this finding suggests the stunning conclusion that engaged reading can overcome traditional barriers to reading achievement, including gender, parental education, and income" (Guthrie, 2004).

Achievement gaps exist among students from various demographic groups including race, gender, and income, as evidenced by persistent discrepancies in standardized test scores, dropout and graduation rates, and the percentages of students entering and completing college. Because South Carolina has a much higher proportion of African American and children of poverty than the national average, meeting or exceeding the national average for literacy proficiency will require massive and focused efforts to cause accelerated growth in literacy achievement.

 Kirsch et al.,(2002) looked at performance and engagement across countries:

- The PISA study (Programme for International Student Assessment) found the amount students read predicts achievement more than any other factor including gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

In a study of fourth graders who took the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001) and 15-year-olds in 32 countries who took the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) (Kirsch, de Jong, LaFontaine, McQueen, Mendalovits, & Monseur, 2002), researchers found the same thing*: the amount students read predicts achievement more than any other factor including gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.* In other words, poor kids who are engaged readers consistently outscore wealthier kids who read less. Focusing on the research on high-progress classrooms will transform literacy achievement for South Carolina's students.

Response to Intervention provides a systems approach for building and maintaining high progress classrooms. The RTI model ensures every student has opportunities to increase academic achievement through quality instruction and intervention when needed.

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http://cela.albany.edu/1stgradelit/index.html.   Richard Allington's work

http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Academic-Standards/old/Instructional-Promising
-Practices/documents/ResponsetoIntervention.html   South Carolina Department of Education

http://www.rti4success.org/   National Response to Intervention Site

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/   What Works Clearinghouse

http://nrcld.org/research/rti.shtml   National Research Center on Learning Disabilities

http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/index.html

Further Resources for Learning More about Classroom Structures

Johnson, Pat. 2006. *One Child at a Time.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

Miller, Debbie. 2002. *Reading With Meaning.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

Morgan, Denise, et al. 2009. *Independent Reading.* NY, NY: Guilford Press.

Routman, Regie. 2003. *Reading Essentials.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Taberski, Sharon. 2000. *On Solid Ground.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Additional Resources for Learning More about Matching Books with Readers

Fountas, Irene and G. Pinnell. 2006. *Leveled Books K-8 Matching Texts to Readers for Effective Teaching.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com (requires $15 payment)

—2008. *Leveled Book List K-8 2006-2008 edition.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com.

Fry formula: http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/fry/fry2.html

Lexile Tool: www.lexile.com

Reading Recovery levels: www.rrcna.org/rrcna/membership/books.asp

Spache and Dale–Chall formulas: www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/tools/okapi.php

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SECTION IV

Universal Screening

Purpose

The main purpose of a screening instrument is to identify students whose performance on the measure warrants further investigation. Screening is only intended to predict which students are likely to fail to reach grade level expectations given their current progress. It does not directly result in diagnosis of student needs. Due to measurement error, it is important to cast a rather wide net to capture potentially at-risk students and then to look further to determine their needs for additional instructional assistance.

–National Research Center on Learning Disabilities

School and district teams should collaboratively select universal screening tools for each academic or behavior area and train school personnel in consistent administration, scoring, and interpretation of results.

Characteristics of Universal Screening

Screening measures should be:

- **Reliable.** Tests are constructed to obtain consistent results; administration and scoring is standardized to increase reliability.

- **Valid.** Universal screening should have high <u>predictive validity</u>: they accurately predict which students are likely to fail to obtain grade level expectations without intervention to spoil these predictions of progress.

- **Easy to administer, score, and interpret** so that results are obtained quickly. Since the purpose of screening is to determine which students warrant further investigation and to provide responsive instruction, screening tools must provide results quickly so that additional assessment to diagnose academic strengths and needs can proceed in a timely manner.

- **Triangulated with data from other sources**, such as teacher observations, school-level assessments, and district-level assessments.

Uses of Universal Screening Data

It is important that the limitations of universal screening data are well-understood by school and district teams in order to determine appropriate use of these data. If a quick-to-administer-and-score instrument is chosen purely for its predictive characteristics, the RTI team must be careful not to over-interpret results. Most universal screenings are <u>not</u> intended to be diagnostic, nor are they constructed to reflect curriculum or detect slight changes in performance. Universal screening is merely the first step in determining who is likely to need additional assistance to reach grade level performance expectations.

By administering a universal screening in fall, midyear and winter, the team should be able to determine the following:

- approximate rates of growth from fall to winter, winter to spring, and fall to spring for individual students, classes, and grade levels;

- which students may need further assessment; and

- general progress toward goals for teachers, grade levels, schools, and district.

Data gathered from universal screening should be depicted in graph and/or narrative forms that are easily interpreted by the following:

- teachers for classroom and student performance,

- principals for classroom, grade, and school performance,

- district RTI leadership team members for district performance, and

- parents for individual student performance.

The following information provides recommended steps, considerations, and guidelines for completing effective universal screening within the RTI framework.

District and School Leadership Team Decisions

Establish an RTI District and School-based Leadership Team to review, select, and plan for the use of Universal Screening Measures:

- The team should consist of members who represent various positions and types of expertise across subject areas.

- The district-level team may elect to require certain fixed measures across all schools in order to have comparison data that are consistent for students who transfer within district.

- The school-level team may consider using additional measures specific to its school's needs.

- Selected universal screening tools need to reflect state and district academic standards and be appropriate for selected grade levels and subjects to be assessed.

Resources

The National Center on Response to Intervention provides an array of resources for planning and implementing an RTI system. The Center recently added a Screening Tools Chart to provide information for use in reviewing and selecting universal screening. The chart can be found at http://www.rti4success.org/tools_charts/screening.php. The Center's mission is to provide technical assistance to states and districts and to build the capacity of states to assist districts in implementing proven models for Response to Intervention and Early Intervention Services.

The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities is another good resource for information about universal screening. In particular, Sections 1 and 5 from their RTI Manual will be helpful to school teams in selecting and using universal screening tools. These are available at the following web addresses:
http://www.nrcld.org/rti_manual/pages/RTIManualSection1.pdf
http://www.nrcld.org/rti_manual/pages/RTIManualSection5.pdf

The What Works Clearinghouse was established in 2002 by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence about "what works" in education. The WWC offers a range of publications on a array of topics including beginning reading, early childhood education, adolescent literacy, English Language Learners, students with learning disabilities, and elementary, middle, and high school math.

The WWC has evaluated beginning reading interventions for students in grades K-3 that meet their strict evidence standards. For reviews of interventions for beginning reading designed to improve alphabetics, fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement, see http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/Topicarea.aspx?tid=01. Note that the WWC limits their reviews to empirical studies conducted by third parties using quantitative methods and inferential statistical analysis that take the form of a randomized controlled trial, or use a regression-discontinuity design, a quasi-experimental design, or a single-subject design. Studies are required to focus on student outcomes, and include at least one relevant outcome that demonstrates adequate face validity or reliability. For a full explanation of their review criteria, see http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/Doc.aspx?docId=27&tocId=2#studies.

Professional Development

- The school team responsible for administration of the universal screening measures throughout the year will attend formal training provided at the school or district level. This will ensure reliability of administration.

- Members who will analyze data need specific training at the school or district level in order to make decisions and effectively communicate results.

- The school and/or district should provide ongoing professional development and consultation regarding universal screening measures and analysis throughout the year.

Considerations

1. Universal screening requires organization of materials and personnel. To increase efficiency, administrators should assign a staff member to manage screening three times yearly.

2. Universal screening measures may be administered by teachers or a team of school personnel (e.g., guidance counselors, administrators, curriculum coaches, school psychologists, etc.). When teachers administer the measures, they are more likely to increase their understandings and participation in collaborative decision-making, problem-solving, and communication. In addition, students who are familiar with test administrators often perform more reliably than they do with someone they do not know.

3. Schools should consider the materials required to complete assessments including copying, timers, clipboards, desks/chairs, areas for screening, etc.

4. The school team should define a uniform period for testing (e.g., a two-week window of opportunity) for each test administration. This ensures that school-wide screening is completed within a consistent time frame and affords more reliable results and comparisons.

5. Universal screening data should be collected and managed. Usually this is accomplished electronically by entering data into a spreadsheet or a commercially-available program.

6. Parental permission is not required for universal screenings; however, schools may want to consider sharing student performance with parents if this data is helpful.

7. Parents should be notified if their child is recommended for Tier II or III instruction. Families should be included in the RTI process on an ongoing basis. The school should ensure that processes are in place to communicate with parents regularly and should provide help and suggestions for parents for ways they can support and encourage their students at home.

Analyze Data from Universal Screening Measures

School- and/or district-level leadership teams will need to define criteria and decision rules regarding identification of at-risk students in one of the following methods:

1. Norm-based measures compare a student's performance to a normalized sample using standardized scores such as percentiles or National Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores. For norm-based measures, the school team should set cut scores to identify at-risk students as those below a particular percentile score or NCE.

2. Criterion-based measures provide specific cut scores to determine at-risk skills. For example, a student reading below x number of words per minute in the fall would be identified as at-risk.

For more information regarding universal screening decisions, standards, tools and case examples consult the following sites:
http://www.nrcld.org/rti_manual/pages/RTIManualSection1.pdf
http://www.nrcld.org/rti_manual/pages/RTIManualSection5.pdf

Screening measures should never be used in isolation to identify at-risk students, as any tool provides only an estimate of student performance. No measurement tool is free of error, so an individual's performance is easily over- or under-estimated. For this reason, universal screening data should serve only as a starting place in determining whether additional intervention is indicated.

When screening indicates a group of students who are likely to be unsuccessful in reaching grade level expectations, further assessment is required to confirm and extend these results. Additional assessments should be chosen to gather information about each student's particular strengths and needs in order to determine how to select from among possible courses of action and to appropriately match the student with an intervention likely to be effective in changing the current trajectory of progress. Triangulating multiple (at least three) sources of data (e.g., teacher observations, student work samples, formative and diagnostic assessments, or screening tools built into intervention programs) improves the reliability of decision-making regarding the identification of at-risk students.

Based on fall screening, the school will identify students in need or substantial intervention, less intensive intervention, and in many cases, differentiated supplemental instruction in the regular classroom. Universal screening allows the school to determine which students need more careful monitoring. Students significantly below grade level will require more frequent progress monitoring, while students less far behind may be monitored only once every 4 weeks. Students right at grade level should be monitored to ensure that they continue to make progress sufficient to stay on grade level.

Grouping for Supplemental Instruction in Tiers I, II, and III

Screening data should never be used alone either to identify students or to determine instructional groupings of students for supplemental instruction in Tiers I, II, or II. These decisions require triangulation with more finely-tuned assessments to determine student strengths and needs and to determine groupings that will allow teachers to select instructional foci, materials for instruction, and approaches that will meet the needs of everyone in the group. Interventions should always be tailored to and matched to the needs of students.

Screening Tools

Below is a list describing various types of universal screening tools. The South Carolina Department of Education does not mandate the use of a particular measure and the following list is not exhaustive.

Edcheckup

The site offers an assessment system for screening student performance and measuring student progress toward goals in reading. These generic passages, which are independent from any particular basal reading series, also may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of reading instruction through the graphing of student reading data. Browsers must pay to view materials from this site.

http://www.,edcheckup.com

EdProgress

EdProgress focuses on assessment, large-scale testing and accountability, and systemic reform. With research-proven training materials, measurement tools, reporting systems, and teacher training interventions, EdProgress helps teachers become more focused on teaching and learning for all students. Browsers must pay to view materials from this site.

http://www.edprogress.com/index.htm

Evidence-Based Progress Monitoring and Improvement System

AIMS web(R) is a formative assessment system that informs the teaching and learning process by providing continuous student performance data and reporting improvement to students, parents, teachers, and administrators to enable evidence-based evaluation and data-driven instruction. Browsers must pay to view materials from this site. Measures are available in reading, writing, and math for grades K – 8.

http://www.aimsweb.com

Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio

Based on National Reading and Writing Standards and Best Practices Research, the *Dominie Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolios* feature original fiction and nonfiction stories, leveled books, rubrics for story writing and reading fluency, case studies, essential phonics and spelling components, convenient reproducible assessment forms, and a scoring guide for spelling accuracy that is based on an analysis of developmental spelling tests. The *Dominie Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolios* assess comprehension of fiction and nonfiction as well as phonics, phonemic awareness, writing, and spelling. It provides both oral and written assessments and includes stanines.

http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZu68&PMDBSUBCATEGORYID=&PMDBSITEID=2781&PMDBSUBSOLUTIONID=&PMDBSOLUTIONID=6724&PMDBSUBJECTAREAID=&PMDBCATEGORYID=3289&PMDbProgramId=19381

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.

http://dibels.uoregon.edu/

Intervention Central

This web site offers free tools and resources to help school staff and parents promote positive classroom behaviors and foster effective learning for all children and youth. The web site was created by Jim Wright, a school psychologist from Syracuse, N.Y. Materials on this site are free.

http://www.interventioncentral.org

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping all children learn. NWEA provides research-based assessments, professional training, and consulting services to improve teaching and learning.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests are based on a grade-independent and stable scale; educators get an indication of student growth.   Educators use this information to identify trends at student, class, grade, program, and school levels. The measurement scale is based on the same test theory that informs the SAT, Graduate Record Exam, and Law School Admission Test. The test theory is that it aligns student achievement levels with item difficulties on the same scale.

http://nwea.org

Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP)

This is a computer program for automatically conducting curriculum-based measurement and for monitoring student progress in reading, math computation, and math concepts and applications. The computer program provides immediate feedback to students about their progress and provides individual and class-wide reports to teachers to help them plan more effective instruction. Browsers must order and pay for materials from this site.

http://www.proedinc.com/store/index.php?mode=product_detail&id=0840

National Center for Learning Disabilities

NCLD works to ensure that the nation's 15 million children, adolescents, and adults with learning disabilities have every opportunity to succeed in school, work, and life. Materials on this site are free.

http://www.ncld.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=571

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring

http://www.studentprogress.org

This center's mission is to provide technical assistance to states and districts and disseminate information about progress monitoring practices proven to work in different academic content areas (grades K-5). Materials on this site are free.

Reading Success Lab

The Reading Success Lab provides software solutions for identifying reading problems and improving reading skills. Some screening materials on this site are free but some of the other materials require an order and payment.

http://www.readingsuccesslab.com

Winter and Spring Screening: Data and Decisions

By midyear, the school has had a full semester to provide tiered instruction, and has gathered ongoing progress monitoring data for students below grade level. The school team has been active in guiding teachers in the use of progress monitoring data to inform and adjust instruction to help students achieve their learning goals, and, if the plan has been successful, helping these students to accelerate their progress toward that goal. Given that the purpose of universal screening is only to predict which students are likely to fail to reach grade level given their present trajectories, winter screening can provide the team with a snapshot of how the school's overall plan is working. Midyear screening will likely identify additional students who may need intervention, as well as students whose intervention plans may need to be adjusted and students who can be cycled out of Tiers II or III.

It is important that the school team fully understand the limitations of the instruments chosen for universal screening. For example, quick-to-administer-and-score assessments of the speed of reading lists of words and non-words are useful for predicting reading failure, but caution should be exercised in using these assessments to make decisions concerning what to teach. Improvements in the percentages of students scoring at or above grade level may or may not indicate that the school's comprehensive plan is working effectively. If, for example, teachers have made a concerted effort to teach what the screening measure assesses rather than teaching the wider range of skills and strategies required for reading text with fluency, comprehension, and accuracy, scores may indicate only that students have gotten better at word recognition.

Some schools select screening instruments that are much more comprehensive but also take longer to administer and score. These measures often provide data for both screening and progress monitoring and are intended to do more than provide predictions about which students are likely to need additional help. For example, districts and schools that require running records of text reading three to four times a year using any of a number of published programs (i.e., *The Developmental Reading Assessment 2, The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment*, or *The Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio*) can use these data to make valid determinations about the effectiveness of their overall plan. If a significant number (e.g., 80%) of students are meeting proficiency levels, or if the percentage of students reaching grade level is steadily increasing over time as measured by these more comprehensive tools, instruction in Tiers I and II can be considered effective. If the percentage of students reaching grade level is not steadily increasing, the data may indicate that the overall plan is not working or that instruction in Tiers I and II need to be improved and made more effective for the students in the school.

As appropriate, universal screening data can be used to analyze

- growth rates from fall to winter,

- progress toward pre-set goals within classrooms, grades, schools, and the district,

- differential growth rates across students, teachers and schools within district, and

- consistent implementation of Tier I and Tier II instruction (analyzed by classroom observations and review of lesson plans).

School and grade level teams should investigate implementation issues in Tier I and II classrooms, helping teachers to analyze their own practices, materials, and use of time to bring these in line with the research on high-progress literacy classrooms.

SECTION V

Progress Monitoring

According to the National Center on Response to Intervention, progress monitoring is defined as "repeated measurement of academic performance to inform instruction of individual students in general and special education in grades K-8.

Progress monitoring can be described as an evidence-based practice that is utilized to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction/intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008). It is conducted at least monthly to:

a) estimate rates of improvement,

b) identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress and/or

c) compare the efficacy of different forms of instruction to design more effective, individualized instruction" (www.rti4success.org).

By using tools that reflect incremental growth and changes in learning relative to whatever instruction and intervention students below grade level are receiving, ongoing progress monitoring allows teachers and school teams to responsively adjust and modify instruction to accelerate growth and learning.

Guidelines for Progress Monitoring

The following information provides recommended guidelines and considerations for completing effective progress monitoring within the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. The school-based leadership team, with input from district leadership, makes decisions regarding frequency, tools, and personnel responsible for progress monitoring.

Who will monitor progress?

The team determines who will monitor progress of students identified for Tier II and III instruction. Often, those who provide supplemental instruction take primary responsibility for progress monitoring students they serve, but all school personnel should collaborate to interpret assessments and provide support. Training in administration of progress monitoring assessments and interpretation of results is essential.

What measures will be used?

The team determines measures that will be used to monitor the progress of individual students, carefully matching progress monitoring tools to interventions provided to gauge student responses to instruction. Progress monitoring measures should have the following characteristics:

- highly reflective of the construct being measured (reading, writing, math concepts, math operations, etc.)

- sensitive to small increments of growth,
- provide direct assessment of skills in academic standards and behavior,
- easily administered, scored, and interpreted.
- efficient for repeated administrations over short periods of time,
- comparable to benchmark assessment measures,
- standardized in administration and scoring, and
- either norm- or criterion-referenced.

It is critical that teams devise ways for teachers and students to chart progress toward goals. While traditional mastery measurements are useful for determining whether students have learned a standard, progress monitoring measures should indicate whether a student is learning at a rate that will allow him or her to meet annual goals. Therefore, school teams must create ways to gauge students' rates of learning relative to grade level progress in order to determine goals, accelerate learning, and monitor progress, where progress is defined as the rate of change.

Frequency of Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring should be frequent enough to inform instruction and allow teachers to gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and adjust instruction, whenever necessary. The school team should determine the frequency of Progress Monitoring for individual students and/or groups of students, with increased frequency for those most in need of additional assistance. For students farthest behind, monitoring may occur weekly or even several times a week in order to determine a student's general trend of performance and to adjust instruction to obtain better results.

In cases in which students are being considered for referral for an evaluation for special education, data must be collected frequently enough and over a long enough period of time that a trend of progress toward goals can be established. In this way, decisions about individual student's responses to interventions provided can be made with improved confidence (Response to Intervention Policy Considerations and Implementation, NASDSE, 2007).

What instruments may be used for Progress Monitoring?

School teams are encouraged to evaluate Progress Monitoring tools relative to their ability to adequately reflect the progress of students given the instruction and interventions the school provides. It is critical that these measures have high construct validity—that is, they do a good job testing what they are intended to test. For example, tests of phonemic awareness should focus on phonemic awareness; tests of oral reading fluency should measure oral reading of texts and assess not only rate of reading, but phrasing, expressive interpretation, and preservation of author's syntax (Rasinski, 2000; NAEP, 2002) http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/ors/scale.asp).

An important resource for school and district teams reviewing progress monitoring tools is available from The National Center for Response to Intervention, sponsored by the United States Department of Education. They provide a chart of progress monitoring tools, the subject areas assessed within those tools, and their progress monitoring standards. This information can be found at http://www.rti4success.org/chart/progressMonitoring/progressmonitoringtoolschart.htm

The South Carolina State Department of Education does not mandate the use of any particular measure. The list below is provided as a resource only and is by no means exhaustive.

AIMS web

AIMS web® is a formative assessment system that informs the teaching and learning process by providing continuous student performance data in reading, math, and writing for grades kindergarten through eight and by reporting improvement to students, parents, teachers, and administrators to enable evidence-based evaluation and data-driven instruction. http://www.aimsweb.com

Dominie Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolio

Based on National Reading and Writing Standards and Best Practices Research, the *Dominie Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolio* features original fiction and nonfiction stories, leveled books, rubrics for story writing and reading fluency, case studies, essential phonics and spelling components, convenient reproducible assessment forms, and a scoring guide for spelling accuracy that is based on an analysis of developmental spelling tests. The *Dominie Reading & Writing Assessment Portfolios* assesses comprehension of fiction and nonfiction as well as phonics, phonemic awareness, writing, and spelling. It provides both oral and written assessments and includes stanines. Subtests may be selected individually or in combination to monitor student progress in particular areas.
http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZu68&filter_161=&filter_422=&filter_423=6731&filter_424=&filter_281=&filter_425=&programFilterTypeList=161,422,423,424,281,425&PMDbSiteid=2781&PMDbSolutionid=6724&PMDbSubSolutionid=&PMDbCategoryid=3289&&PMDbProgramID=19381

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) 2

Development of the *DRA2* was based on what educators and the extant research literature identified as being key characteristics and behaviors of good readers. The *DRA2* is based upon a number of premises which were drawn from a variety of sources including the research literature concerning reading development and instruction. *DRA2* is a valid measurement of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension with evidence for Criterion-Related Validity, Construct Validity, and Content Validity.
http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZ16e&PMDbSiteId=2781&PMDbSolutionId=6724&PMDbSubSolutionId=&PMDbCategoryId=3289&PMDbSubCategoryId=24801&PMDbSubjectAreaId=&PMDbProgramId=23661

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.
http://dibels.uoregon.edu/

Easy CBM

Easy CBM (Curriculum Based Measurement) is an online assessment system that is free for use by teachers. It offers free assessment materials for reading and math as well as online tools for entering data. Once data are entered into the site, reports, including charts and graphs are automatically produced.
http://easycbm.com/

Edcheckup

This site offers an assessment system for screening student performance and measuring student progress toward goals in reading. These generic passages, which are independent from any particular basal reading series, also may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of reading instruction through the graphing of student reading data.
http://www.edcheckup.com

Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System

The *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS)* seamlessly and gracefully links assessment to instruction along *The Continuum of Literacy Learning.* This comprehensive system for one-on-one assessment reliably and systematically matches students' instructional and independent reading abilities to the *Fountas & Pinnell A-Z Text Level Gradient.*
http://www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/BAS2_Overview.aspx

MBSP: Monitoring Basic Skills Progress: Basic Math Kit – Second Edition

Developed by Lynn Fuchs, Carol Hamlett and Douglas Fuchs, MBSP are a researched-based standardized set of measurement and evaluation procedures. They provide a method to focus intensively on the math progress of individual students who have identified learning problems and to evaluate formatively and improve those student's programs.

Teachers use a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) to monitor student progress in mathematics over the course of a school year. This booklet provides test descriptions, direction for test administration, scoring directions, technical data about the tests, and answer keys. The kit is broken down into two major domains in mathematics: MBSP Computation and MBSP Concepts and Applications.
http://www.proedinc.com/customer/ProductView.aspx?ID=1431&sSearchWord=mbsp

Reading Success Lab

The Reading Success Lab provides software solutions for identifying reading problems and improving reading skills. Some screening materials on this site are free while browsers must order and pay for other materials from this site.
http://www.readingsuccesslab.com

Professional Development

The reliability and validity of any measurement tool is highly dependent on whether those who administer and interpret results are trained in the use of the instrument, standardized protocols for administration, and understand the instrument's limitations. Therefore, training is essential.

- To ensure reliability, individuals who progress monitor must be trained in administration and scoring of selected instruments.

- To ensure the validity of decisions made on the basis of these data, teams and individuals who analyze and interpret data must receive training and support.

- Ongoing professional development and consultation regarding administration, scoring, analysis, and use of progress monitoring measures should be provided throughout the year.

Other Considerations

- Teams should ensure the availability of all materials required to complete progress monitoring, including copying, timers, clipboards, desks/chairs, and areas for monitoring.

- Teams should consider the time needed to progress monitor at-risk students.

- Teams should consider the time and skills needed to manage progress monitoring data. Progress monitoring requires that data be put into a spreadsheet or online system in order to create charts and graphs to determine rates of progress and to communicate results. The school should consider available resources for management of data created through progress monitoring, whether through a school or district-developed program or commercially available program. Note: Commercial and non-commercial graphing programs are available that display student data (e.g., National Center on Student Progress Monitoring: www.studentprogress.org & www.interventioncentral.org . A progress monitoring data management system is available through the SCDE, as well, and can be requested by contacting Bev Collom at BCollom@ed.sc.gov).

Collaborative Processes to Ensure Adequate Progress

- Teams should develop processes for monitoring the rate of progress for every student served in supplemental intervention relative to grade level progress even after students are no longer receiving supplemental help. This must include processes for taking quick action any time a student's rate of progress begins to falter. When progress slows, the team intervenes to ensure that classroom instruction is appropriately adjusted to prevent an individual student from again falling below grade level.

- Teams should develop ongoing processes for using data to collaborate and problem-solve with teachers to adjust instruction and support for students making slow progress or at-risk of slow progress. These processes should include times in which all of the teachers that provide support for an

individual student come together to examine data (assessments, work samples, observational records) and to collaborate and share ideas.

- Teams should develop processes for notifying parents when recommending a child for Tier II or III instruction as well as processes for keeping parents informed of their student's ongoing performance on progress monitoring measures as supplemental instruction is provided.

- Teams should develop processes for communicating with parents about ways they can support their students at home. While parents should not be expected to provide instruction, they can be helped to understand ways to provide encouragement and support as well as ensuring that their student has time and opportunity to practice.

Setting Individual Goals for and with Students

Goals should be set in comparison to the student's baseline data and pre-determined criteria, such as the end-of-year grade level benchmarks or in reference to local norms. For example, a student performs at the 10th percentile on the fall benchmark, and is expected to move to the 40th percentile with Tier II or III instructional support.

Goals should be reasonable for students to attain, yet challenging enough to accelerate progress toward grade level expectations. Accelerated progress is significantly more than one grade level per year.

Students' progress should be plotted in comparison to their end-of-year goal and analyzed to determine their rate of progress. It is important to consider Tier I student rates of progress when making decisions regarding student performance. Students sometimes make progress in comparison to their starting points but do not make strong progress in comparison to their grade level peers. Typical rates of growth are determined through universal screening tools with national normative information or by using norms developed locally over a period of time.

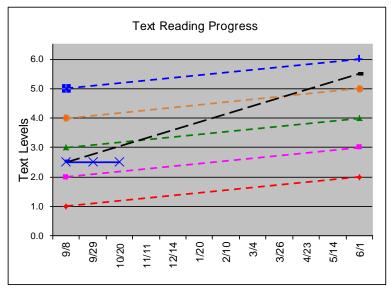The following steps represent how to graph a student's progress from the benchmark score to the end-of-year goal:

1. Establish a benchmark for performance and plot this goal on a chart (e.g., kindergarten student will identify forty letter names by May 30). This goal is plotted at the projected end of the instructional period, such as the end of the school year.

2. Establish the student's current level of performance (e.g., kindergarten student is able to identify one letter name on September 7). Plot this data point on the chart from Step 1.

3. Draw a line from the student's current level to the performance goal. This picture represents the slope of progress required to meet the end-of-year goal.

4. Monitor the student's progress frequently (e.g., after every 10 intervention sessions). Plot the data points on the chart.

5. Develop a trend line to validate the student's progress is adequate to meet the goal over time.

6. Analyze the data regularly, such as after three progress monitoring periods.

An Example of Charting Goals and Monitoring Progress Relative to Goals

Text Reading Progress Monitoring on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System

This example is drawn from the progress monitoring records of a fifth grade classroom teacher who provided intensive intervention to one child over the course of 13 weeks.

Chart Grade-level Progress. The chart below depicts text reading progress goals charted against grade level trajectories for Carrie, a fifth grader reading 2.5 years below grade level at the beginning of the year. Each parallel dotted line represents grade level progress for one grade, with the blue dotted line representing progress for fifth graders reading at grade level. At-grade-level students begin the year reading at a grade equivalent of approximately 5.0 (beginning of fifth grade level) and progress to a level 6.0 (beginning of sixth grade level) by the end of the year. Carrie scored at a grade equivalent of about 2.5, or second grade, fifth month, when assessed on text reading at the beginning of the year, about 2½ years below grade level. Her progress is indicated by the solid blue line with X's. Note that from September 8 to October 20, there was no upward movement in her text reading progress.

Goal line (in black) established for a fifth grader reading 2.5 years below grade level. Note grade level progress lines for grades 1 through 5.

Table 1: Goal line for Fifth Grader Reading below Grade Level

Set a Goal that Will Allow the Student to Catch up to Grade level. In order to catch up to grade level by the end of the year, Carrie will need to make 3.5 years of growth since her grade-level peers will be able to read at the sixth grade level by the end of the year. She and her teacher set an ambitious goal that by year end, she will be able to read at about a level 5.5 with fluency and comprehension, narrowing the gap between her achievement and grade level from 2.5 years to about half a year. Carrie's goal line is depicted by the black dotted line that intersects the third and fourth grade trajectory lines.

Collaboratively Explore the Data and Consider Possibilities. Carrie's teacher worked with her peer teachers and the school's intervention team to determine a course of action to intervene and increase

Carrie's rate of reading progress. They considered a number of factors that might be interfering with her reading including:

- Reading volume. How much is she reading? How much time does she spend reading? Is she reading materials that are manageable—that is, easy materials during independent reading and instructional-level materials during guided reading? Does she know how to select appropriate books? Is she reading enough at school? At home?

- Fluency. Does her reading reflect the characteristics of oral language (intonation that expresses meaning and indicates interpretation, appropriate phrasing, and appropriate rate)? Does she use oral language to problem-solve meaning-making?

- Word recognition, especially of highly frequent words

- Word analysis skills: what is her approach to problem solving words at difficulty? Does she know how to take apart words with multiple syllables?

- Comprehension: does she construct meaning as she reads? Does she take action to repair understandings when she encounters difficulties in understanding?

Adjusting materials, expectations, use of time, and instruction to get a better response. To determine whether Carrie's recognition of highly frequent words was an issue, the school's reading specialist offered to give her a brief battery of word reading tests. These tests showed that Carrie appeared to control first- and second-grade high-frequency words even though she was missing many of these same words when she read text. They decided to rule this out as a problem for the time being since other issues seemed more prevalent.
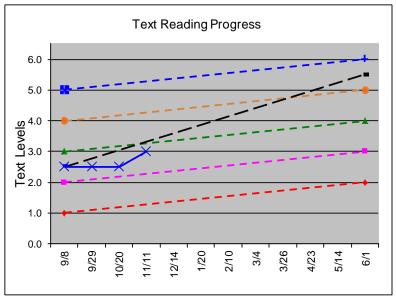
During the intervention team meeting, Carrie's teacher realized that there were several issues she needed to address immediately. At the top of the list were reading volume and fluency, and she set about to make changes that very day. She talked with Carrie about how to select easy books to read, and why this was important as they worked together on their goal. They talked about the kinds of books she enjoyed, and then went together to the school media center to choose books. They brought 15-20 easy books back to the classroom (books written at about a beginning to middle of second grade level) and placed them in a box close to Carrie's desk. They made plans to read and reread all of them multiple times at school and at home.

The teacher then examined her schedule to find more time for Carrie to read at school. She realized that catching her up to grade level meant that she would have to read *much more* than everyone else and everyone in her class already read a lot. She made a number of changes, including deciding that rather than having Carrie do "morning work," each day when she arrived at school, she would use this time to read. She and Carrie found a number of other times during the day when she could read independently, as well. In addition, the teacher carved out 10-15 minutes most days to provide instruction and read with her one-on-one.

Next, the teacher called Carrie's mother and conferenced with her about what they were working on. She explained that Carrie would bring home books to practice reading every night, and these books were easy because they were trying to work on fluent, phrased, expressive reading. She coached the mother to

encounter Carrie at home by reading expressively with her, listening to her read, and making a big deal over her use of voice to perform texts.

Daily one-on-one instruction focused on phrased, expressive reading. The teacher had Carrie select a text to read that she enjoyed and that she had read before. She listened to her read, and found a few sections of text that Carrie read fairly well and pointed these out and celebrated them. Then they worked through sections that were not phrased and expressive. The teacher demonstrated how a paragraph or a page should sound, and then she and Carrie read that section together. Then Carrie read those sections alone, with her teacher jumping in to support phrased, expressive reading whenever necessary—usually by reading with her, then backing out and having her do it again by herself only when she was sure Carrie's reading was appropriately phrased and intoned to carry meaning. After a few sessions of this one-on-one shared reading and coaching, Carrie's fluency on easy texts had improved dramatically. They identified a kindergarten buddy for Carrie to read to, and Carrie set a goal of preparing easy picture books to performance level. She practiced and practiced to prepare one book after another to share with her kindergarten buddy. By the end of three weeks of intervention focused around fluent, phrased reading of easy (second grade-level) texts, her teacher decided to check her progress on the school's progress monitoring assessment. Progress monitoring on the *Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment* showed that Carrie was now able to read a beginning of third grade text with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. The way she was processing text had begun to change, and as expected, this resulted in Carrie being able to read harder texts.

Text Reading progress after addressing reading volume and fluency for 3 weeks.

Table 2: Reading Progress Over 3 Weeks

Analyzing and Exploring Progress Monitoring Data Again to Determine What Next? At this point, the teacher again sought help from the intervention team. She reported on what she had done and what had changed. She and Carrie were both excited to have made this sort of progress in such a short period. She explained to Carrie that things were going to get a little harder now, because now they were going to work

on how to solve problems in harder texts. Up until this point, the texts they chose had very few problems in them that would interfere with phrased, expressive reading. Now it was time to build problem-solving skills. The teacher again tested Carrie, but this time, farther up into a level of text that was a bit harder than she could manage without help (instructional level and frustration level), and then took these assessments to the team so they could see the kinds of difficulties Carrie now encountered as she moved into higher levels.

It appeared that she needed to learn how to take apart longer, multi-syllable words as she was reading, and to learn to do so in a way that didn't disrupt her reading. The team discussed ways to do this, including using a white board or paper and pencil to show her how to take endings off words and solve the roots, or to take longer words apart chunk by chunk. They also recommended some short word study lessons outside of text reading to help Carrie learn the process of breaking words apart. The challenge would be to get problem-solving going without letting her revert to ignoring all of the other information that she now had available since she had learned to allow language and meaning to drive her processing. Her teacher went back to Carrie armed with a few more good ideas for moving her forward.
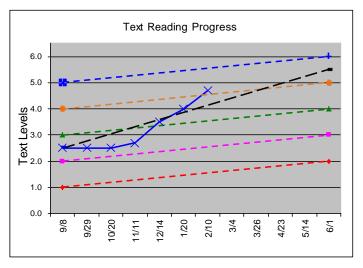
Progress slowed a little bit while Carrie learned how to bring this new learning into her reading process, but by Christmas, she was able to read a *Fountas & Pinnell* testing level N, or about a third grade, fifth month level. She had begun reading a series of mysteries (*A to Z Mysteries*) which she really enjoyed, and was continuing to read to her kindergarten buddy. Her book box at school was now filled with these easy chapter books in addition to picture books, and she was gaining confidence in her ability to read and sustain attention to longer and more involved texts. She took home a big bag of books over the winter holidays, and apparently made a deal with her mom that each time she passed another *F & P* level, her mom would buy her a book!

By the middle of January, (after the winter holidays and after a week of no school due to snow) she successfully passed a *Fountas & Pinnell* level P—this time nonfiction—meeting the criteria for accuracy (98%), fluency (highest score) and comprehension (90%). Her teacher continued to read with her daily, working with her on fluency and breaking apart longer words. In late January she started reading the *Dear America* series, which she chose "because these are books about real kids in olden days" and "it's like social studies and I love social studies." By February 10, she passed an *F & P* level R nonfiction text with 95% accuracy, the highest score on fluency, and 70% comprehension. When a new child moved to the school, Carrie showed her one of the *Dear America* books and asked if she had read any of these. She then managed to talk her new friend into reading them with her.

This is a powerful example of how one teacher worked collaboratively to identify a focus of instruction that would change everything for her student. Together, with her colleagues and the school's intervention team, she charted an ambitious goal to help Carrie to radically change her trajectory of progress. She made substantive changes to her instruction, the materials she used, the time she spent with this reader, and her own expectations. After 12 weeks of instruction she said excitedly, "I have learned so much from working with this child…more than I ever thought possible. I didn't know it was possible to completely turn a kid around like this."

Text Reading progress after 12 weeks of intensive classroom intervention.

Table 3: Reading Progress Over 12 Weeks

Progress Monitoring Text Reading Levels

Date	Title	F & P Level	Eq Level	ACC %	Fluency	Comp	Fic. NF	Easy, Inst, Hard
9-1	City Hawks	M	3.0	95%	2	-	N	H
9-17	Giants of the Sea	L	2.7	99%	2	40%	N	H
9-20	Edwin's Haircut	K	2.5	98%	2	71%	F	I
11-11	Ernie Learns	L	2.7	98%	3	80%	F	E
11-17	Saving Up	M	3.0	98%	3	80%	F	E
11-18	Vanessa's Butterfly	N	3.5	98%	2	90%	F	I
1-14	Plenty of Pets	P	4	92%			F	H
1-31	The New Girl	O	3.7	99%	3	90%	F	E
1-31	Animal Instincts	P	4	98%	3	70%	NF	I
2-8	A Secret Home	Q	4.3	98%	3	90%	F	E
2-8	Fishing Smarts	R	4.7	95%	3	70%	NF	I

Table 4: Text Reading Levels for Progress Monitoring

Carrie's teacher used progress monitoring data together with a collaborative problem-solving process to implement responsive and intensive instruction specifically designed to help Carrie change as a reader. She was able to decide when to change her focus and when to move in levels or stay with a level because she frequently monitored her progress using *Fountas and Pinnell* text reading assessments. She built on her student's strengths and helped her to address her weaknesses. By the end of the year, it is likely that
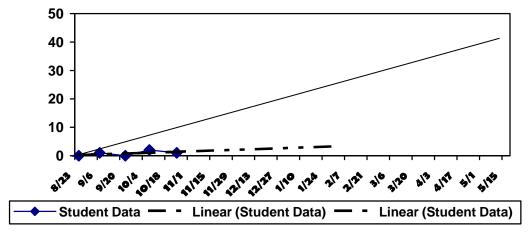
Carrie will surpass the goal they set for her. With enough books to read at home over the summer, and enough practice, it is entirely possible that Carrie will begin middle school reading on grade level.

Discussion: Using Progress Monitoring Charts to Guide Decision-Making

When using progress monitoring charts to make determinations regarding instructional interventions, consider several decision rules as a guide:

I.   If there are 2 or more consecutive data points without upward movement, as in the example below, the intervention team should consult with school personnel to rule out reasons for low performance such as absenteeism. Then meet with the student's teachers to discuss possible changes in instructional strategies, materials, increased instructional time, instructional focus, increased time for engaged practice, etc.
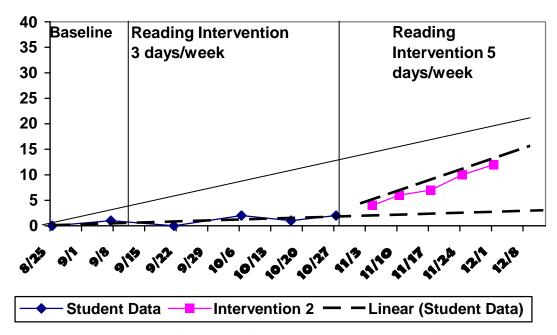
Student Progress

Table 5: Example of Progress Flat-lining

II. When progress flat-lines as in the example below, consider increasing the frequency of progress monitoring to acquire more immediate information regarding the child's response to the intervention to allow more responsive adjustments to instruction or alternatively, to change the intensity or focus of the intervention . The following chart shows that the first intervention did not address the student's needs. The second intervention however, yielded better results. Had this change been made sooner, the student would be that much closer to his or her goal.

Student Progress

Table 6: Example of Extended Flat-Line and Change of Intervention

III. Set performance goals high enough so that students are able to accelerate progress to catch up to grade level. In the example below, the goal line (solid line) not only is below the student's progress line, it is insufficient for accelerating progress to the point where the student could ever catch up to grade level.
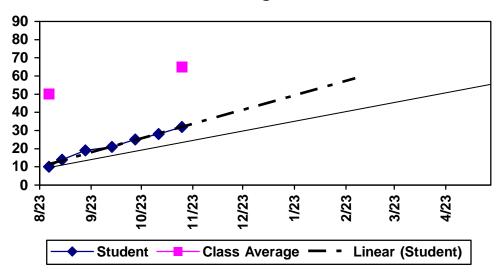
Student Progress

Table 7: Example of Low Expectation Goal Line

IV. Once a student is performing at grade level expectations, interventions can be faded. At this time, the team should implement processes for continued, but less-frequent progress monitoring to determine whether the student is maintaining progress. If progress falters, the team must take action to ensure that the student's teachers adjust instruction and support to increase the rate of progress to maintain a grade level trajectory.

Student Progress

Table 8: Example of Student in Intervention Attaining Grade Level Expectations

V. When a student's progress is atypical in comparison to others in the same intervention, as in the two charts below (The student 'AJ' demonstrated little to no progress on two different measures, in comparison to peers in the same Tier II group), it is important to ask several questions. 1) Is it possible that factors such as attendance, behavior/attention, motivation, home factors, linguistic or cultural differences are interfering? 2) Is it possible that the instruction provided in this intervention is not well-matched to this student's needs or is not pitched at the appropriate level? 3) Is it possible that this student needs more individualized assistance or more frequent support than is provided within this intervention?

Measure A

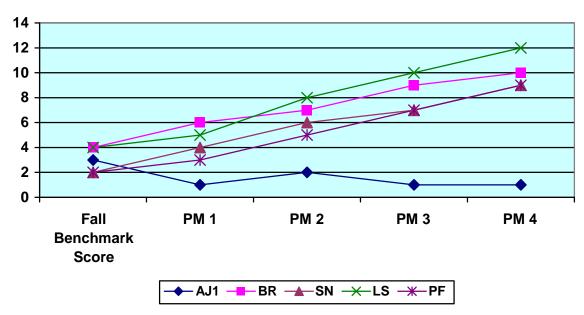## Tier II Student Performance

Table 9: Example of Student in Intervention Not Making Progress

Measure B

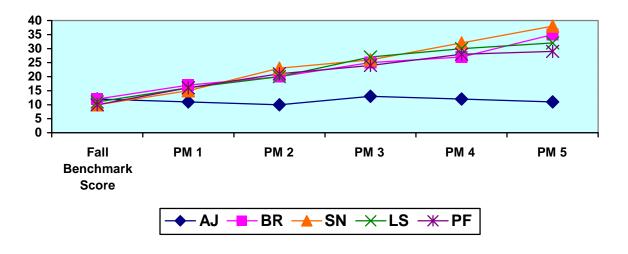## Tier II Student Performance on Measure B

Table 10: Example of Student in Intervention Not Making Progress

VI. Diagnostic assessments should be considered for those students not responding to Tier II intervention. These assessments help teachers plan more responsive instruction by providing in-depth information about students' skills and instructional needs. The outcome of the diagnostic assessment may indicate a need to change the intervention to better meet the instructional needs of the student.

Resources for Progress Monitoring
Response to Intervention Progress Monitoring Resources for Grades K–12

The National Center on Response to Intervention has developed a progress monitoring tools chart. The chart does not recommend specific products, but is intended to be used as a consumer report, to help educators become informed consumers.
http://www.rti4success.org/chart/progressMonitoring/progressmonitoringtoolschart.htm

The National Center on Response to Intervention has posted on the website a manual authored by Lynn and Doug Fuchs on curriculum-based measurements and progress monitoring.
http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/using-cbm-determine-response-intervention

http://easycbm.com/

http://www.edcheckup.com

http://www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/BAS2_Overview.aspx

http://www.proedinc.com/customer/ProductView.aspx?ID=1431&sSearchWord=mbsp

http://www.readingsuccesslab.com

SECTION VI

SOUTH CAROLINA RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

October 2011

English Language Learners (ELLs) and Response to Intervention Guidance

The number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in South Carolina districts and schools varies widely throughout the state, and services for these students are also quite variable. In addition, those identified as new learners of English include students with different individual needs. Because of these factors, there should not be a specific statewide rule about the provision of Response to Intervention (RTI) services to ELLs. Instead, teams should consider the following general guidelines in determining RTI services to ELLs beyond Tier I instruction with all appropriate accommodations and modifications:

- Closely observe individual ELL's "true peers," those with similar cultural backgrounds, who have been learning English for similar amounts of time, who have similar levels of formal education in their native languages, and who receive similar ESOL services. The following link is a very good, recent reference about RTI considerations for ELLs:

  http://nccrest.org/publications/briefs.html Click on "A Cultural, Linguistic and Ecological Framework for Response to Intervention with English Language Learners."

- Consider direct ESOL services by an ESOL teacher or paraprofessional as a Tier II intervention.

- Consider whether it is in the best interest of the student to receive several interventions during the school day from different education professionals, especially since students often show culture shock and a "silent period" in their first year or so in United States schools. (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

- Always use multiple measures in determining the need for any additional services for ELLs.

- Always involve either the ESOL teacher or the district ESOL Coordinator in decisions involving RTI Tier II or III services.

Works Cited for English Language Learners

Flynn, Kathleen M. and J. D. Hill. 2006. *Classroom Instruction that Works for English Language Learners*, ASCD.

Further Resources for Learning More about English Language Learners

Brown, Julie Esparza and A. Sanford. March 2001. *RTI for English Language Learners: Appropriately Using Screening and Progress Monitoring Tools to Improve Instructional Outcomes.* National Center on Response to Intervention.
http://www.rti4success.org/resourcetype/rti-english-language-learners-appropriately-using-screening-and-progress-monitoring-too.

http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/english-language-learners-resources.aspx#institutes

http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-for-english-learners.pdf

http://www.centeroninstruction.org/language-and-reading-interventions-for-english-language-learners-and-english-language-learners-with-disabilities
http://www.ncte.org/ell

Funding Sources

Districts have the flexibility to align many available funding sources to support the implementation of their Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative. In their effort to increase the standards of achievement for all students, districts can allocate existing resources in an RTI structure that systematically addresses student academic and behavior needs. Districts are encouraged to use RTI as a "best practice" format as they plan for the utilization of financial resources dedicated to student learning.

Professional Development provides funding revenue appropriate to provide professional development for certified instructional and instructional leadership personnel in grades kindergarten through twelve across all content areas, including teaching in and through the arts.

Title I (Title I, Basic State Grant Programs) provides revenue under Title I of ESEA for the purpose of meeting the special education needs of educationally deprived children in school attendance areas with high concentrations of children from low-income families (CFDA 84.010). Also included is revenue from basic state formula grants for Title I: Migrant Education (CFDA 84.011), Neglected and Delinquent (CFDA 84.013), and School Improvement Grant (CFDA 84.218).

Title III Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students provides revenue provided under ESEA to ensure that children who are limited English proficient attain English proficiency and develops high levels of academic attainment in English and core academic subjects (CFDA 84.365).

Students at Risk of School Failure (Revenue 3538, Subfund 338, EIA Fund) provides revenue allocated to schools and school districts to establish flexible programs in grades K-12, providing assistance for students at every grade level which emphasizes academic success and dropout prevention so that all students will graduate from high school with their peers.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides revenue for the provision of a free appropriate public education for children ages 3 through 21 with disabilities (CFDA 84.027).

Medicaid provides funding which the Office of School-Based Health Finance (OSBHF) strives to improve the quality and scope of medical services provided in schools through Medicaid reimbursement claiming. These funds can be used for occupational therapists and physical therapists to work with students in schools.

General Fund is the funding source through which the Financial Systems Section of the Office of Finance produces annual payments to school districts. The funding provided on the Education Finance Act (EFA) of 1977 provides school districts with the base funding on which they operate. The Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984 provides additional funding to school districts in several different program areas or strategies for which the districts may qualify. Lottery funding is allocated to districts in support of the Education Accountability Act requirements and for K-5 math, science, reading, and social studies programs. Possible expenditures may include interventionists to work with individuals or small groups.

K–5 Enhancement provides revenue allocated to school districts on a competitive grant basis to fund mathematics and science programs in grades K–5.

6–8 Enhancement provides revenue to school districts on a competitive grant basis to fund the teaching of grade-specific standards and to improve academic performance of students in the core academic areas of reading, mathematics, social studies, and science for grades 6–8.

Educational Accountability Act (EAA) Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards provide revenue to schools as incentive to implement improvements in the instructional program.

Sources: Financial Accounting Handbook

        Funding Manual

Response to Intervention
Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

Acceleration refers to increasing the rate of learning to help students attain grade level performance.

Accommodations are changes in instruction that enable students to demonstrate their skills in the classroom or assessment/test setting. Accommodations are designed to provide equity, not advantage, for students with disabilities. Accommodations include assistive technology as well as alterations to presentation, response, scheduling, or settings. When used appropriately, they reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability, but do not reduce or lower the standards or expectations for content. Accommodations that are appropriate for assessments do not invalidate assessment results.

Acquisition refers to beginning learning in any situation. It requires the complex process of combining information from multiple sources.

Aim Line is a line on a graph that connects a student's current performance with the performance necessary to achieve on or above grade level or the performance expected within a period and indicates how much growth a student needs to make to meet his goal.

Assessment is a broad term used to describe the collection of information about student performance in a particular area. Assessments can be formative or summative.

At Risk is a term that refers to students who are struggling and who may need supplemental or additional instruction to accelerate development in targeted instructional areas.

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) is the expectation of a statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This legislated Act requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make adequate yearly progress as defined by states and approved by the United States Department of Education.

Baseline is an initial observation or measurement that serves as a comparison upon which to determine student progress.

Behavior Intervention Plan is a plan developed for students exhibiting behavioral difficulties. This plan includes targeted behaviors, intervention strategies, reinforcers, consequences, collecting and monitoring data, as well as positive behavioral strategies.

Benchmark Assessments are assessments administered throughout a unit or course to monitor progress toward learning goals and to guide instruction. Effective benchmark assessments check understanding and application of student knowledge and skills rather than recall; consequently, effective benchmark assessments include performance tasks. Benchmark assessments may involve pre- and post-assessments.

Benchmark is a detailed description of a specific level of student performance expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student work. A set of benchmarks can be used as "checkpoints" to monitor progress toward meeting performance goals within and across grade levels.

Collaboration occurs when two or more parties work together on common goals to enhance the quality of education for students.

Common Assessments are the result of teachers collaborating and coming to consensus about what students should know, understand, and be able to do according to the standards. Common assessments assess the academic standards and provide teachers a means for examining student work.

Comprehensive Evaluation is an in-depth evaluation that is conducted to determine if a student has a disability and to determine the educational needs of the student.

Content Standards are broad statements of what students should know and be able to do in a specific content area. They state the purpose and direction of the content.

Core Instructional Model is the instructional and behavioral program provided to all students in a school; in a tiered instructional system, the tier of instruction which aims to meet the needs of 80-90 percent of students.

Criterion Referenced Assessment is an assessment that measures what a student understands, knows, or can accomplish in relation to specific performance objectives. It is used to identify a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to skills defined as the goals of the instruction, but it does not compare students to other students.

Curriculum Map is an outline for the course content by units and may provide a suggested time schedule for each unit.

Curriculum is the instructional plan of skills, lessons, and objectives in a particular subject.

Curriculum-Based Assessment is an informal assessment in which the procedures directly assess student performance in targeted content. The purpose of the assessment is to make decisions regarding how to best address a student's instructional needs.

Curriculum-Based Measure is a measurement that uses repeated assessments from the student's academic curriculum to monitor progress and guide instruction.

Curricular Variables are the factors impacting the delivery of instruction to students, including the selection of materials, the amount of time spent on instruction, the pacing of teaching, teacher training to administer the material, and the student-teacher ratio, etc.

Data Point is an isolated piece of data on a graph or chart that illustrates a student's performance/progress.

Data-based Instruction is an instructional approach in which student performance data is used to assess the effectiveness of the instruction and to make changes in instruction based on the data.

DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. It is designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.

Differentiation is a broad term referring to the need of educators to modify the curriculum, teaching environments, and practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for students. To

differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying interests, readiness levels, and learning profiles and to react responsively. There are four elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, products, and learning environment.

Dominie Assessment Portfolio is a reading and writing assessment kit which assesses comprehension of both fiction and nonfiction reading. Through the analysis of text readings, educators can examine students' use of grapho-phonics, syntax, and semantic sources of information. The text reading subtest is also a measure of fluency. Other subtests within the portfolio can be used to assess phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is an instructional program for limited English proficient students.

English Language Learner (ELL) is a term that refers to a student whose first language is not English and whose command of English is limited. The term is used interchangeably with limited English proficient (LEP).

Evaluation is the process of making judgments about the level of student understanding or performance.

Evidence-based Research is evidence that supports the efficacy, generality, and use of a practice as indicated by research.

Exemplary is a term used to describe a student who demonstrates exemplary performance in meeting the grade-level standard on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

Explicit Instruction is a systematic instructional approach that includes a set of delivery and design procedures derived from effective schools' research merged with behavior analysis. Essential components of well-designed explicit instruction include (a) visible delivery features of group instruction with a high level of teacher and student interactions and (b) the less observable, instructional design principles and assumptions that make up the content and strategies to be taught.

Feedback is descriptive comments provided to or by a student that provides very specific information about what a student is or is not doing in terms of performance needed to meet identified standards/learning goals.

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension.

Formative Assessment is evaluation used to guide and monitor the progress of student learning during instruction. Its purpose is to provide continuous feedback to both the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and failures. Formative assessments diagnose skill and knowledge gaps, measure progress, and evaluate instruction. Teachers use formative assessments to determine what concepts require more teaching and what teaching techniques require modification. Educators use results of these assessments to improve student performance. Formative assessments are not necessarily used for grading purposes. Examples include (but are not limited to): pre/post tests, portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, teacher/student conferencing, and teacher commentary and feedback.

Frameworks are models for articulating desired results, assessment processes, and teaching-learning activities that can maximize student achievement.

General Fund is the operating budget of the school system, excluding grant funds that are restricted to specific programs only.

Gifted Student is a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

Goal is a long-term projection of desired outcomes regarding student performance and school system operations.

Grade-Level Expectation defines what all students should know and be able to do at the end of a given grade level.

Heterogeneous Grouping is a grouping of students with varying abilities where each student takes a role in an area of strength that adds to the knowledge of the whole group.

Homogenous Grouping is the "cluster" grouping of students with similar abilities or interest area.

HSAP is an acronym for the South Carolina High School Assessment Program which is administered to students in their second year of high school. Students are required to earn Carnegie units and pass HSAP to receive a South Carolina high school diploma. Students must complete two areas, English/language arts and math.

IDEA is the acronym for Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Also referred to as IDEA 2004, this federal statute provides services to students with disabilities ages three through twenty-one. The legislation was originally passed in 1975 and the latest reauthorization was in 2004.

Inclusion is the term used when students with identified disabilities are educated with general education age/grade-level peers.

Individualized Education Program **(IEP)** is a written document that outlines the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with a disability. It is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with IDEA 2004.

Individualized Education Program Team **(IEP Team)** is a group of individuals responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a student with a disability.

Innovation refers to improvement, advances, creativity, and originality. Innovation requires substantial modifications in thinking to effect positive and transformational changes in student achievement. Organizations must be flexible to support the emergence of new and better strategies to positively affect student achievement.

Intensive Intervention refers to academic and/or behavioral interventions characterized by increased length, frequency, and duration of implementation for students who struggle significantly. It is often associated with the narrowest tier of an RTI tiered model. It is also referred to as tertiary interventions.

Intervention refers to care provided to improve a situation. This requires action and effort by all responsible for student learning. Intervention should be provided at the first signs of difficulty to interrupt slow rates of learning and help students accelerate learning. Intervention is the process of routinely assessing students' responses to instruction and continuously adjusting instruction to get a better

response. Intervention should supplement classroom instruction; affording students focused instruction and support from a knowledgeable teacher as well as increased opportunities for guided practice.

Literacy Coach is an educator who provides ongoing consistent support in the area of literacy for the implementation of instructional components. The coach is non-threatening and supportive, not evaluative. This school or district position is sometimes referred to as a reading coach.

MAP is a series of tests that determine a student's instructional level and measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year to year in the areas of reading and math.

Mean is the average of a set of numbers.

Median is the middle value in a list of numbers.

Met is a term used to describe a student who meets the grade level standard on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

Mode is the score in a data set that occurs most often.

Modification is a change in the course content or instructional level which changes the standard for a student with disabilities.

Norm Referenced Assessment is an assessment designed to discover how an individual student's performance or test result compares to that of an appropriate peer group. (Compare this type assessment to criterion-referenced assessment.)

Not Met is a term used to indicate that a student did not meet the grade level standard on Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

Organizing Framework is an outline that guides teachers as they plan for instruction ensuring that all standards are addressed and achieved by the end of the year.

PASS is an acronym for Palmetto Assessment of State Standards, an assessment program for students in grades three through eight. It is aligned to the state academic standards and includes tests in writing, English language arts (reading and research), mathematics, science, and social studies. The PASS test results will be used for school and school district accountability purposes beginning with the 2008-09 school year. The assessment results will also be used for federal accountability purposes (No Child Left Behind). The PASS tests are designed to provide standard-level results for each subject area.

PBIS is an acronym for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a process for creating safer and more effective schools. PBIS is a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate all children by developing evidenced-based, school-wide and classroom discipline systems. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students. PBIS is not a prescribed program. It provides systems for schools to design and implement behavior expectations and to evaluate effective school-wide practices in classrooms, in non-classroom settings, and in student specific discipline plans. PBIS is a team-based process for systemic problem solving, planning, and evaluation.

Performance Level Descriptors are verbal statements describing each performance level in terms of what the student has learned and can do. These statements are available for each state-mandated assessment, content area, and grade level where applicable.

Performance Levels are scores that define a specific level of performance as indicated in the Performance Level Descriptors. Each student receives a scale score and a performance level designation (e.g., does not meet standard, meets standard, or exemplary) when assessed on South Carolina's state-mandated assessment.

Performance Standards are clear expectations for assessment, instruction, and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to identify "how good is good enough." Performance standards incorporate content standards, but expand upon them by providing suggested tasks, sample student work, and teacher commentary.

Performance Task is a formative assessment that confirms student understanding/misunderstanding and or progress toward the standards/learning goals at different points during a unit of instruction. Performance tasks involve the application of knowledge and skills rather than recall and result in tangible products or observable performances. They involve meaning-making, encourage self-evaluation and revision, and require judgment to score. They are evaluated using predetermined criteria (rubrics).

Predictions of Progress is a long-term prospective on day-to-day decisions made regarding a student's progress. Evaluating what a student can do presently and what he/she needs to learn to do are the purposes.

Primary Intervention is a preventive and proactive intervention, implemented school-wide and often connected to broadest tier (core or foundational tier) of a tiered intervention model.

Problem-Solving Approach uses interventions, selected by a team, that target each student's individual needs.

Problem-Solving Team is a team of people, which may include school staff and parents, who use a problem-solving approach to address a problem or area of need.

Professional Learning Community is a group of individuals who seek and participate in professional learning on an identified topic.

Professional Learning Opportunity is the process of increasing the professional capabilities of staff by delivering (or providing access to) training and educational opportunities. This is sometimes referred to as professional development.

Progress Monitoring is repeated measurement of academic performance to inform instruction of individual students in general and special education in grades K-8. It is conducted at least monthly to (a) estimate rates of improvement, (b) identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress and/or (c) compare the efficacy of different forms of instruction to design more effective, individualized instruction.

Qualitative refers to a type of data that is related to the quality of observations. It is an analysis based on observable qualities or components of complex entities or situations which do not involve measurement or numbers. Qualitative research studies often involve the analysis of spoken or written words to try and understand experiences and opinions.

Quantitative refers to a type of data that is expressed in numerical values. Observations involve measurements and numbers, and analysis is based on measurement and numeric calculations.

Reading Coach is an educator who provides ongoing consistent support in the area of literacy for the implementation of instructional components. The coach is non-threatening and supportive, not evaluative. This school or district position is sometimes referred to as a literacy coach.

Reliable (reliability) is when a measurement gives the same results for the same data every time. This measurement should be consistent across time and for a wide range of students.

Remediation is instruction intended to remedy a situation or to teach a student something that he should have previously learned. Remediation assumes appropriate strategies matched to student learning have been taught previously.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of using data to guide high-quality instruction, together with academic and behavior interventions matched to student need, frequent progress monitoring to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and carefully examining students' responses to instruction to make critical educational decisions.

RTI Core or Leadership Team is a group of educators whose function is to communicate, implement and facilitate the components of an RTI school wide framework. The RTI core or leadership team may be composted of the following members:

- The curriculum and instructional facilitator,
- The principal,
- Resource teacher(s) or special education teacher(s),
- Classroom teacher representative(s),
- The school psychologist assigned to the school,
- When warranted, an ESOL teacher, and
- If available, a literacy coach and interventionist(s).

Rubric is a summary of criteria that identifies the key traits or dimensions to be examined and assessed, and it provides key features of performance for each level of scoring.

SAT (Student Assistance Team) is a group of teachers, administrators, and other professionals who identify needs and provide plans to assist students to be more successful in school.

SIT (School Intervention Team) is a group of teachers, administrators, and other professionals who identify needs and provide plans to assist students to be more successful in school.

Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn to do the task, and then gradually shifts as much of a task as possible to the student without adult assistance. Scaffolding is the instructional technique of using teacher support to help a student practice a skill at a higher level than he or she would be capable of independently. The opportunity to practice the skill at this level helps students advance to the point where they no longer need the support and can operate independently.

Scientifically-Based Research (SBR) is research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to core academic development, instruction, and difficulties; and includes research that (a) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment, (b) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn, (c) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations, and (d) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review. [Section 9101(37) of ESEA; 34 C.F. R. § 300.35]

Secondary Intervention is an intervention that relates directly to an area of need. It is different from, and supplemental to, primary interventions. Often implemented in small group settings, it may be individualized and is often connected to a supplemental tier of a tiered intervention model.

Self-Assessment is oral or written self-reflective, meta-cognitive comments made by the student that self-assess progress toward the specified standard(s) and provide feedback to the teacher in terms of student understanding; as a result of effective self-assessment, students develop the skills necessary to self-adjust and become more independent learners.

South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP): This test is administered to students attending public middle schools, high schools, alternative schools, adult education, or home schools enrolled in courses in which the curriculum standards corresponding to the EOCEP tests are taught, regardless of course name or number.

Special Education is defined by law as specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability; services are provided at no cost to the parents and can be provided in many different settings.

Standard Treatment Protocol Approach uses one consistent program from which interventions are selected to address multiple needs of students. Preferable, interventions can be adapted from the lesson components to address the individual needs of students.

Standard is the broad expectation for an area of knowledge in a given domain and may include an expectation of the degree to which a student expresses an understanding of that knowledge.

Standardized Assessments are tests on which all students answer the same questions, and each question has defined correct answers.

Standards-Based Classroom is a classroom where teachers and students have a clear understanding of the expectations (standards). Teachers and students know what they are teaching/learning each day and why the day's learning is important. In addition, they are working toward meeting standards throughout the year, in that standards-based learning is a process, not an event.

Student Support Team is a group of teachers, administrators, and other professionals who both identify needs and provide plans to assist students in becoming more successful in school.

Student with a Disability (IDEA definition) refers to a student evaluated as having a mental disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, a developmental delay, or deaf-blindness, and who needs special education and related services.

Student with a Disability (Section 504 definition) refers to a student evaluated as having a disability that substantially limits a major life activity; 504 does not require that a student have a disability in the areas mentioned in IDEA. A 504 disability may be long-term, like Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or temporary, like a broken arm.

Summative Assessment is an evaluation tool generally used at the end of an assignment, unit, project, or at the end of a course. In an educational setting, summative assessments tend to be more formal assessments (e.g., unit tests, final exams, projects, reports, and state assessments) used to assign students a course grade or to certify student mastery of intended learning outcomes.

Support refers to the assistance, effort, encouragement, cooperation and collaboration provided by everyone in the education system to facilitate student learning at proficient levels.

Tasks provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and understanding related to specific standards or elements. This demonstration may occur at any time during the course or at the end of the course.

Tertiary is an intervention that relates directly to an area of need that has not been met in primary and secondary intervention. It is different from, and supplemental to primary and secondary interventions. It is individual, intensive, and durable.

Tiered Instruction refers to levels of instructional intensity within a tiered model.

Tiered Model is a common model of three or more tiers that delineate levels of instructional interventions based on student need.

Trajectory is the path of progress that reflects the rate of learning.

Trend Line is a graphic representation of trends in data series. Trend lines are used to predict progress. On a graph the trend line connects data points and compares against aim line to determine responsiveness to intervention.

Triangulation of Data is simply the process of using three points of data that say the same thing about a student when making educational decisions about that student. Any single assessment score - be it from MAP or any other assessment - is subject to environmental or motivational influences which can affect its accuracy.

Universal Screening establishes an academic and behavioral baseline and is used to identify learners who need additional support.

Valid (Validity) means that the instrument used measures what it is designed to measure—that the data reflect what they are intended to show.

South Carolina's Response to Intervention

Family Guide to Intervention

October 2011

The Importance of Partnerships

Families and schools share a common goal for students to learn and to have healthy, positive, caring experiences and grow up to become capable young adults who contribute and participate in their communities. Students get the most out of every learning experience when the adults in their lives form partnerships. The **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)** and the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement ACT (IDEA 2004)** require more accountability for schools to provide high quality instruction for *all students.* Schools can't do this alone. Families and school staff must work together to make decisions in the best interest of students.

The objective of the guidance document is to inform families about the RTI process and how it may operate in schools.

What is Response to Intervention (RTI)?

Response to Intervention is a process schools use to help students that are not making sufficient progress toward their learning goals. For RTI to be effective, families and educators need to work together. They need to discover what works for students and what may contribute to them not meeting grade level expectations. Families and educators must collaborate and communicate to ensure that quality instruction is based on student need.

When a school identifies a student not performing at a satisfactory level or projected rate of learning, the school must take a scientific approach to find and use effective instructional strategies based on student need**.** RTI requires school staff to critically evaluate classroom instructional and behavior programs. Teachers must deliver research-supported instruction. The instruction needs to be differentiated or adapted to individual student needs. Differentiating instruction when needed increases the likelihood that students can be successful and make progress. One size fits all instruction does not work in a Response to Intervention multileveled instructional system.

The Essential Components of Response to Intervention

RTI practices are not limited to a specific subject area of the school curriculum. The RTI process is designed to improve outcomes for all children in the academic area as well as in the area of behavior.

School staff members make consistent efforts to welcome families as partners and decision-makers in their child's education. **Collaboration** and communication between families and school staff is critical to promote effective instruction for all students.

- The school staff conducts school-wide **assessment** of academics and/or behavior for all students. This process, called **Universal Screening** is conducted at regular intervals (fall, winter, spring) to identify students who are in need of closer monitoring in the classroom and those in need of more intensive academic and behavior interventions.

- School staff provides instruction that occurs in levels, called **Tiered Instruction**. RTI generally consists of a three-tiered model of school supports that uses research-based academic and/or behavior interventions. Quality instruction in the classroom (**Tier 1**) is critical, but will not meet the needs of every student.

- School staff implements specific, **High Quality, Research-based Instruction and Interventions (Tier II or Tier III)** for students not meeting grade-level academic and behavior expectations

in the classroom. Students will receive more frequent progress monitoring and increased collaboration among parents, interventionists, classroom teachers, and other staff members. Each level is more individualized and intensive. Tier III interventions are not necessarily special education; however, if a disability is suspected, school staff informs parents of their procedural safeguards and initiates a referral to determine if the student meets **Section 504** or **special education (IDEA)** eligibility. For more information on eligibility for special education, refer to the State Board of Education Regulation 43-243. Students are not placed permanently in a tier of instruction and may move between tiers as needed. A student with a disability or with other identified special considerations may be served at any tier in the process based on individual needs. Students who need additional assistance do not need to go through each tier to receive the appropriate intervention.

- School staff continuously monitors student progress. The purpose of **Progress Monitoring** is to determine the effectiveness of each intervention and to make any modifications as needed and to identify student's specific difficulties. Students instructional and behavior needs are identified early to increase progress toward standards and grade level or age appropriate expectations.

Benefits of Response to Intervention

RTI practices strengthen communication between home and school. Schools inform families frequently of the school's expectations for academic performance and behavior and of the child's progress. Families become more active and meaningful participants in the school's educational efforts.

A well-implemented, research-based RTI process ensures earlier, more focused help for students not meeting grade-level expectations and provides critical information about student instructional needs in order to create effective interventions. The process may provide a more accurate identification of students with early reading disabilities.

An RTI system also increases collaboration among school staff and assistance to teachers, and guides **professional learning** efforts with the goal of increasing student achievement through continual improvement of instruction.

What about RTI for Children with Disabilities Who Receive Special Education Services?

When a student is suspected of being a child with a disability, a referral should be made immediately to consider starting the full and individual evaluation process. Using the RTI model as part of the evaluation process provides data to the evaluation group.

A Parent may request the **special education** evaluation process begin at any point during the RTI process. A request for a special education evaluation should be made in writing. The RTI process can continue during the evaluation process and may provide data to the school in responding to the parent's request.

If a student has an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP),** the first step is to work with members of the **IEP team** to identify the appropriateness for the intervention strategies needed. The team may determine whether additional special education and or related services are required through reevaluation.

Response to Intervention: Questions Families/Parents Should Ask

     Families can make a difference in the outcomes for their children by asking questions to obtain the information necessary to make informed decisions about educational opportunities. Below are some questions to guide you as you learn more about RTI.

- Is the school district currently using an RTI process to provide additional support to students not meeting grade level expectations? If not, do they plan to?

- What screening procedures are used to identify students in need of intervention?

- What are my student's specific strengths and weaknesses?

- What are the types of data that will be collected to monitor student progress? How will that information be communicated to families?

- How do my student's scores compare with other children who are at the same grade level and age level?

- What materials and instructional methods are used in the classroom? How does the school know that the materials and instructional methods are research- based?

- Do the teachers and staff have special training in working with students who have academic and behavioral difficulties?

- How often do the different teachers and other school staff members share information with each other about student progress?

- How was it determined that my child might benefit from intervention in Tier II or Tier III instruction? Who is involved in that decision?

- What are the interventions and instructional programs being used? What research supports their effectiveness?

- Is the teacher or other person responsible for providing the interventions trained in using the intervention?

- For how many days each week is Tier II or Tier III instruction provided and for how many minutes each day?

- At what point in the RTI process are students who are suspected of having a disability referred for formal evaluation?

Important Tips to Remember

- Keep a copy of your child's screening scores so that you can compare them with scores on future tests.

- Ask for a copy of the progress monitoring information on a regular basis so that you can track progress.

- Inform the school staff of your concerns.

- Parents may request that a formal evaluation be done at any time in the RTI process. If a disability is suspected, a, letter of referral may be written to the school. Below is an example:

  Date

  Dear Principal (Principal's name),

  Please evaluate my child for a possible disability.

  Thank you.

  (Your name)

When a school receives a letter, school officials are legally obligated to respond to the request. A meeting may be scheduled to explain the school's procedures and goals for individual evaluations. In addition, they may also inquire reasons for requesting the evaluation. This inquiry may not delay the school's decision to conduct the evaluation. The school district is not required to conduct a full and individual evaluation based on parent request but must provide the parent with Prior Written Notice to explain the reason that it will not conduct the evaluation.

Teachers may also make a referral for a formal evaluation. This referral should be based on proper process required from the Special Education policies within the district. The School Intervention Team and the appropriate information gathered for respective students should be included in this referral.

RTI Resources

Parent Advocacy Brief: Parent's Guide to Response-to-Intervention, National Center for Learning Disabilities.
www.LD.org

Response to Intervention: What Families and Educators Need to Know, Parents Reaching Out, New Mexico, Fall 2007.
www.parentsreachingout.org/pdfs/english/education/edurti.pdf

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RTI Vocabulary and Definitions

Assessment is a broad term used to describe the collection of information about student performance in a particular area. Assessments can be formative or summative.

Collaboration means to work together, especially in a joint effort.

Data-based Instruction is an instructional approach in which student performance data is used to assess the effectiveness of the instruction and to make changes in instruction based on the data.

IDEA is the acronym for Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Also referred to as IDEA 2004, this federal statute provides services to students with disabilities ages three through twenty-one. The legislation was originally passed in 1975 and the latest reauthorization was in 2004.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document that outlines the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with a disability. It is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with IDEA 2004.

Individualized Education Program Team (IEP Team) is a group of individuals responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a student with a disability.

Interventions are instructional strategies used to enhance student learning based on student needs. Interventions are provided in addition to the classroom instruction. Interventions are characterized by increased length, focus, and frequency.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is a United States Act of Congress concerning the education of children in public schools. NCLB was originally proposed by the administration of George W. Bush immediately after he took office. The Act supports standards-based education reform, which is based on the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education.

Professional learning is the process of increasing the professional capabilities of staff by delivering or providing access to training and educational opportunities.

Progress Monitoring is a scientifically-based practice that is used to assess student's academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Research-based Instruction is research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and includes research that:
- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators

- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls
- Ensures experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings
- Accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review."

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a system of academic and behavioral interventions designed to provide early, effective assistance to struggling students. Schools implement research-based interventions and conduct frequent progress monitoring to assess student response and progress. When students do not make progress, they receive increasingly more intense interventions.

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

Special Education is defined by law as specially designed instruction and related services to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability; services are provided at no cost to the parents and can be provided in many different settings.

Standard is the broad expectation for an area of knowledge in a given domain and may include an expectation of the degree to which a student expresses his or her understanding of that knowledge.

Tiered Instruction refers to levels of instructional intensity within a leveled instructional model.

Universal Screening establishes an academic and behavioral baseline and is used to identify learners who need additional support.

Parent Participation: What Teachers Need to Know

Involving parents at all phases is a key aspect of a successful RTI program. As members of the decision-making team, parents can provide a critical perspective on students, thus increasing the likelihood that RTI interventions will be effective. For this reason, schools must make a concerted effort to involve parents as early as possible, beginning with instruction in the core curriculum. This must be done by notifying parents of student progress within the RTI system on a regular basis. Districts and schools should provide parents with information about its RTI program and be prepared to answer questions about RTI processes. The following should be included in this information:

- Explain to ALL parents how RTI is being implemented as part of the school's general education initiative.

- Inform parents about any new instructional practices that will be used in the classroom and how the student's progress will be monitored.

- Ensure that families know how the school will communicate and how they can request information or talk to the teachers.

- Notify parents about what they can do at home to reinforce what is happening at school.

- Inform families about the additional instruction or interventions (Tier II), what academic or behavioral areas are being included, what the parents can do at home, and how progress or problems will be communicated.

- Consider family diversity (culture, education, language and poverty) when designing methods of communication.

- Explain the data.

- Communicate and celebrate success.

- Educate and support the family in understanding their child's present level of performance and in understanding the special education process, if their child has been referred for an evaluation to determine special education eligibility.

- Be sensitive to family concerns about their child's having a disability and quickly respond to questions and requests for evaluation. Do not try to limit these discussions to students receiving Tier II interventions.

- Remind school personnel and parents that special education is only one of the options for Tier III interventions.

The South Carolina Department of Education Resources

The South Carolina Department of Education provides leadership, direction, support, and vision for quality, innovative and effective educational practices that improve learning in the state educational system. The following include, but are not limited to, programs and initiatives that are supported by the South Carolina Department of Education through funding or technical assistance.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

A major advance in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a patchwork of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, restrooms). Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary (school-wide), secondary (classroom), and tertiary (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

Office of Exceptional Children
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/173/PositiveBehaviorInterventionsandSupports.cfm

Exemplary Writing Program

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sponsors the Exemplary Writing Program (EWP) with assistance from the Writing Improvement Coordinating Council (WICC). The Exemplary Writing Program provides a framework for developing an effective school-wide writing program. The purpose of the Exemplary Writing Program is as follows:

- to make available a framework of essential criteria for developing an effective writing program that serves as a basis for self-assessment and professional development in schools;

- to facilitate sharing and best practice among schools based on a common understanding of criteria related to success in teaching students to be effective writers; and

- to identify and give public recognition to schools across the state of South Carolina that undergo the transformation of growing an outstanding writing program.

Office of Teacher Effectiveness ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/Literacy/ExemplaryWritingProgram.cfm

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

The goal of STEM related professional learning is to support teachers with pedagogical-content knowledge that translates into effective classroom practices which integrates the four domains of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As a result, students in effective STEM classrooms learn how to identify, apply and integrate concepts from those four domains in order to understand complex problems and to solve problems using innovative approaches.

Office of Teacher Effectiveness http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/60/

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a highly effective short-term intervention of one-to-one tutoring for low-achieving first graders. The intervention is most effective when it is available to all students who need it and is used as a supplement to good classroom teaching. Reading Recovery serves the lowest-achieving first graders - the students who are not catching on to the complex set of concepts that make reading and writing possible.   Individual students receive a half-hour lesson each school day for 12 to 20 weeks with a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher. As soon as students can read within the average range of their class and demonstrate that they can continue to achieve, their lessons are discontinued, and new students begin individual instruction.

Office of Teacher Effectiveness http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/Literacy/readingrecovery.cfm

Best Practice Seminars 2011-2012

In support of the South Carolina ELA Academic Standards, a series of seminars highlighting best practices in literacy will be offered to literacy educators by the Unit of Literacy and Early Learning in the Office of Teacher Effectiveness and the South Carolina Council of the International Reading Association (SCIRA).

Office of Teacher Effectiveness http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/Literacy/BestPracticesSeminarSeries.cfm

Gifted and Talented

The South Carolina State Board of Education recognizes the need to provide gifted education services to identified students in grades 1-12. Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades 1-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas. These students require an educational program beyond that normally provided by the general school program in order to achieve their potential.

Office of Federal and State Accountability http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/123/

Literacy Leader Program

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides a year-long professional learning opportunity for literacy leaders that support the essential components of a comprehensive literacy program. To create a vision of effective literacy instruction at the state and local level, instructional leaders must have a common understanding of evidence-based practices and classroom strategies. All K-12 literacy leaders (school and district administrators, literacy or instructional coaches, department heads, lead teachers, curriculum specialists, etc.) may participate. During the sessions, leaders will facilitate data conversations, examine effective classroom environments, and structures and strategies for effectively teaching readers and writers. Resources and tools will support leaders in the implementation of effective practices at a school level.

Professional Development Topics
Based on identified needs, literacy specialists will provide on-going professional development and assistance on the following:

- Reading and Writing Research, Theory and Beliefs
- Examining National and State Data-What Does it Tell Us About Instruction
- Creating High Progress Classrooms
- Effective Instructional Practice
- Classroom Observation Data (environment, schedule, resources)
- Facilitating Data Conversations

Office of Teacher Effectiveness
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/Literacy/LiteracyLeaderProgram.cfm

School Library Media Services

Library media programs and technology resources are required and accessible to all students and staff and are appropriate to achieve the strategies and goals in each school renewal or district strategic plan.

Office of Standards and Curriculum
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/36/

Teacher Effectiveness

The Office of Teacher Effectiveness provides educators with an array of multifaceted professional learning opportunities that integrate theory and best practice, build capacity, and are data and results-driven. Through various technologies, job-embedded learning, and customized services, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness seeks to advance the current practice of professional development to bolster teacher quality and, by extension, student learning in South Carolina.

Programs & Services

- Early Childhood Literacy
- Elementary Literacy Education
- English Language Arts
- Even Start
- Middle Level Literacy
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math

- Secondary Literacy Education
- Social Studies
- Visual & Performing Arts
- World Languages

Office of Teacher Effectiveness
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/

Academic Standards

The Office of Standards and Curriculum Web page contains information to support parents, teachers, and school administrators as they implement standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessments in classrooms.

Standards and Content Resources

- Driver Education
- English Language Arts & ESOL
- Health and Safety Education
- Mathematics
- World Languages

- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- Visual and Performing Arts
- S3 Curriculum Modules

Office of Standards and Curriculum
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Academic-Standards

Career and Technology Education (CATE)

The mission of the Office of Career and Technology Education is to provide leadership and services to districts and schools supporting grade-level, standards-based curricula through the integration of academic and career and technical instruction for students in grades seven through twelve while focusing on the Office's 2020 Vision for Career and Technology Education in South Carolina.

Office of Career and Technology
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ac/Career-and-Technology-Education/

Parent Involvement

In 2001, the Education Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and provided a framework for educators, families and communities to work together to improve student achievement. The parent involvement provisions of Title I, Part A stress:

- shared accountability between schools and parents for high student achievement, including expanded School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services for eligible children in low-performing schools;
- local development of parental involvement plans with sufficient flexibility to address local needs; and
- building parents' capacity for using effective practices to improve their own child's academic achievement.

Office of Federal and State Accountability
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/79/

eLearning

The mission of the Office of eLearning is to develop and deliver standards-based, student-centered online and technology-based interactive instruction to expand educational opportunities for 21st century skills. These are accomplished by the following:

- creating a smooth transition K-16 and to offer professional development to educators and expand the scope and depth of their instructional skills,
- providing educational opportunities needed in areas of the state where districts have limited resources, and
- providing innovative, standards-based curriculum delivered online and through other technologies to give access to relevant content anytime and anywhere; offering diverse, exciting learning choices; and, the opportunity and skills to participate in a national and global community.

The vision of the Office of eLearning is to be the leader in online and technology-based education by working collaboratively with schools, districts, educators, and divisions to offer quality instructional resources for students and educators.

Office of eLearning http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/e-learning/

Exceptional Children

The Office of Exceptional Children ensures that all children with disabilities in the state have available a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), protects the rights of these children and their parents, and provides leadership to school districts and state-operated programs in the provision of appropriate special educational services.

Office of Exceptional Children
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ac/Exceptional-Children/

Federal and State Accountability

Federal and State Accountability focuses on improving learning outcomes for all students by providing leadership and support while ensuring that federal and state requirements for accountability are met through effective, comprehensive compliance monitoring and technical assistance. The office includes the following programs and services:

Programs & Services

- Accreditation of Schools and Districts
- ACT/SAT Improvement Program
- Advanced Placement
- Comparability of Services
- Cultural Exchange and Academic Study Program
- District Strategic Plans and School Renewal Plans
- Gifted and Talented
- High School Courses and Requirements
- High School Diploma
- Home Schooling
- Innovative Programs and Locally Developed Courses
- International Baccalaureate Programs

- McKinney-Vento Homeless
- Migrant Education Program
- Neglected and Delinquent Program
- Parent Involvement
- School Identification Numbers (SIDN)
- South Carolina Junior Scholars Program
- Supplemental Educational Services
- Title I
- Title III-English to Speakers of Other Languages
- Title VI - Rural Education Achievement Program

- Uniform Grading Policy

Office of Federal and State Accountability
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Federal-and-State-Accountability

Leader Effectiveness

The Office of School Leadership promotes equity and excellence in education by providing a continuum of leadership development opportunities and services that are aligned both with the South Carolina Department of Education's strategic plan and with state and federal legislation so that it can effectively address the multiple needs of their customers.

Programs & Services

- Assistant Principal's Program for Leadership Excellence
- Developing Aspiring Principals Program
- Foundations in School Leadership

- Guidance and Counseling
- •Principal Induction Program
- •School Leadership Executive Institute
- •Tapping Executive Educator

Office of School Effectiveness

http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Leader-Effectiveness/

Student Intervention Services

Established in July 2011, the Office of Student Intervention Services houses programs designed to assist districts with accountability and student intervention services.

Programs & Services

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Alternative Schools
- Education and Economic Development Act
- Learn and Serve Grant
- •Palmetto Mentoring Network
- •Persistently Dangerous Schools
- •Volunteer Initiatives

Office of Student Interventions
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Student-Intervention-Services/

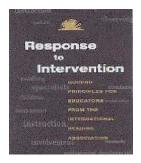### External Technology Services

The mission of External Technology is to provide technology assistance via applications programming, hardware and software acquisition, and technical support to the school districts in South Carolina for state provided software applications and systems in order to meet the technology needs of the South Carolina Department of Education.

Chief Information Office

http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Technology-Services

IRA Guiding Principles

The IRA Commission on [Response to Intervention (RTI)](#) has adopted six key principles to guide members' thinking and professional work in the area of RTI. These principles are focused specifically on RTI as it intersects with issues of language and literacy and are meant to help classroom teachers, reading/literacy specialists, speech-language pathologists, teachers of English learners, special educators, administrators, and others as they work toward the goals of preventing language and literacy difficulties among America's children and improving instruction in these areas for all students.

Before presenting these Principles, we provide a brief background regarding RTI related legislation and the Commission's position on key concepts related to RTI.

Background

Language related to RTI was written into law with the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law indicates that school districts are no longer required to take into consideration whether a student has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in determining eligibility for learning disability services. Rather, they may use an alternative approach that determines if the student responds first to scientific research-based classroom instruction and then to targeted interventions.

After receiving one or more targeted interventions, students who do not demonstrate adequate progress are then considered for an evaluation for a specific learning disability. This approach has come to be known as RTI, although this exact language is not actually used in the law.

The concept of RTI builds on recommendations made by the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education in 2002 that children with disabilities should first be considered general education students, embracing a model of prevention as opposed to a model of failure. A prevention model is intended to rectify a number of long-standing problems including the disproportionate number of minorities and English learners identified as learning disabled and the need to wait for documented failure before providing services.

The RTI provision allows local school districts that meet certain criteria to allocate up to 15% of their funding for students with disabilities toward general education interventions that serve students who may be at risk of being identified as learning disabled. This explains why RTI is often perceived as a special education initiative at the same time that special education organizations describe it as a general education initiative.

The statute and regulations identify eight areas in which low achievement may be the basis for identification of a specific learning disability. Six of these areas are within the domain of language arts: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading fluency skills, and reading comprehension. For the purposes of this document, we refer to these six areas throughout this document as language and literacy.

Because these areas of language and literacy play such a prominent role in the problems of struggling learners, IRA formed a Commission on RTI to provide its members with information and opportunities for involvement in articulating IRA's perspective on RTI. An article outlining the Commission's work appeared in the August/September 2008 issue of *Reading Today*; the article can be found in the *Reading Today* section of the IRA website at www.reading.org.

The IRA Commission on RTI embraces the concept of RTI and seeks to clarify it with regard to issues related to language and literacy. The Commission finds it productive to think of RTI as a comprehensive, systemic approach to teaching and learning designed to address language and literacy problems for all students through increasingly differentiated and intensified language and literacy assessment and instruction.

As such, RTI is a process that cuts across general, compensatory, and special education and is not exclusively a general or special education initiative. The Commission takes the position that carefully selected assessment, dedication to differentiated instruction, targeted professional development, parent education, and genuine collaboration among teachers, specialists, administrators, and parents are some factors that are essential for the success of RTI.

The IRA Commission also supports the idea that RTI is not a specific program or model. A paper developed in 2005 by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), which includes IRA as a member, emphasizes that there is no one model or approach to RTI and many possible variations can be conceptualized.

In fact, the federal government purposely provided few details for the development and implementation of RTI procedures, stating specifically that states and districts should have the flexibility to establish approaches that reflect their community's unique situation. This means that the widely used 3-tier model is neither mandated nor the only possible approach to RTI. Similarly, the statute and regulations do not mandate screening assessments, or any particular assessment per se, although they do require data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals.

Given the context for RTI provided here, the IRA Commission feels it is extremely important for the language used in describing, developing, and implementing an RTI approach to reflect its purpose as a systemic initiative rather than a specialized or particular program. More specifically, the language of RTI needs to reflect the emphasis on optimizing instruction for students who are struggling with language and literacy rather than assuming permanent learning deficits.

To summarize, RTI is not a model to be imposed on schools, but rather a framework to help schools identify and support students before the difficulties they encounter with language and literacy become more serious. According to the research, relatively few students who are having difficulty in language and literacy have specific learning disabilities. Many other factors, including the nature of educational opportunity, affect students' academic and social growth. For example, teaching practices and assessment tools that are insensitive to cultural and linguistic differences can lead to ineffective instruction or misjudgments in evaluation.

In this document, we assume that instruction/intervention can and will be effective for large numbers of students who are presently experiencing school/literacy difficulties. It is our responsibility to identify students' needs and help them succeed.

Students are often identified as "struggling" or "learning disabled" based on their growth and development in language and literacy. Consequently, IRA takes its responsibility very seriously and suggests that its members be active participants in all aspects of RTI in their schools, districts, and states. To further clarify issues related to RTI and language and literacy, the Commission offers the following set of interrelated principles as a guide to its members and others concerned with developing and implementing an RTI approach to improving the language and literacy learning of all students.

Principle 1: Instruction

RTI is first and foremost intended to prevent language and literacy problems by optimizing instruction.

- Whatever approach is taken to RTI, it should ensure optimal instruction for each student at all levels of schooling. It should prevent serious language and literacy problems through increasingly differentiated and intensified assessment and instruction and reduce the disproportionate number of minorities and English language learners identified as learning disabled.

- Instruction and assessment conducted by the classroom teacher are central to the success of RTI and must address the needs of all students including those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Evidence shows that effective classroom instruction can reduce substantially the number of children at risk of classification as learning disabled.

- A successful RTI process begins with the highest quality classroom core instruction-instruction that encompasses all areas of language and literacy as part of a coherent curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for pre-k-12 students and does not underestimate their potential for language and literacy learning. This core instruction may or may not involve commercial programs and, in all cases, must be provided by an informed, competent classroom teacher.

- The success of RTI depends on the classroom teacher's use of research-based practices. As defined by IRA in its position statement "What Is Evidence-Based Reading Instruction?", research-based means "that a particular program or collection of instructional practices has a record of success. That is, there is reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in reading achievement." Read the full statement.

- Research on instructional practices must not only provide information about "what works," but also what works with whom, by whom, in what contexts, and on which outcomes. The effectiveness of a particular practice needs to have been demonstrated with the types of students who will receive this instruction, notably students from rural/urban areas as well as from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

- Research evidence frequently represents the effectiveness of an instructional practice "on average," which suggests that some students benefited and others did not. This means that instruction must be provided by a teacher who understands the intent of the research-based practice being used and has the professional expertise and responsibility to plan instruction and adapt programs and materials as needed (see principle on Expertise).

- When core language and literacy instruction is not effective for a particular student, it should be modified to address more closely the needs and abilities of the student. Classroom teachers, at times in collaboration with other experts, must exercise their best professional judgment in providing responsive teaching and differentiation (see principle on Responsive Teaching and Differentiation).

Principle 2: Responsive Teaching and Differentiation

The RTI process emphasizes increasingly differentiated and intensified instruction/intervention in language and literacy.

- RTI is centrally about optimizing language and literacy instruction for particular students. This means that differentiated instruction, based on instructionally relevant assessment, is essential. Evidence shows that small group and individualized instruction are effective in reducing the number of students who are at risk of becoming classified as learning disabled.

- Instruction and materials selection must derive from specific student-teacher interactions and not be constrained by packaged programs. Students have different language and literacy needs so they may not respond similarly to instruction, even when research-based practices are used. No single process or program can address the broad and varied goals and needs of all students, especially those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

- The boundaries between differentiation and intervention are permeable and not clear-cut. Instruction/ intervention must be flexible enough to respond to evidence from student performance and teaching interactions. It should not be constrained by institutional procedures that emphasize uniformity.

Principle 3: Assessment

An RTI approach demands assessment that can inform language and literacy instruction meaningfully.

- Assessment should reflect the multidimensional nature of language and literacy learning and the diversity among students being assessed. The utility of an assessment is dependent on the extent to which it provides valid information on the essential aspects of language and literacy that can be used to plan appropriate instruction.

- Assessment tools and techniques should provide useful and timely information about desired language and literacy goals. They should reflect authentic language and literacy activities as opposed to contrived texts or tasks generated specifically for assessment purposes. The quality of assessment information should not be sacrificed for the efficiency of an assessment procedure.

- Multiple purposes for assessment should be clearly identified and appropriate tools and techniques employed. Not all available tools and techniques are appropriate for all purposes.

- Efficient assessment systems involve a layered approach in which screening techniques are used both to identify which students require further (diagnostic) assessment and to provide aggregate data about the nature of student achievement overall. Initial (screening) assessments should not be used as the sole mechanism for determining the appropriateness of targeted interventions. Ongoing progress monitoring must include an evaluation of the instruction itself and requires observation of the student in the classroom.

- Classroom teachers and reading specialists/literacy coaches should play a central role in conducting language and literacy assessments and in using assessment results to plan instruction and monitor student performance.

- Assessment as a component of RTI should be consistent with the IRA/NCTE *Standards for the Assessment of Reading and Writing*. Access the standards.

Principle 4: Collaboration

RTI requires a dynamic, positive, and productive collaboration among professionals with relevant expertise in language and literacy. Success also depends on strong and respectful partnerships among professionals, parents, and students.

- Collaboration should be focused on the available evidence about the needs of students struggling in language and literacy. School-level decision-making teams (e.g. intervention teams, problem-solving teams, RTI teams) should include members with relevant expertise in language and literacy including second-language learning.

- Reading specialists/literacy coaches should provide leadership in *every* aspect of an RTI process-planning, assessment, provision of more intensified instruction and support, and making decisions about next steps. These individuals must embody the knowledge, skills, and dispositions detailed for Reading Specialists in the *IRA Standards for Reading Professionals.*

- Collaboration should increase, not reduce, the coherence of the instructional offerings experienced by struggling readers. There must be congruence between core language and literacy instruction and interventions. This requires a shared vision and common goals for language and literacy instruction and assessment, adequate time for communication and coordinated planning among general educator and specialist teachers, and integrated professional development.

- Involving parents and students and engaging them in a collaborative manner is critical to successful implementation. Initiating and strengthening collaborations among school, home, and communities, particularly in urban and rural areas, provide the basis for support and reinforcement of students' learning.

Principle 5: Systemic and Comprehensive

RTI must be part of a comprehensive, systemic approach to language and literacy assessment and instruction and should provide support for all K-12 students.

- RTI needs to be integrated within the context of a coherent and consistent language and literacy curriculum that guides comprehensive instruction for all students. Core instruction, and indeed all instruction, must be continuously improved to increase its efficacy and mitigate the need for specialized interventions.

- Specific approaches to RTI need to be appropriate for the particular school/district culture and take into account leadership, expertise, the diversity of the student population, and the available resources. Schools and districts should adopt an approach that best matches their needs and resources while still accomplishing the overall goals of RTI.

- A systemic approach to language and literacy learning within an RTI framework requires the active participation and genuine collaboration of many professionals, including classroom teachers, reading specialists/literacy coaches, special educators, and school psychologists. Given the critical role that language development plays in literacy learning, professionals with specialized language-related expertise such as speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and teachers of English learners may be particularly helpful in addressing students' language difficulties.

- Approaches to RTI must be sensitive to developmental differences in language and literacy among students at different ages and grades. Although many prevailing approaches to RTI focus on the early elementary grades, it is essential for teachers and support personnel at middle and secondary levels to provide their students with the language and literacy instruction they need to succeed in school and beyond.

- Administrators must ensure adequate resources and provide support for appropriate scheduling along with ample time for all professionals to collaborate.

- Ongoing and embedded professional development is necessary for all educators involved in the RTI process. Professional development should be context-specific and provided by professional developers with appropriate preparation and skill to support school and district personnel. Professional expertise is essential to the improvement of language and literacy learning in general as well as within the context of RTI (see principle on Expertise).

Principle 6: Expertise

All students have the right to receive instruction from well-prepared teachers who keep up to date, and supplemental instruction from professionals specifically prepared to teach language and literacy, as noted in IRA's statement "Making a Difference Means Making It Different: Honoring Children's Rights to Excellent Reading Instruction."

- Teacher expertise is central to instructional improvement, particularly for those who encounter difficulty in acquiring language and literacy.

- Important dimensions of teachers' expertise include their knowledge and understanding of language and literacy development, their ability to use powerful assessment tools and techniques, and their ability to translate information about student performance into instructionally relevant instructional techniques.

- The exemplary core instruction that is so essential to the success of RTI is dependent on highly knowledgeable and skilled classroom teachers. For further information, see IRA's *Standards for Reading Professionals*.

- Professionals who provide supplemental instruction/intervention must have a high level of expertise in all aspects of language and literacy instruction and assessment and must be capable of intensifying or accelerating language and literacy learning.

- Student success depends on teachers and support personnel who are well prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in a variety of settings. Deep knowledge of cultural and linguistic differences is especially critical for the prevention of language and literacy problems in diverse student populations.

- Expertise in the areas of language and literacy requires a comprehensive approach to professional preparation that involves preservice, induction, and inservice education. It also requires opportunities for extended practice under the guidance of knowledgeable and experienced mentors.

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