

Learning Leadership

Strengthening the Capacity of 21st Century Leaders and Learners

Response to Intervention – A Pivotal Process within a Tiered System of Supports: Central Themes for District Leaders and Staff Developers

By Lisa Perry, Yonkers Public Schools Director of Instructional Technology and Science

Through the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2006, Response to Intervention (RTI) has become a core component of educational policy. RTI reflects a responsive approach, incorporating ongoing diagnostic instruction and assessment through a process designed to support all learners and provide targeted support for struggling students. RTI is a natural outgrowth of an increasingly responsive educational system, taking many forms across districts. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), authorized December 10, 2015, brings to the forefront the systemic emphasis on school transformation through the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) within which the RTI process is framed.

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Essential Elements for Districts to Consider

In an interview with Dr. Stevan Kucic, Consulting Director of School Transformation at the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Dr. Kucic emphasized the need for a district commitment to a systemic approach to tiered systems of support. Instructional and intervention decisions, he explains, must be based purely on student outcome data from the use of the interventions in place. Dr. Kucic emphasizes that it is important to note this is *not* the same as data guided decision-making. It is data *driven* decision-making. The essential process of discovery and resulting intervention decisions based on active and ongoing assessment of outcome data are key components of the RTI process itself. *continued next page...*

Response to Intervention (RTI) Process of Intervention Based on Student Outcomes		
Tier I or Primary Intervention	For all students	Universal instruction Foundational Found in all settings Both preventive & proactive
Tier II or Secondary Intervention	For some students	Supplemental intervention for students at some risk High efficiency Rapid response
Tier III or Tertiary Intervention	For individual students	Supplemental intervention for students at high risk High intensity Durable procedures

➡ A January 5, 2016 EdWeek article by experts in the field of RTI illustrates that the implementation of RTI is a clear process which focuses on core instruction and intervention services that are specific and refined to meet student needs, with key elements including pared down screening, high levels of data efficiency, and refinement in the way intensity of interventions are operationalized.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/01/06/four-steps-to-implement-rti-correctly.html>

Essential Elements for Districts to Consider, *continued...*

When asked to describe the most serious concerns observed when district initiatives are reviewed, Dr. Kukic warned that “a popular but fatal error is the idea of piloting RTI,” such as in one school or in a particular setting. “This rarely generalizes out to a system of change,” Dr. Kukic stated, as systemic change requires a coordinated commitment across a system itself of both discovery and development. It is recommended that a district anticipate a four-year period of diagnostic review, implementation, and learning-community collaborative commitment for holistic change.

Clearly observable components of successful implementation include the following:

- a) The district analyzes student responses to ever increasingly intense interventions.
- b) Decisions are based entirely on student outcomes.
- c) The district relies on valid and reliable data through a clear process.

“Ultimately,” Dr. Kukic states, “the district must dedicate itself to fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practice.”

Misconception	In Reality ...
RTI is a behavioral versus academic intervention model.	RTI is a holistic process of intervention and support. - RTI incorporates a global view of student achievement. - RTI reflects both academic and behavioral considerations.
RTI is the responsibility of Special Education.	RTI is designed within an instructional system. - RTI streamlines the process of diagnoses and intervention for all students. - RTI only functions effectively within a full system of support that includes a range of stakeholders working in a coordinated fashion.
RTI is a static process which requires a uniform approach across all schools.	RTI is a responsive process which adjusts over time. - Schools within a district may incorporate varied processes based on student maturational levels, resources, and team expertise. - As long as the RTI process demonstrates effectiveness, variations in approach can reflect customization designed to maximize available resources and skills. - The RTI process should be reviewed and shared regularly across teams district-wide to assure effectiveness and increasingly aligned coherence.

FOR REFLECTION/REVIEW: Data, Who, Timing, Development

Data

- i. What outcome data are used to determine decision-making; why were they chosen?
- ii. Do the measures continue to be the best available (i.e., validity, speed of capture)?
- iii. How frequently is data updated; what technologies are used to increase efficiency?

Who

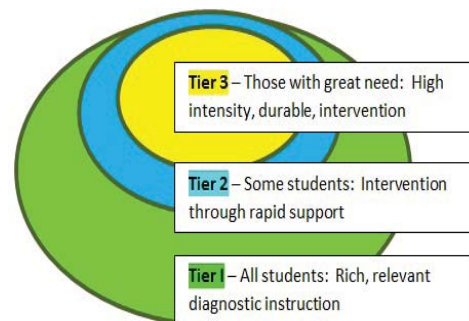
- i. What teams are involved in the decision / assessment process; what is their role?
- ii. How are students involved in the process?
- iii. How are caregivers involved; how are they kept informed?

Timing

- i. What benchmark time periods are used to determine changes to intervention plans?
- ii. How often is coherence improved through review and assessment of results?
- iii. Where can increases in efficiency be gleaned?

Development

- i. What district practices and leadership initiatives could be shared to promote efforts?
- ii. What resources can be shared and/or developed to support staff, students, and families?
- iii. What training will support increased levels of efficiency and effectiveness?



Components of Successful RTI	
Focus: Instruction Data Based Decisions Progress Monitoring Universal Screening	Multi-Level Instructional & Intervention Process Whole Child Approach Stakeholder Involvement Action Research Approach

A need-to-know for stakeholders

RTI: A process, not a system ←————→ MTSS: The system framing the RTI process.

Process: A sequence of events, or interrelated set of activities, which interact to achieve a result.

System: A set of interdependent or interacting parts, which form a whole.

Framing Our Work

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - Relevant Language/Allowable Funds

Report Language:

"It is the intent of the Conferees that the full range of students' needs, including academic needs and behavioral needs, be addressed through a school's use of a multi-tier system of supports."

Definition:

'(33) MULTI-TIER SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS – The term 'multi-tier system of supports' means a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision making.'

Professional Development:

'(xii) are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities, or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services to those children, including positive behavioral intervention and supports, multi-tier systems of supports, and use of accommodations.'

FUNDS

Title II:

'(F) developing programs and activities that increase the ability of teachers to effectively teach children with disabilities, including children with significant cognitive disabilities, which may include the use of multi-tier systems of support and positive behavioral intervention and supports, and students who are English learners, so that such children with disabilities and students who are English learners can meet the challenging State academic standards described in section 1111(b)(1)'

Title II: LEARN:

Local Use of Funds '(4) Providing for a multi-tier system of supports for literacy services.'

Every Student Succeeds Act (PDF)

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s1177enr/pdf/BILLS-114s1177enr.pdf>

Committee Report

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&sid=cp114xndpP&r_n=hr354.114&dbname=cp114&&sel=TOC_2160674&

Sec. 8002. Definitions

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&sid=cp114xndpP&r_n=hr354.114&dbname=cp114&&sel=TOC_968788&<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&sid=cp114xndpP&r_n=hr354.114&dbname=cp%0b114&&sel=TOC_968788&>

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&sid=cp114xndpP&r_n=hr354.114&dbname=cp%0b114&&sel=TOC_968788&>

*For more information or
professional development
on **Response to
Intervention** please
contact your local
BOCES or Big Cities
representative.*

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Resources

National Center for Learning Disabilities - <http://www.nclld.org>

RTI Action Network - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/>

NYSED RTI Parent's Guide - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/RTI/rti-pamphlet.pdf>

Considerations for English Language Learners - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/getstarted/sld-identification-toolkit/ld-identification-toolkit-considerations-for-ell>

Framing Urban Challenges - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/urban-school-challenges>

New York Staff Curriculum Development Network - <http://nyscdn.org/> December 2015 Meeting

Tools

Toolkit - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/getstarted/sld-identification-toolkit>

IES Practice Guide/Reading - http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf

Checklists and Forms - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/checklists>

Video and Podcasts - <http://www.rtinetwork.org/professional/videos/podcasts>

RTI In An Age of Common Core Standards - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFHYB04miR8>

Role of Collaboration in School Success - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4W5LZKB0bc4>

Glossary of RTI Terms - <http://www.rti4success.org/resources/rti-glossary-terms>

Extended Research

Every Child Succeeds Act Webinar - <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essastwebinar12222015.pdf>

Implementing RTI Using Title I, Title III, and CEIS Funds - <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/rtifiles/rti.pdf>

Margaret Searle, (2010), What Every School Leader Should Know About RTI, Alexandria: VA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Stevan J. Kukic, Ph.D. & Harvey A. Rude, Ed.D., (2010). Organizational Change: Transformative Leadership for Special Education by Council of Administrators of Special Education. Retrieved from https://system.netsuite.com/core/media/media.nl?id=334047&c=713075&h=312c0e80b9510cccd70a&_xt=.pdf&gc=clear

Dr. Stevan J. Kukic is the Consulting Director of School Transformation for the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), was a past chair of the Professional Advisory Board for NCLD, and served on Board of Directors for the Center as chair of NCLDs Public Policy Committee. He has been the recipient of multiple distinguished educator awards, was a past Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for Cambium Learning Group specializing in support through intervention, technology, and services, and has served as Director for At Risk and Special Education, Utah State Office of Education.