

# Using Response to Intervention (RTI) for Washington's Students



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## Introduction

On December 3, 2004, Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). The language that Congress uses in IDEA 2004 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB 2001) stresses the use of professionally sound interventions and instruction based on defensible research, as well as the delivery of effective academic and behavior programs to improve student performance. Congress believes that as a result, fewer children will require special education services. Provisions of IDEA 2004 allow school districts to use scientific, research-based interventions as an alternative method for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). This process is generally referred to as **Response to Intervention (RTI)**.

Using Response to Intervention for Washington's Students is designed to: (a) explain the principles and components of the RTI process, (b) provide guidelines related to decision making within a RTI system, (c) recommend how to use RTI data in identifying specific learning disabilities, (d) answer common questions, and (e) identify additional resources that school districts may use in developing their own RTI systems.

Recent research shows that multi-tiered models are effective educational practices within schools to bring high quality instruction to **all** students. When discussing the first step to take in the future of education in Washington, the State School Superintendent noted in her November 17, 2005 State of Education Address that:

*"We must personalize education. We must put our students at the center of everything we're doing."* Dr. Terry Bergeson

Dr. Bergeson has outlined the aspects of personalizing education which include:

- Decisions based on data;
- Screening for at-risk students;
- School wide collaboration to help each student;
- Progress monitoring; and
- Evaluating the effectiveness of instruction and interventions.

The RTI concepts presented in this document make use of a multi-tiered approach that incorporate the aspects of a personalized education. The use of 'tiered' models is common in both education and mental health. For example, there are many similarities between this RTI framework and Washington's K-12 Reading Model. While this manual intentionally aligns with the K-12 Reading Model, RTI may be applied to other academic content areas, such as math, written language and social behavior.

Due to the state's cultural and linguistic diversity in student populations, resources, geographic areas, and rural, urban and suburban populations, it is expected that no two school districts or even school buildings will implement RTI in precisely the same way. With that in mind, this manual has been designed to propose a framework for schools and districts that choose to implement RTI.

## RTI Defined

The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD, 2006) defines RTI as:

*“...an assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data.”*

RTI is an integrated approach to service delivery that encompasses general, remedial and special education through a multi-tiered service delivery model. It utilizes a problem-solving framework to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties for all students using scientific, research-based instruction. Essentially, RTI is the practice of: (a) providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to all students needs and (b) using learning rate over time and level of performance to (c) make important educational decisions to guide instruction (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2005). RTI practices are proactive, incorporating both prevention and intervention and is effective at all levels from early childhood through high school.

RTI is intended to reduce the incidence of “instructional casualties” by ensuring that students are provided high quality instruction with fidelity. By using RTI, districts can provide interventions to students as soon as a need arises. This is very different, for example, from the methods associated with the aptitude-achievement discrepancy models traditionally utilized for SLD identification which have been criticized as a “wait to fail” approach.

## RTI: Big Ideas

RTI is comprised of seven core principles that represent recommended RTI practices (Mellard, 2003). These principles represent systems that must be in place to ensure effective implementation of RTI systems and establish a framework to guide and define the practice.

- 1. Use all available resources to teach all students.** RTI practices are built on the belief that all students can learn. One of the biggest changes associated with RTI is that it requires educators to shift their thinking: from the student--- to the intervention. This means that the initial evaluation no longer focuses on “what is wrong with the student.” Instead, there is a shift to an examination of the curricular, instructional, and environmental variables that change inadequate learning progress. Once the correct set of intervention variables have been identified, schools must then provide the means and systems for delivering resources so that effective teaching and learning can occur. In doing so, schools must provide resources in a manner that is directly proportional to students’ needs. This will require districts and schools to reconsider current resource allocation systems so that financial and other support structures for RTI practices can be established and sustained.
- 2. Use scientific, research-based interventions/instruction.** The critical element of RTI systems is the delivery of scientific, research-based interventions with fidelity in

general, remedial and special education. This means that the curriculum and instructional approaches must have a high probability of success for the majority of students. By using research-based practices schools efficiently use time and resources and protect students from ineffective instructional and evaluative practices. Since instructional practices vary in efficacy, ensuring that the practices and curriculum have demonstrated validity is an important consideration in the selection of interventions. With the absence of definitive research, schools should implement promising practices, monitor the effectiveness and modify implementation based on the results.

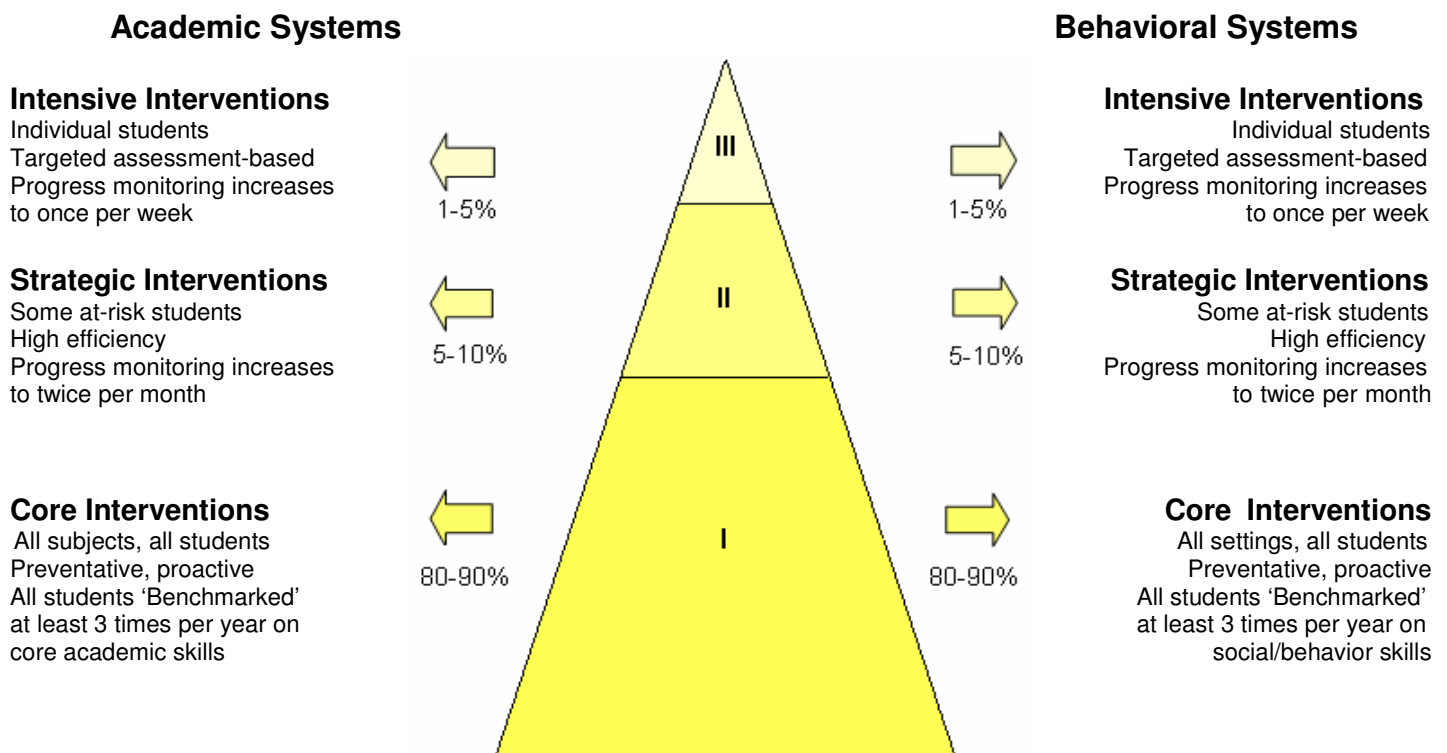
- 3. *Monitor classroom performance.*** General education teachers play a vital role in designing and providing high quality instruction. Furthermore they are in the best position to assess students' performance and progress against grade level standards in the general education curriculum. This principle emphasizes the importance of general education teachers in monitoring student progress rather than waiting to determine how students are learning in relation to their same-aged peers based on results of state-wide or district-wide assessments.
- 4. *Conduct universal screening/benchmarking.*** School staff conduct universal screening in all core academic areas and behavior. Screening data on all students can provide an indication of an individual student's performance and progress compared to the peer group's performance and progress. These data form the basis for an initial examination of individual and group patterns on specific academic skills (e.g., identifying letters of the alphabet or reading a list of high frequency words) as well as behavior skills (e.g., attendance, cooperation, tardiness, truancy, suspensions, and/or disciplinary actions). Universal screening is the least intensive level of assessment completed within a RTI system and helps educators and parents identify students early who might be "at-risk." Since screening data may not be as reliable as other assessments, it is important to use multiple sources of evidence in reaching inferences regarding students "at risk."
- 5. *Use a multi-tier model of service delivery.*** A RTI approach incorporates a multi-tiered model of service delivery in which each tier represents an increasingly intense level of services associated with increasing levels of learner needs. The system described in this manual reflects a three-tiered design. All multi-tiered systems, regardless of the number of levels chosen, should yield the same practical effects and outcomes.

In a RTI system, all students receive instruction in the core curriculum supported by strategic and intensive interventions when needed. Therefore, all students, including those with disabilities, are found in Tiers I, II, and III. Important features, such as universal screening, progress monitoring, fidelity of implementation and problem solving occur within each tier. A matrix illustrating these features within a tiered service delivery model is included in Appendix A. The basic tiered model reflects what we know about students in school: their instructional needs will vary. Thus, the nature of the academic or behavioral intervention changes at each tier, becoming more rigorous as the student moves through the tiers.



Figure 1 illustrates layers of instruction that can be provided to students according to their individual needs. Tier I represents the largest group of students, approximately 80-90%, who are performing adequately within the core curriculum. Tier II comprises a smaller group of students, typically 5-10% of the student population. These students will need strategic interventions to raise their achievement to proficiency or above based on a lack of response to interventions at Tier I. Tier III contains the fewest number of students, usually 1-5%. These students will need intensive interventions if their learning is to be appropriately supported (Tilly, 2006).

Figure 1: Three-Tier Model of School Supports



**6. Make data-based decisions.** Decisions within a RTI system are made by teams using problem solving and/or standard treatment protocol techniques. The purpose of these teams is to find the best instructional approach for a student with an academic or behavioral problem. Problem solving and standard treatment protocol decision making provide a structure for using data to monitor student learning so that good decisions can be made at each tier with a high probability of success. When using the problem solving method teams answer four interrelated questions: (1) Is there a problem and what is it? (2) Why is it happening? (3) What are we going to do about it? (4) Did our interventions work? (NASDSE, 2005) Problem solving and standard treatment protocol techniques ensure that decisions about a student's needs are driven by the student's response to high quality interventions.

**7. Monitor progress frequently.** In order to determine if the intervention is working for a student, the decision making team must establish and implement progress monitoring. Progress monitoring is the use of assessments that can be collected

frequently and are sensitive to small changes in student behavior. Data collected through progress monitoring will inform the decision making team whether changes in the instruction or goals are needed. Informed decisions about students' needs require frequent data collection to provide reliable measures of progress. Various curriculum-based measurements are useful tools for monitoring students' progress.

### Features of a Tiered Service Delivery Model

As noted earlier, a RTI approach incorporates a multi-tiered system of service delivery in which each tier represents an increasingly intense level of services. Students move fluidly from tier to tier. A multi-tiered concept aligns all available resources to support and address students' needs regardless of their eligibility for other programs. It is important to note that RTI is not a placement model; it is a flexible service model.

### Tier I-Core Instruction

In the RTI framework, all students in Tier I receive high quality scientific, research-based instruction from general education teachers in the **core curriculum**. The core curriculum provides the foundation for instruction upon which all strategic and intensive interventions are formulated. While Tier I instruction occurs in the general education setting, it is not necessarily grade level instruction. Instruction at Tier I includes all developmental domains such as behavioral and social development along with instruction in academic content areas. Tier I instruction must be both differentiated and culturally responsive to serve approximately 80-90% of the student body and is effective for the vast majority of students. At this phase, general education teachers match students' prerequisite skills with course content to create an appropriate instructional match and use instructional strategies with fidelity that are evidence-based.

**Fidelity** refers to the degree to which RTI components are implemented as designed, intended, and planned. Fidelity is achieved through sufficient time allocation, adequate intervention intensity, qualified and trained staff, and sufficient materials and resources. Fidelity is vital in universal screening, instructional delivery and progress monitoring.

An important first step in identifying at-risk students is the use of **universal screening and/or benchmarking** of students in all core academic areas and behavior. Students who are at-risk are not suspected as having a disability absent other data or indicators. At Tier I, universal screening for all students is conducted at least three times during a school year: fall, winter and spring. Scores earned at different times during the year are used to determine whether a student's performance and progress is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. Universal screening is typically done through brief assessments such as curriculum-based measures (CBMs). Significant numbers of students meeting proficiency levels (e.g., 80% or greater) based on the results of universal screening tools is an indicator that the instruction in the core curriculum is effective. When there is evidence that instruction in the core curriculum is not effective, schools must examine whether it is occurring school-wide or whether it is a class-specific problem. If, for example, a school has a high percentage of students with a particular risk factor for low achievement (e.g., low-income) this does not automatically mean it is acceptable to refer a higher proportion of students in that school for special

education services. Instead, consideration should be given to redesigning the core program so that it meets the needs of the school's core student population. When the core curriculum is effective, interventions within the core will need to be made for at-risk students in accordance with their individual needs based on universal screening/benchmarking data, followed by progress monitoring.

While a variety of universal screening tools are available, schools are encouraged to choose tools that are easy to administer and analyze. Schools may utilize multiple convergent sources for screening students, including: district-wide assessments; existing data; classroom data; CBMs; and other measurements. To ensure valid and reliable results, directions for administering screening tools and scoring the results should be explicitly followed. Teachers and staff administering and scoring screening tools should receive ongoing professional development to ensure fidelity of administration and reliability of scores. Schools should identify a standard procedure with specified criteria or benchmarks for identifying students "at-risk" (e.g., create a table of cut points or patterns of performance, etc.). However, a cut score alone does not warrant movement to Tier II absent Tier I interventions that have been tried and proven to be unsuccessful.

**Progress monitoring** documents student growth over time to determine whether the student is progressing as expected in the core curriculum. In Tier I, progress monitoring is recommended in addition to general screening/benchmarking measures for those at-risk students that were not performing in accordance with standards.

Analysis of the screening data and progress monitoring will expose *false positives*, (students that appear to have skill deficits but do not) and *false negatives* (students that do not appear to have skill deficits, but do). Unidentified, false positives result in an over identification of students in need of strategic or intensive interventions that can be costly and time consuming. False negatives, on the other hand, can result in an under identification of students in need of Tier II or Tier III interventions.

Schools should implement screening instruments with fidelity and emphasize high sensitivity and specificity. When choosing screening instruments, greater emphasis should be placed on sensitivity to ensure identification of at risk students. The trade off can be increased false positives which will later be identified through progress monitoring.

CBMs are primarily used as a method for progress monitoring and are characterized as brief, easy to administer and score, and produce measures that are good predictors of a student's academic ability. A list of various CBM tools can be found in the resources on page 20. CBMs are used for both screening/benchmarking and progress monitoring. Other measures of student performance such as classroom observations, state-wide and district-wide assessments, and other standardized testing may be considered when measuring the effectiveness of the interventions provided.

The data collected during progress monitoring at Tier I to at risk students helps teams make informed decisions at the classroom level. These data provide a picture of the student's performance and rate of growth (e.g., progress) to inform instructional and

curricular changes so that every student reaches proficiency on targeted skills. Students who do not reach a proficiency level at Tier I will need more strategic interventions. **Lack of responsiveness** is defined as the rate of improvement, or a progress slope, that is not sufficient for the student to become proficient with state standards without more interventions. Five weeks or more after progress monitoring has been initiated for at risk students is suggested as a sufficient period to review lack of responsiveness at Tier I. The decision to advance to Tier II is based upon an analysis of the progress monitoring data and a determination of a lack of responsiveness at Tier I.

### **Tier II-Strategic Interventions**

At Tier II, **strategic interventions** are provided to students who are not achieving the desired standards through the core curriculum alone. Tier II typically consists of 5-10% of the student body. Strategic interventions supplement the instruction in the core curriculum provided in Tier I and should be targeted at identified student needs and stated in an intervention plan. Decisions about selecting the appropriate strategic interventions should be made when a student enters Tier II and then reviewed through progress monitoring at appropriate intervals after interventions are implemented.

Strategic interventions are intended to be short-term in duration (e.g., 9-12 week blocks) and are in place for immediate implementation. Interventions are generally provided in small groups of three to six students and may occur in the main classroom or in other settings. It is recommended that interventions at Tier II consist of three to four sessions per week at 30-60 minutes per session. Instruction must be provided by trained staff and supervised by individuals with expertise in the intervention chosen by the decision making team. Students may benefit from more than one Tier II intervention cycle.

Schools set up and deliver strategic interventions that are designed to address routine problems exhibited by students. When selecting materials for strategic interventions, districts and schools are encouraged to identify 2-3 programs, or fewer, per academic area and to utilize on a district-wide or school-wide basis for behavior. Districts or schools can identify additional programs, though limiting programs to two or three prevents redundancy and a lack of coordination across or among programs. It also reduces the amount of professional development that would be required to implement strategic interventions.

At Tier II, progress monitoring involves reviewing existing data of the student's performance and progress using CBM tools. Progress monitoring is done more frequently at Tier II than Tier I, usually occurring at least two times per month, or more frequently as determined by the decision making team. Data gathered through Tier II progress monitoring informs teams of modifications needed to student intervention plans. For example, if progress monitoring data reflects student performance below the goal line over four consecutive periods of data collection, the amount and frequency of the intervention should be increased, or new strategic interventions should be added.

Students who are successful at Tier II may be reintegrated into Tier I. However, for a small percentage of students, Tier II interventions will not be enough. If a student is not

meeting proficiency after it is determined that Tier II strategic interventions have been implemented with fidelity, the student will require intensive interventions at Tier III.

### **Tier III - Intensive Interventions**

**Intensive interventions** at Tier III are designed to accelerate a student's rate of learning by increasing the frequency and duration of individualized interventions based on targeted assessments that analyze the lack of responsiveness to the interventions provided at Tier I and Tier II. Intensive interventions at Tier III may either support and enhance instruction provided at Tier I and supported by Tier II, or be substituted for a portion of the Tier I and Tier II interventions if those interventions have been tried with increased frequency and duration and proven ineffective. Students at Tier III are those students who are performing significantly below standards and who have not adequately responded to high quality interventions provided at Tier I and Tier II.

Tier III generally serves fewer than 5% of the student body. Intensive interventions are usually delivered in groups of no more than three students and may occur longer than 9-12 week blocks. Progress monitoring at Tier III is completed more frequently, at least on a weekly basis. An example of an intervention plan at Tier III may include two 30-minute sessions daily, in addition to the interventions the student is receiving in the core curriculum.

Prior to selecting intensive interventions, **targeted assessments** are typically conducted when a student enters Tier III. These assessments use direct measures in addition to analysis of RTI data to provide more in-depth information about a student's instructional needs and are used to identify the student's skill deficits. Targeted assessments may be administered by reading specialists, Title I/LAP teachers, school psychologists, special education teachers, specially trained general education teachers, or other specialists. Targeted assessments include the use of interviews, observations, error analysis techniques, CBMs, CBM mastery measures, which are used to target a very narrow skill, other standardized assessments, and/or functional behavioral assessments. A sample approach using error analysis in the area of reading is provided in Appendix G.

Students who are successful at Tier III may be returned to previous tiers and/or the core curriculum. Students who are not successful after multiple Tier III intensive interventions must be considered for a referral for special education evaluation and/or other long-term planning (e.g., 504 plan, additional Tier III cycle, etc.).

### **Problem Solving Process**

Problem solving is a data-based decision making process that is used to identify needed interventions for students in Tiers I, II and III. Decisions are made by teams that are composed of individuals who are qualified to make the important educational decisions to help students succeed in school. As a general rule, the composition of a decision making team changes by adding additional specialists' expertise as students move from tier to tier. When using problem solving or standard treatment protocol techniques, decision making teams should always include the student's general

education teacher(s) and parents. If districts choose to use existing teams, they may need to modify procedures to align with the problem solving steps discussed below. Decision making team participants may include: the principal; academic specialists (Title I, ELL, and literacy consultants); special education teachers; school psychologists; speech and language pathologists and other educational staff associates; additional general education staff; and paraeducators, in addition to parents and the general education teacher(s) of the student.

To facilitate the problem-solving process at any of the tiers, I, II, or III, the information collected during assessment must inform instructional decision-making. By sampling information from content domains (Instruction, Curriculum, Educational Environment, and Learner) which are most relevant to instruction and learning, teams collect data by using four assessment modalities. These are called the R.I.O.T. procedures (**R**evue [of records and products]; **I**nterview [of teachers, students and parents]; **O**bserve; and **T**est). Information about the content domains and R.I.O.T procedures are provided in Appendices B and C. An example of using problem solving to address a student's needs in the area of writing may be found in Appendix D.

In making decisions, teams should use the following approach:

- **Define the problem** - When a concern is raised, the first step is to review the concern and attempt to identify the problem. The decision making team should first review existing student data to determine specific problems. For example, a student should not be identified as simply having an academic or a behavior problem. The team should try to narrow the problem (based upon available data) to identify the deficit skill area(s) (e.g., phonemic awareness, problem solving skills, math calculations, vocabulary, reading comprehension or peer interactions, etc.).
- **Analyze the cause** - Once the problem is defined, the decision making team needs to develop a hypothesis as to why the problem is occurring and continuing. This involves analyzing those variables that can be altered through instruction in order to find an instructional solution. This includes questions of fidelity, missing skills, motivational factors, or lack of exposure to the general curriculum. The team should focus on explanations of the problem that can be addressed through instruction. In addition to the cause of the problem, the team needs to consider the student's rate of learning. In doing this, the team reviews the student's learning trend (e.g., progress) in the areas identified by the decision making team. The team should also compare the student's progress to peers over time. In analyzing the problem, it is helpful for the team to consider the four different content domains as illustrated in Appendix B.
- **Develop a plan** - Once the problem has been analyzed, the team identifies interventions that will meet the student's needs. The team does this by developing a plan that includes: an implementation timeframe (e.g., 4 weeks, 6 weeks, or 8 weeks); the frequency of the interventions (how often the intervention will be provided and for how many minutes per week); who will provide the intervention (e.g. classroom teacher, Title I teacher, etc); and a timeframe to evaluate the

effectiveness of the intervention. A sample of an intervention plan can be found in Appendix F. The student's plan should outline the goal for progress. The team plots an "aim-line" (graphic representation) depicting the desired rate of progress a student needs to reach the goal from the current baseline.

- **Implement the plan-** Interventions must be implemented with fidelity. To ensure fidelity, qualified staff must deliver the interventions according to the prescribed process and prescribed timeframe. Schools should document their delivery of the interventions using multiple sources (e.g. observation notes, lesson plans and grade books, student work reflecting instructional elements and graphs of student progress, etc.).
- **Evaluate the plan-** In order to determine if the intervention is working for a student, the team must collect data through progress monitoring. The frequency of progress monitoring depends on the tier, but in all cases the process is similar. A student's current performance and progress is compared to their projected "aim-line." If performance falls significantly below the aim-line over three or four consecutive monitoring periods, the decision making team should revisit the intervention plan to make appropriate modifications or revisions.

### **Standard Treatment Protocol**

A standard treatment protocol is a viable alternative approach to problem solving and may be used along with, or in some cases in place of problem solving, to make decisions within a RTI system. Standard protocol is a process where student decisions are made using an established response to regular occurring circumstances. Implementation usually involves a trial of fixed duration (e.g., 9-15 weeks) delivered in small groups or individually. A standard treatment protocol approach can be applied to make universal initial decisions for struggling students with similar problems. Recent research has shown that this approach can be successful when applying early interventions in reading. When students are successful in the treatment trial, they are returned to the core curriculum. When students are unresponsive to the treatment trial, they are provided individualized instruction supported through either strategic or intensive interventions.

Standard treatment protocol may be helpful for some types of decision making early on within a multi-tiered system. In general, problem solving and standard treatment protocol are not exclusive and many models use both approaches. The problem solving approach is often used more when making decisions about behavior. Standard treatment protocol often proves more successful early on in reading because it allows teams to make quick, evidenced-based decisions for a large number of students. RTI systems tend to make decisions in mathematics and writing using either approach or a combination of the standard treatment protocol and problem solving approaches.

### **RTI and Behavior**

IDEA 2004 discusses the use of RTI in relation to the identification and support for students with possible specific learning disabilities. However, there is another

dimension that stems from the common observation that many students struggle academically and exhibit problem behaviors. There are a variety of reasons why students misbehave. Some students will misbehave because they “won’t do it,” or because they try and “can’t do it.” Regardless, the fact remains that behavior and academic success are closely linked and need to be addressed simultaneously or in a concerted effort.

In a RTI approach to behavior, systematically collected behavioral data (e.g., observations, office referral patterns, ratings, etc.) provides a basis for making decisions on behavior supports. A student who displays challenging behavior should be assessed, just as the student would if an academic concern was raised. Based on the results, staff uses evidence-based practices to support the student in reducing challenging behaviors and developing positive attitudes toward academic and social life. At the highest level of rigor, evidence-based interventions for behavior means a randomized controlled trial design, followed by quasi-experimental controlled design (typically denotes non-random assignment to condition). Additional evidence of efficacy is indicated by studies with a *statistically significant positive effect*, which is a positive effect sustained for at least one year post intervention, and replication of the effect in one or more settings and/or populations. Many evidence-based behavioral interventions should be considered such as: methods based on applied behavior analysis (e.g., reinforcement); social learning (e.g., teaching expected behaviors through modeling and role playing); and cognitive behavioral methods to teach “thinking skills,” (e.g. problem solving, impulse control, or anger management, etc.).

IDEA 2004 did not change the criteria required to establish an emotional behavioral disorder (EBD). However, an evaluation group may include RTI data when considering whether a student has a disability that meets EBD criteria. The mirrored multi-tiered structure depicted on page 4 allows schools to evaluate and intervene for both behavior and academics (Sprague, 2006). The universal screening that applies to behavior at Tier I suggests that schools have effective positive behavioral systems in place. Despite this, there will be some students that will need additional strategic and/or intensive behavioral interventions. Information on school-wide behavioral interventions can be found in the resources section on page 20.

### **Support of RTI through Early Intervening Services Funds**

IDEA 2004 allows districts to designate up to 15% of their federal IDEA Part B funds, less any amount reduced by maintenance of effort, for Early Intervening Services (EIS) to students in Kindergarten through grade twelve, that may include activities to support development of RTI practices. The intent of optional EIS funding is to allow districts to proactively address students who have not been identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. EIS activities benefit students who are not eligible for special education services and who may avoid future referrals. EIS activities may include professional development to enable district staff to deliver scientific research-based academic instruction and behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software. EIS activities may also provide educational and



behavioral evaluations, services and supports. School districts that use EIS funds must report to OSPI the number of students served through these funds and the number of these students that become eligible for special education services within the following two years.

### **Child Find Obligations within RTI Systems**

Implementing a RTI system does not alter a school district's obligations to identify students with disabilities ("child find"). Parents, teachers, or anyone else can initiate a referral at any time. Schools need to ensure that staff is trained to refer students who may require special education services no matter their tier level. This means that students do not need to advance through the multi-tiered system as a condition before a referral is made. In certain circumstances, a student may have progressed through the multiple tiers without any success (e.g., at least two Tier III interventions have been unsuccessful). In this situation, a disability should be suspected and a referral must be made. District personnel should be aware that a parent or any one else has the right to make a special education referral even for students who have not yet demonstrated a lack of responsiveness to an intervention. A district or school may continue RTI interventions if they have already been initiated while processing the referral and determining whether or not the student is a candidate for special education evaluation within required timelines.

### **Parent Participation**

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 can be done through traditional methods such as parent-teacher conferences, regularly scheduled meetings, or by other methods. 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 written information about its RTI program and be prepared to answer questions about RTI processes. The written information should explain how the system is different from a traditional education system and about the vital and collaborative role that parents play within a RTI system. The more parents are involved as players, the greater the opportunity for successful RTI outcomes.

Because RTI is a method of delivering the general education curriculum for all students, written consent is not required before administering universal screenings, CBMs, and targeted assessments within a multi-tiered RTI system when these tools are used to determine instructional need. However, when a student fails to respond to interventions and the decision is made to evaluate a student for special education eligibility, written consent must be obtained in accordance with special education procedures. When developing screening measures districts should also consider the parallel measures that may be used for evaluation.

## **Changing Roles and Responsibilities**

Implementation of RTI methods occur within the general education environment and require a school-wide commitment. All school staff and parents play vital roles in a RTI approach. A successful RTI system requires the commitment of many people including, parents, teachers, specialists, administrators and paraeducators. It requires that all work cooperatively in supporting each student as they progress.

Data management is also crucial within a RTI system. Schools that use RTI will need to identify the person or persons responsible for ensuring that data are properly obtained and analyzed. As students' needs advance to more intensive interventions, school psychologists, special education teachers, educational staff associates (ESA), or other specialists may be called upon to manage, interpret and synthesize student data to support decision making teams.

In a RTI approach, the role of the school psychologists may change from traditional assessor of individual cognitive abilities to a more intervention-based assessor of target skills. School psychologists, in addition to ESAs and special education teachers will need to assist the classroom teacher in using screening data and progress monitoring data to guide curriculum decisions. They will need to assist the decision making team in using assessment data to identify specific curriculum areas of concern. This means school psychologists will need to be knowledgeable about available interventions. School psychologists will also be needed to incorporate RTI data and analyze all available data to appropriately guide the special education referral process and eligibility decision. They should be particularly active in the analysis and interpretation of data as well as the standardization of local measures.

Effective leadership is obviously required to implement RTI change processes within the school. This leadership can take many forms. Principals often play a critical leadership role, but so can teachers and other staff, including those in the district office. In order to be effective leaders, principals must understand and be active in the change process. To assist teachers and support staff in providing instruction and interventions, they must provide or coordinate valuable and sustained professional development. Principals should have a hands-on role in making decisions within a problem solving process. They should ensure that RTI practices are implemented with fidelity and that student data are managed properly.

## **District Readiness and Professional Development**

Before implementing RTI systems, the district's or school's preparedness must first be addressed. Districts should develop a comprehensive plan for implementing RTI that should include an evaluation of the current infrastructure relative to leadership, teaming, curriculum, screening and professional development.

To implement the use of reading interventions within a multi-tiered system in Washington State, a district's comprehensive plan should involve the three phases outlined in the K-12 Reading Model:

- Phase One (pre-implementation preparations);
- Phase Two (effective Tier I instruction through the core curriculum); and
- Phase Three (effective Tier I, II, and III interventions).

To fully incorporate a RTI program, school districts must expand their comprehensive plans to include assessment of its readiness and capacity to adopt and implement RTI practices for all academic areas and behavior. A separate checklist to help assess a school district's readiness for RTI in reading, mathematics, writing and behavior is attached as Appendix I. A district's or school's comprehensive plan is expected to take several years to fully implement, thus districts and schools are encouraged to start small before moving to a district-wide approach. This is due to the considerable amount of professional development that needs to be provided in the beginning stages of establishing RTI systems to build capacity. It will be equally important for all staff to receive on-going professional development support after a RTI system has been put into place.

A number of school districts in Washington have begun using multi-tiered models to provide scientific, research-based interventions to struggling students. These districts will likely transition more easily to a comprehensive RTI framework as they are already using key aspects of a RTI approach. School psychologists, ESA staff, and other specialists who are traditionally involved in the referral process for special education will be key participants in a RTI system at earlier stages. These professionals will be able to provide the data interpretation, assessment and specialized instructional expertise needed to support a RTI system. It is important that specialists, in addition to general and special education teachers and building principals, receive the professional development necessary to implement each phase of the comprehensive plan.

### **Identifying a Specific Learning Disability Using RTI**

When considering adopting a RTI approach for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (SLD), school districts should keep in mind a number of provisions of IDEA 2004. Under IDEA 2004 schools districts may, but are no longer required to consider whether a student has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in accordance with WAC 392-172-132 as outlined in the *State of Washington Severe Discrepancy Tables*. At the same time, IDEA 2004 gives school districts the flexibility to determine that a student has SLD using RTI data. Proponents point out that identifying SLD through RTI shifts the focus of the evaluation process from emphasizing the documentation of the student's disability to emphasizing the student's instructional needs. RTI emphasizes this shift of focus through documentation of a student's persistent failure to progress even after receiving intense and sound scientific-research based interventions in the general education curriculum.

IDEA 2004 is silent about the exact criteria school districts may use in establishing a SLD. It is expected that when final federal regulations are published, specific criteria will be established and states will be provided clarifying guidance regarding these procedures. Until that time, district's implementing RTI are strongly encouraged to use established approaches for using RTI data to identify SLD. The following is recommended.

After appropriate CBM probes have been applied, and after attempts have been made to implement at least two Tier III interventions with fidelity, a student should be considered non-responsive when the student's level of academic achievement has: (a) been determined to be significantly lower than that of his or her peers and (b) the gap between the student's achievement and that of his or her peers increases (or does not significantly decrease). Absent other information to explain the lack of achievement, students who are non-responsive at Tier III should be suspected of having a disability.

Once a referral for 504 or special education is initiated the school district must determine whether or not an initial comprehensive evaluation is required to determine the presence of a disability. Unless mitigating information exists to explain why the student was non-responsive at Tier III, it is anticipated that an initial evaluation will be completed. Before conducting an initial evaluation, the school district must obtain written consent from a parent or guardian. A comprehensive evaluation may or may not require additional testing. A comprehensive evaluation should include a formal observation of the student by a team member unless a recent observation was completed by a team member prior to the evaluation. If the student's evaluation team is able to determine that the existing data developed through the RTI process is sufficient to complete the evaluation report in all suspected areas of disability, additional information does not need to be obtained. If the existing data does not establish the need for special education services, further assessment may be needed to rule out the possibility of a qualifying disability, including a disability in a category other than SLD.

To establish SLD, the evaluation data gathered through the RTI process determines when the student is performing significantly below the level or standard of his or her peers. The evaluation group should be able to answer "yes" to questions (a) (b) and (c) below:

- (a) Were at least two phases of intensive Tier III interventions implemented in the general education curriculum with fidelity, which did not affect the student's achievement and does evidence of the student's non-responsiveness at Tier III reflect that he or she is learning at a rate significantly less than his or her peers?
- (b) Is there evidence of the student's low performance based on RTI and other existing data that meets at least two of the following four criteria:
  - CBM scores showing the student is performing at or below the seventh percentile of current grade level or at or below the sixteenth percentile of a previous grade level;
  - a standardized assessment score that is 1.75 standard deviations below the mean, consistent with test protocols;

- CBM scores and other data demonstrate that the student's median performance is below that of his or her grade-placement peers by a discrepancy ratio of at least 2.0 (the discrepancy ratio is calculated by dividing the peers' median performance by the target student's median performance); or
  - the student's instructional performance level is two or more grade levels below her or his current grade placement determined by CBM scores, classroom performance, observation, and if appropriate, standardized assessments?
- (c) Does the evaluation group (including the parent) believe the student requires resources that are not available in the general education setting, with or without accommodations, in order to participate or progress in the general education curriculum at a level equal to his or her peers? Evidence of this criterion would show that the student requires specially designed instruction or Tier III interventions for an extended period of time that is not available in the general education curriculum.

Caution should be exercised when applying the median criterion in question (b) to both very young students (kindergarten and 1st grade) and older students (7th grade and above). For young students a 2.0 discrepancy ratio may not be as meaningful as it would be for older students. For example, a kindergarten student reading 4 words per minute compared to a peer median of 8 words per minute, may not be significantly meaningful. Likewise, for older students, a discrepancy ratio that is somewhat less than 2.0 may be particularly significant (for example, a 1.6 discrepancy ratio may indicate low performance for a 9th grade student reading 120 words per minute compared to a peer median of 200 words per minute). Similarly, the grade level criterion in question (b) should be applied comparatively for younger students in low grade levels (kindergarten and first grade).

Examples of sample language that may be used in an evaluation report when applying the above criteria may be found in Appendix H. Before concluding that a SLD exists, the evaluation group will rule out that the student's learning problems primarily result from visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages. The group will also rule out yes answers to the above criteria occurring from limited English proficiency, a lack of instruction in mathematics, or a lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction. Identifying a SLD using a RTI approach will not establish special education eligibility unless the evaluation group also determines that the disability is causing an adverse impact on the student's educational performance and that the student requires specially designed instruction.

If an evaluation group determines that a student qualifies for special education services, the evaluation report should include recommendations about the intensive interventions and other special education services that the student requires. The report should also include recommendations about any related services, program modifications, accommodations, and supports for school personnel as well as any other information

necessary for the development of the student's individualized educational program (IEP). Once the student is determined eligible, the district must take steps to convene the student's IEP team so that his or her special education program may be developed and the appropriate placement identified. School districts will need to ensure that the SDI identified for each eligible student by their IEP team adapts as appropriate to the student's needs, the content, methodology or delivery of the core curriculum.

Students who were previously determined SLD based upon the *State of Washington's Severe Discrepancy Tables* remain eligible for special education services when a district begins to implement a RTI system. However, when a district reevaluates a student, the reevaluation group should use RTI results as part of the student's existing data used to determine whether or not the student continues to be eligible for special education services. In a RTI system, the specially designed instruction provided to a student should supplement the scientific-based interventions and high quality instruction the student was already receiving in the general education setting. School districts will also find that students may require specially designed instruction through special education for shorter periods of time in a RTI system because of the high quality instruction provided to all students. Ideally, some students who were previously determined SLD should be able to exit special education as a result of the increased instructional capacity in the general education environment.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. **Question:** How do you measure rate of improvement?

**Answer:** Rate of improvement is the amount of improvement divided by the time devoted to it. An example is the number of words a student obtains divided by the number of weeks of instruction needed to learn those words. Rate of improvement is demonstrated by a student's progress slope. This slope compares the student's progress in response to the interventions, compared with CBM benchmarks, state standards, other students in the same age/grade group, and/or an expected rate of progress for peers.

### 2. **Question:** How do you measure and analyze fidelity?

**Answer:** Successful RTI systems must consistently maintain high levels of fidelity in the implementation of both interventions and progress monitoring. This means that the intervention plans are applied consistently. Professional development is important in initially establishing and maintaining fidelity. Direct and indirect assessments of the implementation of major components of interventions or the CBMs (depending on what is being analyzed) will allow school districts to measure and analyze fidelity to determine the professional development needs of staff. This reiterates the importance of having just a few agreed upon interventions so school districts are working with a common understanding of what the intervention "looks like" and can support effective implementation in the classroom. This analysis is usually conducted at the building level often by the school principal. Direct assessment of staff is done through observation during implementation and task analysis of staff's use of the major components. Indirect assessment is conducted

through staff's self-reporting, interviews and documentation. Indirect assessment should focus on the staff's knowledge of components (often documented through a checklist) and gap analysis to determine when components were used properly.

- 3. Question:** Can parents request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at public expense when a school district has chosen to implement a RTI system?

**Answer:** Yes, an IEE request is a process specific to special education and is available when a parent disagrees with the special education evaluation completed by the school district. When school districts choose to implement a RTI system, parents maintain the right to request an IEE at public expense in accordance with WAC 392-172-150.

- 4. Question:** When should a school district initiate a special education referral in a RTI system?

**Answer:** A school district should initiate a referral when it obtains information to cause it to suspect that a student has a disability *or* when a parent or any other person makes a referral requesting that a student be evaluated for special education services. A school district's child find responsibilities do not end when the district chooses to implement a RTI approach. Parents, teachers or any interested persons may also initiate a referral at any time if they believe a child requires special education services. Non-responsiveness at Tier III represents a baseline within a RTI system when a disability should be suspected absent other information and school districts may not require that a student demonstrate non-responsiveness at Tier III before initiating a referral.

- 5. Question:** If a student is determined not eligible for special education services, how long may that student continue to receive the intensive interventions provided at Tier III?

**Answer:** Students who enter Tier III should initially receive at least two full attempts of intensive interventions in order to determine if that student is non-responsive. Because RTI is a system of delivering the general education curriculum, each school district determines the level of resource commitment beyond the amount of time typically needed to determine if a disability is suspected. When students are determined ineligible for special education, school districts should also consider how other federal and state funding sources can supplement implementation of Tier III. Districts have to consider the needs of students who require accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or other applicable laws. Students who have been determined ineligible for special education services but continue to insufficiently progress may be re-referred for special education.

- 6. Question:** Are school districts that choose to use RTI required to use the curriculum or interventions referenced in this manual in order to determine that a SLD exists?

**Answer:** No. However, school districts are required to use data developed from scientific research-based interventions when using RTI. The interventions that are referenced in this manual and on the curriculum and instruction section of OSPI's web page, are scientific research-based. School districts are free to choose from the interventions that OSPI has identified or choose other interventions that are scientific research-based.

7. **Question:** How might specially designed instruction (SDI), differ from the Tier III interventions a student may have been receiving prior to qualifying for special education services?

**Answer:** Interventions and services a student receives once determined eligible for special education services will vary with each individual student. If a student has been unsuccessful with two attempts of Tier III interventions, the student's SDI may look similar to those Tier III interventions except the instruction will be more intense, provided with an increased frequency and duration, and adapted to meet the student's unique needs. School districts are required to ensure that the SDI identified for each eligible student is developed and provided in accordance with WAC 392-172-045(4).

8. **Question:** How should a school district using RTI proceed when it suspects that a student was previously determined eligible using the *State of Washington Severe Discrepancy Tables*, requires special education services in additional areas of the curriculum?

**Answer:** If the RTI process reveals that an eligible student is suspected of requiring special education services in an additional area, the district may reevaluate the student using RTI data and additional assessment data if needed.

9. **Question:** Can a school district use RTI data to support the decision that a student has a disability in a special education disability category other than SLD?

**Answer:** Yes. RTI data may be included when considering criteria in other categories. However, the information included in the evaluation report must be comprehensively sufficient to address each area of suspected disability. Therefore, RTI data may not be the sole source of information but may supplement information provided for suspected disabilities in categories other than SLD.



## Resources

### **Intervention resources in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Behavior:**

- **Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice:** <http://cecp.air.org/fba/>
  - Behavior interventions.
- **Center for Improving Reading Competence Using Intensive Treatments School wide (Project CIRCUITS):** <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cce/reading.html>
  - Investigating reading intervention models for K-3 students.
- **Intervention Central:** <http://www.interventioncentral.org/>
  - Reading, math and behavior interventions, CBM probes and mastery measures.
- **Office of Special Education Programs School-wide Positive Behavior Support Implementers Blueprint and Self-Assessment:** <http://www.pbis.org/files/Blueprint%20draft%20v3%209-13-04.doc>
  - Three-tiered model for positive behavior support.
- **OSPI K-12 Reading Model:** <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/reading/pubdocs/K-12ReadingModel.pdf>
  - Explanation of multiple-tiered reading model for Washington.
- **OSPI Review of Grades 4-12 Reading Interventions:** <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/reading/pubdocs/4-12ReadingIntervention.doc>
  - Comprehensive review of reading programs for Washington.
- **OSPI Review of K-3 Reading Core/Comprehensive Instructional Review in English and Spanish:** <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/Reading/pubdocs/K3EnglishandSpanishRdngCoreCompInstMatrlsRpt406.pdf>
  - Comprehensive of published English and Spanish reading programs at the K-3 levels alignment with GLEs.
- **OSPI Mathematics and Reading Core/Comprehensive Instructional Materials Review:** [http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/pubdocs/K12InstructionalMaterialsReview/K-12\\_InstMatRev\\_Full.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/pubdocs/K12InstructionalMaterialsReview/K-12_InstMatRev_Full.pdf)
  - Comprehensive review of published mathematics and reading programs alignment with GLEs.
- **Positive Behavior Support Power Point Presentations for School Staff:** <http://www.modelprogram.com/?pageid=41897>

- Free downloads directed at building school wide positive behavior support (MODEL).
- **Reading Rockets:** <http://www.readingrockets.org/>
  - Resources for school psychologists, reading specialists and classroom teachers in reading.
- **Schoolwide Information System for Behavior Problems:** <http://www.swis.org/>
  - School-wide management program for data regarding location, frequency, function of behavior.
- **What Works Clearinghouse:** <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/>
  - Established by the U.S. Dept. of Education (Institute of Education Sciences) to provide educators, policymakers, researchers and the public with a trusted source of information regarding evidence of what works in education.
- **The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt):** <http://www.nccrest.org/>
  - NCCRESt, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, provides technical assistance and professional development to close the achievement gap between students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their peers, and reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. The project targets improvements in culturally responsive practices, early intervention, literacy, and positive behavioral supports.

### **Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring/CBM Tools for Reading, Writing and Mathematics:**

- **Aimsweb:** <http://www.aimsweb.com/index.php>
  - CBMs in reading, writing, and mathematics (includes Spanish literacy).
- **CBMNow:** <http://www.cbmnow.com/>
  - CBMs in reading, writing, mathematics and spelling.
- **DIBELS Home Page:** <http://dibels.uoregon.edu>
  - Reading CBMs.
- **National Center on Student Progress Monitoring:** <http://www.studentprogress.org/chart/>
  - Review of CBMs in reading, writing and math.

- **OSPI Manual Regarding Evaluation and Assessment in Early Childhood Special Education: *Children Who Are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse*:** <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/pubdocs/CLD.pdf>
  - OSPI guidance for evaluation of young students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.
- **Research Institute on Progress Monitoring:** <http://www.progressmonitoring.org/>
  - Provides technical assistance to states and districts and disseminates information about progress monitoring practices proven to work in different academic content areas.

### **Model RTI Programs, Policies and Procedures:**

- **IRIS Center's RTI Module:** [http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti01\\_overview/chalcycle.htm](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti01_overview/chalcycle.htm)
  - RTI training module.
- **National Association of School Psychologists:** <http://www.nasponline.org/>
  - RTI resources.
- **National Association of State Directors of Special Education:** <http://www.nasdse.org/>
  - RTI policies & procedures manual.
- **National Research Center on Learning Disabilities:** <http://www.nrcld.org>
  - RTI resources.
- **Office of Special Education Programs Ideas that Work Toolkit for Assessing Specific Learning Disabilities:** [http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/ta\\_responsiveness\\_intervention.asp](http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/ta_responsiveness_intervention.asp)
  - Model RTI Policies and Procedures.
- **A Parent's Guide to Response-to-Intervention:** [http://www.nclld.org/images/stories/downloads/parent\\_center/rti\\_final.pdf](http://www.nclld.org/images/stories/downloads/parent_center/rti_final.pdf)
- **Washington State Association of School Psychologists:** <http://www.wsasp.org/>
  - Position papers, evaluation guidance and more

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## Appendix A –Matrix Using Three-Tiered Model\*

This matrix represents corresponding roles and activities for implementation of universal screening, progress monitoring, decision-making, and scientific, research-based interventions within a multi-tiered system.

<b>SCREENING</b>	<b>Tier I</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>Tier III</b>
All students participate.  Decide which students are at-risk and which are not.	Universally screen/ benchmark 3 times a year in reading, mathematics, written language and social/behavior.	N/A	N/A
<i>We Use:</i>	Curriculum based measures (CBMs), district-wide assessments, existing data, classroom data, other measures used to screen student achievement	N/A	N/A
<i>Who is involved:</i>	Teacher, parent, consult from support team (can include principal, special education teachers, content area specialists, Education Staff Associates (ESAs), Title I teachers, school psychologists, etc.)	N/A	N/A
<b>PROGRESS MONITORING</b>	<b>Tier I</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>Tier III</b>
Decide when changes need to be made	3 times per year. Follow at-risk students closely – using Problem Solving / Review, Interview, Observe, Test (R.I.O.T.) or Standard Treatment Protocol	More frequently (every two weeks)	Very frequently (every week)
<i>We use:</i>	CBMs, existing data	CBMs	CBMs
<i>Who is involved:</i>	Teacher, parent, para-educators (data collection) peer tutors (data collection), and consult from support team	Same as in Tier I plus content specialist (data collection and analysis) special education, other specialists (analysis)	Same as in Tier II plus school psychologists

<b>DECISION MAKING</b>	<b>Tier I</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>Tier III</b>
What are the student's instructional needs? NOTE: not diagnosing impairments - identifying learning problems	Informal – problem solving (R.I.O.T.), Standard Treatment Protocol	Using team approach, reviewing intervention data (R.I.O.T.) and applying to CBMs – further hypothesis of the problem developed	Using appropriate measures targeted to identify area of need; targeted assessment (including error analysis or functional behavioral analysis), to answer content specific instructional questions.
<i>We use:</i>	Universal screening and other data gathered at Tier I	Data from progress monitoring, CBMs	Pinpointing skill deficits.
<i>Who is involved:</i>	Teacher, parent, consultation from support team	Tier I plus content area specialists, Title I or ELL teachers	Tier II plus special education teacher, ESAs, school psychologist
<b>INTERVENTIONS</b>	<b>Tier I</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>Tier III</b>
Decide when services can be discontinued and to document overall effectiveness	Core curriculum and school-wide positive behavioral systems. Expectation is that 80% of students are meeting benchmark	Strategic interventions	Intensive interventions
<i>We use:</i>	Flexible grouping (grades 3 and up), accommodations to address curriculum, instructional accommodations	OSPI K-12 reading model, writing interventions outlined in Appendix E; mathematics, behavior and other interventions listed in resources	More intensive and increased use of Tier II interventions, individualized interventions
<i>Who is involved:</i>	Teacher, parent, consultation from support team	Tier I plus content specialists, Title I or ELL teachers	Tier II plus special education teacher, ESAs, school psychologist

## Appendix B – Explanation and Matrix of Content of Assessment Domains\*

**I. Curriculum:** Curriculum refers to what is taught. This domain includes the long range direction, intent, and stated outcomes of the course of study. It also includes the content arrangement, and pace of steps leading to the outcomes. Before instruction can be aligned with student needs, an appropriate curriculum that has been carefully selected should be in place. To assure curriculum alignment you need to:

- Make sure that the curriculum is aligned and matches appropriate state and district standards and benchmarks.
- Be certain that core components are introduced and reinforced at appropriate levels within the curriculum.
- See that the curriculum is taught consistently in all of the classrooms.

**II. Instruction:** Instruction is how curriculum is taught. This domain includes instructional decision making regarding materials and curriculum level. Progress monitoring and the ability to control success rate are also included. Examples of other instructional variables include giving clear directions, communicating expectations and criteria for success, direct instruction with explanations and cues, sequencing lesson designs to promote success and offering a variety of activities and experiences for practice and application.

Once an appropriate curriculum is implemented, instruction should be examined for effectiveness starting with the whole group. This can be determined by asking the following questions:

- Have the research-based practices been shown to increase student performance?
- Have effective practices have been implemented with fidelity in ways that students will benefit?
- Do materials have documented efficacy?
- Has a sufficient amount of instructional time been allotted for curriculum implementation?
- Is instruction tailored to meet students' current levels of knowledge?
- Is instruction organized so that pre-requisite skills are taught sequentially?

**III. Environment:** The environment is where the instruction takes place. This domain includes all aspects of the classroom setting such as physical arrangement, rules, management plans, routines, and expectations. It may also include out of class variables such as peer and family influence, and job pressure for students at the secondary level.

Environmental considerations cover a wide range of factors. The setting, routines and rules should be closely scrutinized. This includes:

- Making sure that the physical environment (seating arrangement, lighting and noise-level) are appropriate; and
- Determining if routines and behavior management plans are conducive to learning.



**IV. Learner:** The learner is who is being taught. The most important learner variable is his or her current knowledge, sometimes referred to as ‘prior knowledge’ of the task that they need to learn. This is the last domain to consider when planning interventions. Before the student’s skills and motivation are called into question, it should be confirmed that the curriculum and instruction are appropriate and the environment positive. Interventions in the student learner domain are not likely to be successful if problems in the other domains are not adequately addressed. Fixed, or unalterable, traits such as a student’s ‘ability’, race, gender or family history are the last domain to consider when planning interventions.

Here are some example variables from each content domain:

Instruction	Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional decision making regarding selection and use of materials</li> <li>• Instructional decision making regarding placement of students in materials</li> <li>• Use of progress monitoring</li> <li>• Clarity of instruction</li> <li>• Communication of expectations and criteria for success</li> <li>• Direct instruction with explanations and cues</li> <li>• Sequencing of lesson designs to promote success</li> <li>• Use of a variety of practice and application activities</li> <li>• Pace and presentation of new content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-range direction for instruction</li> <li>• Instructional philosophy/approaches</li> <li>• Instructional materials</li> <li>• Intent</li> <li>• Stated outcomes for the course of study</li> <li>• Arrangement of the content/instruction</li> <li>• Pace of the steps leading to the outcomes</li> <li>• General learner criteria as identified in the school improvement plan and the district curriculum and benchmarks and state standards</li> </ul>
Environment	Learner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical arrangement of the room</li> <li>• Furniture/equipment</li> <li>• Rules</li> <li>• Management plans</li> <li>• Routines</li> <li>• Expectations</li> <li>• Peer context</li> <li>• Peer and family influence</li> <li>• Task pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior knowledge of the target task</li> <li>• Academic performance data</li> <li>• Related social/behavioral performance data</li> <li>• This is the last domain that is considered and is only addressed when the curriculum and instruction are found to be appropriate and the environment is accommodating</li> </ul>

## Appendix C-Matrix of the Review, Interview, Observe, and Test (R.I.O.T.) Approach to the Four Content of Assessment Domains\*

### I. Reviewing the Four Domains

Procedure	Domain	Source	Data Outcomes
Review	Instruction	Permanent products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of instructional demands reflected in paper-pencil tasks (e.g., style demands of the task, difficulty levels, skill requirements)</li> </ul>
	Curriculum	Permanent products (e.g., books, worksheets, curricular guides, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of instructional demands reflected in curricular materials (e.g., instructional approaches, pacing, difficulty, pre-requisite skills, scope and sequence of instruction)</li> </ul>
	Environment	School rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discipline policies and procedures that define what is deemed as “situational appropriate”</li> </ul>
	Learner	Permanent products, peers' work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard performance of peers</li> </ul>
		Cumulative records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patterns of behavior as reflected in teacher reports (teacher perception of the problem) and discipline records</li> <li>Onset and duration of the problem</li> <li>Interference with personal, interpersonal, and academic adjustment</li> <li>Settings where behavior of concern has occurred</li> </ul>
		Health records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of health, vision, and/or hearing problems potentially related to the academic and/or social behavior concern</li> </ul>
		Permanent products and student work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patterns of performance errors reflecting skill deficits</li> <li>Interference with ability to profit from general education instruction</li> <li>Consistent skill and/or performance problems over time</li> <li>Settings where behavior of concern is evident</li> </ul>
		Teacher's grade book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student performance in relationship to setting demands (e.g., teacher expectations, task demands)</li> </ul>
		Behavior Assessment Technique (BAT) records and teacher intervention documentation records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to intervention as reflected in “Intervention Plans” and progress monitoring</li> </ul>

## II. Interviewing Within the Four Domains

Procedure	Domain	Source	Data Outcomes
Interview	Instruction	Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher expectations</li> <li>Teacher instructional practices</li> <li>Teacher reinforcement strategies</li> </ul>
	Curriculum	Teachers and relevant district personnel (e.g., curriculum directors, principals, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philosophical orientation of the curriculum (e.g., whole language, phonics, whole class reading, etc.)</li> </ul>
	Environment	Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom routines, rules behavior management plans reflecting a definition of "situational appropriate"</li> </ul>
		School district personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School rules, discipline policies reflecting a definition of "situational appropriate"</li> </ul>
		Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior management strategies reflecting parent expectations and definition of "situational appropriate"</li> </ul>
	Learner	Teachers, relevant district personnel, parents, community resources, student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviewees' perceptions of the problem-its nature, intensity, significance to the student and in relation to peers</li> </ul>
		Behavior rating scales, checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patterns of behavior as perceived by raters who complete them</li> <li>Settings in which behavior of concern is perceived by raters who complete them</li> </ul>

## III. Observation within the Four Domains

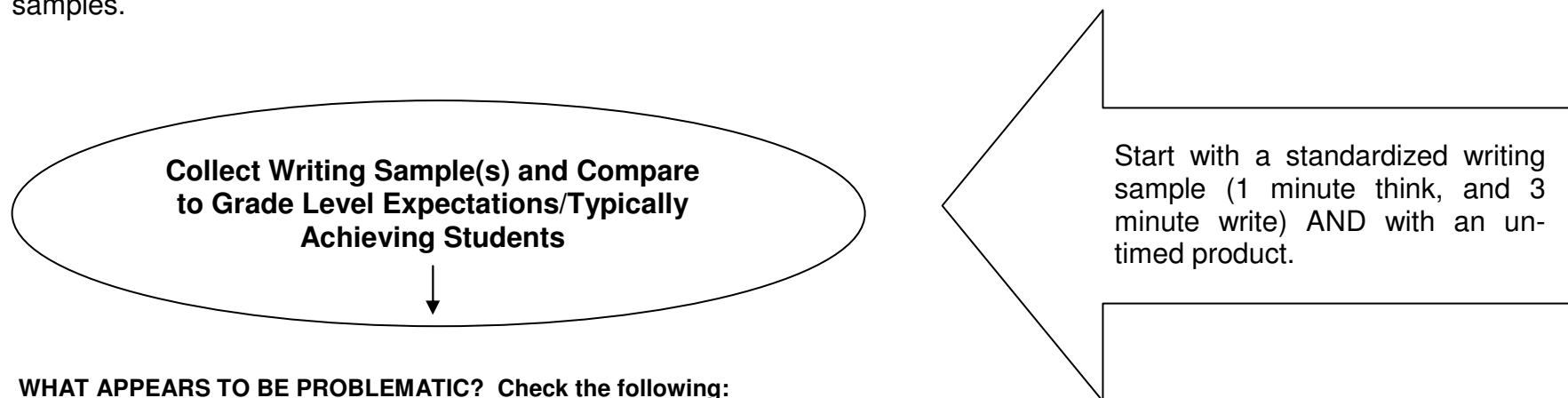
Procedure	Domain	Source	Data Outcomes
Observe	Instruction	Setting analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective teaching practices, teacher expectations</li> </ul>
		Systematic observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antecedents, consequences</li> </ul>
		Anecdotal recording checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective teaching practices</li> </ul>
	Curriculum		
	Environment	Setting analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical environment (e.g., seating arrangement, equipment, lighting, furniture, temperature, noise levels)</li> <li>Classroom routines and behavior management</li> <li>Demographics of peer group</li> </ul>
		Systematic observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer performance for performance standard of "situational and developmentally appropriate"</li> <li>Interaction patterns</li> </ul>
	Learner	Anecdotal recording checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of behavior of concern</li> <li>Patterns of behavior of concern</li> <li>Response to interventions as reflected in informal progress monitoring</li> </ul>
		Systematic observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature and dimensions (e.g., frequency, duration, latency, intensity) of target behaviors</li> <li>Response to interventions as reflected in systematic progress monitoring</li> </ul>

#### IV. Testing Within the Four Domains

Procedure	Domain	Source	Data Outcomes
TEST	Instruction		
	Curriculum	Readability of texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty levels of textbooks</li> </ul>
	Environment		
	Learner	Curriculum based measurement (CBM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency in oral reading, math computation and written expression</li> <li>• Resistance to intervention (systematic progress monitoring)</li> </ul>
		Curriculum based assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance on curriculum based tasks in specific skill areas</li> </ul>
		Classroom tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student academic performance on classroom measures of achievement</li> <li>• Interference with ability to profit from general education instruction</li> <li>• Resistance to intervention (progress monitoring)</li> </ul>
		Norm-referenced (individual and group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student academic performance in relationship to a norm group—as a performance standard</li> <li>• Personal trait data in relationship to a norm group as a standard of appropriateness and reflecting personal adjustment</li> </ul>
		Criterion-referenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student academic performance identifying skill strengths and weaknesses</li> </ul>
		Self-reports (checklists, inventories, rating scales, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal trait data reflecting student perception of the problematic situation and student's personal adjustment</li> </ul>

## Appendix D – Using Problem Solving to Address Writing Problems\*

The example below demonstrates how the problem solving process is applied to identify specific areas where students may be struggling. This example uses writing, however, a similar approach can be used for collecting reading or mathematic samples.



**WHAT APPEARS TO BE PROBLEMATIC? Check the following:**  
**Step 1: SURVEY LEVEL: WHAT is the problem?**

	Fluency	Syntactic Maturity	Vocabulary (Semantic Maturity)	Content	Conventions	Legibility	Writing Process
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of text generated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied sentence lengths and sentence types</li> <li>Use of complete sentences</li> <li>Verb tense agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of words used</li> <li>Grade level use of vocabulary and grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization</li> <li>Originality</li> <li>Style</li> <li>Cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Punctuation</li> <li>Spelling</li> <li>Capitalization</li> <li>Grammar rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handwriting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans ahead</li> <li>Consideration of audience</li> <li>Selection of genre</li> <li>Moves back and forth between the stages of the writing process</li> </ul>
<b>Problem indicators (compared to GLEs or another standard)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short sentences</li> <li>Switches tenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeated use of similar words</li> <li>Uses only simple language</li> <li>Vocabulary appears to be below grade level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No paragraph formatting</li> <li>“Knowledge Telling”</li> <li>No identifiable structure</li> <li>Lacks sequence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many errors: punctuation, spelling, capitalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to read the writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other errors mentioned <b><u>and</u></b> no evidence of planning, audience consideration, or genre</li> </ul>

	Fluency	Syntactic Maturity	Vocabulary (Semantic Maturity)	Content	Conventions	Legibility	Writing Process
<b>Sample ways to quantify</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total words written</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-Units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type-token ratio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holistic scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of errors</li> <li>• Checklist that specifies the problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter formation errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Interview</li> </ul>
<b>Does a discrepancy exist?</b>							

**Step 2: DEVELOP ASSUMED CAUSES: WHY is the problem occurring?**

<b>Possible assumed causes for the problem and evaluation questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a missing tool skill?</li> <li>• Is there a motivation problem? (Does the student refuse to write?)</li> <li>• Is there a physical problem? (Fatigue)</li> <li>• Do they know their letters? Letter sounds?</li> <li>• Early literacy skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can student identify complete/incomplete sentences?</li> <li>• Can student produce complete sentences?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the student have limited proficiency in English?</li> <li>• Is there also a problem with spelling?</li> <li>• Are there also problems with spoken language and/or communication?</li> <li>• What are the student's vocabulary skills in the area of the topic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the student identify a paragraph?</li> <li>• Can the student explain the concept of and identify the components of a paragraph?</li> <li>• Can the student write a paragraph if given assistance?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a specific error pattern?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there also a fluency problem?</li> <li>• Is there a specific error pattern?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there knowledge telling?</li> <li>• Can the student identify/utilize the steps in the writing process?</li> <li>• Does the student have a strategy for planning?</li> <li>• Can the student write for an audience?</li> <li>• Can the student write for a purpose?</li> <li>• Can the student differentiate between draft and final?</li> </ul>
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**Step 3: VALIDATING/SPECIFIC LEVEL:** Create a hypothesis. Then develop or administer assessments to confirm or disconfirm your hypothesis.

**Step 4: SUMMATIVE DECISION MAKING:** Determine current level of performance and select goals and objectives.

**Step 5: FORMATIVE DECISION MAKING:** Determine how progress will be monitored. Include the use of CBM general outcome measures and any mastery measures.

**Step 6: INSTRUCTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:** Determine the type of learning and select appropriate initial instructional interventions.

## Appendix E – Examples of Selecting Writing Interventions\*

The following matrix is an example of breaking down skills to determine appropriate interventions for writing. A similar approach can be used for selecting reading or mathematics interventions.

Type of Learning	General Description	Description Relative to Written Language	Potential Problem Indicators	Possible Types of Instructional Interventions
<b>Declarative Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Knowing that something is the case” “The facts”</li> <li>• Labels and names</li> <li>• Facts and lists</li> <li>• Organized discourse</li> <li>• Declarative knowledge explained with words like “explain, describe, summarize and list”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the vocabulary associated with language</li> <li>• Knowing parts of speech</li> <li>• Identifying genres</li> <li>• Knowing the vocabulary of writing: verbs, nouns, sentences, paragraphs</li> <li>• Using and writing age appropriate vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is unable to fill out a planning sheet with phrases such as “Identify your audience”</li> <li>• Student does not identify specific genres</li> <li>• Limited vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide explicit vocabulary instruction,</li> <li>• Use mnemonic devices,</li> <li>• Utilize graphic organizers to show relationships,</li> <li>• Use rehearsal strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Concept</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A concept is a set of specific objects, symbols, or events which are grouped together on the basis of shared characteristics and which can be referenced by a particular name or symbol” (Merrill &amp; Tennyson, 1977)</li> <li>• Concrete concepts are known by physical characteristics</li> <li>• Requires generalization and discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizes the writing process in a non-linear manner. Independently plans, revises, edits as needed before completing a final project</li> <li>• Independently selects an audience and writes in a genre for a specific purpose</li> <li>• Utilizes a wide variety of sentence structures and types to communicate meaning in print</li> <li>• Consistently utilizes complete sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not able to articulate a strategy for approaching the writing process</li> <li>• Is not able to discriminate between genres</li> <li>• Does not articulate different purposes for writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching by analogy strategies</li> <li>• Utilizing concept mapping</li> <li>• Utilizing imagery</li> </ul>

Type of Learning	General Description	Description Relative to Written Language	Potential Problem Indicators	Possible Types of Instructional Interventions
<b>Procedure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unambiguous steps in a process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies steps in the writing process</li> <li>Fills out sections in a graphic organizer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States steps in the writing process but is unable to follow them</li> <li>Unable to complete a specified process or does not turn in work</li> <li>Completes a pre-writing activity, but does not include the components or ideas in the draft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach writing strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Principle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the relationship between two or more concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies grammar rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses incorrect verb tenses or lacks subject verb agreement</li> <li>Writes incomplete sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicit instruction in mechanics and grammar</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The selection and combination of multiple principles applied to solve a problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selects and writes in an appropriate genre</li> <li>Writes for a defined purpose to a defined audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not convey meaning when writing</li> <li>Does not select and write for a variety of audiences and purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach writing strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Techniques to monitor own learning</li> <li>Mental tactics for: attending to, organizing, elaborating, manipulating, and retrieving knowledge</li> <li>Mental tactics that lead to discovery, invention or creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Techniques to remember specific aspects that are necessary for writing in a particular genre</li> <li>Technique for editing using COPS (Capitalization, Overall appearance, Punctuation, and Spelling)</li> <li>Takes effective notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student does not edit his/her own paper, even though he/she has learned specific skills</li> <li>Does not differentiate between revising and editing</li> <li>Does not organize thoughts into cohesive paragraphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach editing or revising strategies</li> <li>Explicit instruction in writing (convention) skills</li> <li>Utilization of graphic organizers as a way to organize information</li> <li>Teach specific writing strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoughts or feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participates in writing activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuses to write or does not complete tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a safe environment</li> <li>Provide scaffolded support for success in an initial writing task</li> </ul>
<b>Psychomotor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A physical task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is able to generate text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuses to write or does not complete tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach handwriting and keyboarding</li> <li>Seek out support from an OT</li> </ul>

\*Originally developed by Ken Howell and LeAnne Robinson.



## Appendix F – Model Intervention Plan\*\*

### Response to Intervention

### Intervention Plan

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Attending Dist./School: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident Dist./School.: \_\_\_\_\_

General Ed. Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Problem Solving Meeting # \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's  
Name

Title/Relationship  
to Student

Participant's Name

Title/Relationship  
to Student

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

#### 1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM:

**Points to consider:** Identify the area to be targeted for intervention. Apply the R.I.O.T. approach across the four domains to determine current levels of performance. Identify the problem areas.

Environment (R.I.O.T.):

Curriculum (R.I.O.T.):

Instruction (R.I.O.T.):

Learner (R.I.O.T.):

## 2. ANALYZE THE PROBLEM:

**Points to Consider:** Look at the problem as the difference between what is expected and what occurs. Analyze the problem with respect to the characteristics of the environment, instruction, curriculum, and the individual learner. Other questions may include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is the instruction delivered with fidelity?         | <input type="checkbox"/> Is the student missing tool skills (alterable)?           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How is the information provided during instruction? | <input type="checkbox"/> What are the characteristics of the learning environment? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How is the curriculum organized?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> What has not worked in the past?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What has worked in the past?                        |  |

Based on the data you have collected, why do you think the problem is occurring?

## 3. DEVELOP A PLAN:

### Goal:

Write a meaningful, measurable, observable goal. Include the conditions (time frame, materials, setting), student's name, behavior, and criterion.

### Identify Potential Interventions:

Generate a list of interventions. Evaluate each one keeping in mind the research base and record the top six. Place an asterisk (\*) by the intervention methods(s) selected to implement.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. IMPLEMENT THE PLAN:

Identify the setting where implementation occurs:

\_\_\_ general education setting \_\_\_ special education setting \_\_\_ combination

##### Implementation plan:

Record what the Team members need to do in preparation for implementing the intervention plan.

What will be done? Include subject area and what needs to be done.	When?	By Whom?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

##### Monitoring Plan:

Record the evaluation procedures, the evaluation schedules, and the decision rule.

	By Whom?
1. Evaluation Procedures:	
2. Evaluation Schedules:	
3. Decision Rule:	

##### Next Problem Solving Meeting:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. EVALUATE THE PLAN

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Make modifications and conclusions based on data analysis and the monitoring plan (evaluation procedure, schedule, and decision rule). Record conclusions made and why.

Conclusions:
<div>A. Problem Solved- Student exits intervention plan and returns to core curriculum</div> <div>B. Continue the Intervention Plan</div> <div>1. Discontinue current intervention because goals have been met and develop a new intervention plan with new goals</div> <div>2. Revise the plan because goals have not been met</div> <div>3. Continue the plan because progress is evident although goals have not been met</div> <div>C. Problem not solved, consider referral for special education or 504 plan.</div>

\*\* **Modified from documents originally developed by Wayne Callender**

## **Appendix G – Using Error Analysis in Targeted Assessments of Reading\*\*\***

When conducting targeted assessments error analysis may be used along with Review, Interview, Observe, Test (R.I.O.T.) procedures including interviews and conducting and scoring mastery measures that target specific skills.

The following is a suggested approach for using error analysis when conducting targeted assessments in reading at Tier III. Similar approaches could be used for written language and mathematics.

a) Use error analysis from students' performance on CBMs, or mastery measures with appropriate reading tests, to identify the student's skills and knowledge of:

- ☐ Phonological Awareness
- ☐ Phonemics
- ☐ Sound-letter relationships
- ☐ Blending
- ☐ Sight word recognition
- ☐ Syllabication, morphographic content, clusters
- ☐ Polysyllabic words
- ☐ Passage reading at level
- ☐ Oral reading fluency
- ☐ Silent reading fluency

b) Use results from direct measures of reading strategies to determine whether the student:

- ☐ Guesses based on first letter
- ☐ Identifies different word (i.e. "the" for "these")
- ☐ Sounds out word
- ☐ Omits sound
- ☐ Errors in letter sound correspondence (i.e. short "e" sound for short "l")
- ☐ Produces initial sound(s) then word
- ☐ Substitution (i.e. "hat" for "cap")
- ☐ Deletes phoneme (i.e. "cat" for "cats")
- ☐ Repeats word
- ☐ Reads slowly
- ☐ Reads too fast
- ☐ Rule error (i.e. "hat" for "hate")
- ☐ Could not correctly repeat the word
- ☐ Uses incorrect spelling pattern (i.e. spells long "A" sound by adding an "e" to the end of the word instead of "ay")
- ☐ Must write multiple versions of word to determine correct spelling

c) The following are examples of sample data that can be collected for error analysis. Curriculum relevant/appropriate grade level measures should be used. When comparing the frequency and/or proportion of error types among the various measures there has to be an equal number of opportunities for each type of error to occur.

1. **Sight (Dolch) Word Reading Accuracy** (i.e. the, of, was, their, etc.)  
Based on appropriate grade level sight words taught as of the date the data was collected.

**Data collections**

DATE	# words presented	# words correct	% correct	sample errors

2. **Phonetically Regular Word Reading Accuracy**  
Correct identification on first attempt. Based on appropriate grade level sounds, blends, and syllables taught as of the date the data was collected.

**Data collections**

DATE	# words presented	# words correct	% correct	sample errors

### 3. **Passage Reading Rate and Accuracy**

Based on novel passage at appropriate grade level taught as of the date the data was collected. Any miscues, substitutions and deletions count as an error. Time is calculated for entire passage.

#### **Data collections**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>time</b>	<b>errors</b>	<b>total words</b>	<b>WPM</b>	<b>errors/100 words</b>

Attach passage with marked errors or error list.

### 4. **Spelling of Phonetically Regular Words**

Based on appropriate grade level syllable types taught as of the date the data was collected. Dictate list and present word and have student repeat word. Word is presented as unit with no assistance to break down or distinguish.

#### **Data collections**

<b>DATE</b>	<b># words presented</b>	<b># words correct</b>	<b>% correct</b>	<b>sample errors</b>

\*\*\* **Modified from documents originally developed by Cindy Dupuy and Cynthia Sheller**

## Appendix H – Example of Information for Evaluation Report Using RTI Data\*\*\*\*

The following example provides evaluation groups information and sample language that could be used to compile RTI data in support of determining SLD. This example uses reading and math and may be adapted further in those areas or to include writing.

a) Evidence of resistance to general education interventions. (Interventions attempted and data showing results):

At Tier III, the student received at least two attempts of intensive reading/math interventions coupled with the following Tier II interventions (**list interventions and other accommodations**). The intensive Tier III interventions were provided as follows: **<insert (e.g., for reading: initially, phonemic segmentation); (e.g., for math: initially, math computation)>** instruction was provided for two 30-minute periods per day in addition to the core **<insert grade>** reading/math curriculum. After two weeks, **<insert name of intervention program>** replaced one of the daily **<insert (e.g., phonemic segmentation/math computation)>** training periods. In week seven, the student's **<insert (e.g., phonemic segmentation/math computation)>** was replaced by an additional session of **<insert program name and/or description of reading/math instruction>**; a fluency/math program **<insert name>** was also added at that time. The attached intervention plan and progress-monitoring graph document the student's progress throughout the **<insert # of weeks>** intervention period. From **<insert # correct words per minute (CWPM)/correct digits per minute (CDPM)>** during baseline, the student improved a total of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** during this **<insert # of weeks>** period. This represents an acquisition rate of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** per week, well below the goal of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** increase per week, and also below the established goal criteria of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** increase.

b) Evidence of low performance when compared with peer's performance in the areas of concern. (Must use multiple indicators; two or more are needed to demonstrate that a student is a low performer.)

- Compared to grade level peers on the school-wide curriculum-based measure (CBM), the student's median score of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** is **<insert #>** times discrepant from the class median score of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** (7% or less of current grade level). Progress monitoring data revealed that the student gained a total of **<insert # words/digits>** over a **<insert #>** week period – an acquisition rate of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** per week. The student's median reading/math computation rate over the course of this period was **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>**. On CBM reading/math probes at one grade level below his/her current grade placement, the student's median reading/math score is **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>**. This corresponds to the **<insert #>** percentile. This is also within the criterion range (**e.g., at or below the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile**) considered for low performing students.

- Testing demonstrated that student received a standardized assessment score of **<insert #>** which established a discrepancy of 1.75 or greater standard deviations below the mean.
- The student's classmates improved an average of **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** on **(district/school wide CBM benchmarks)**, however, the student improved only **<insert # CWPM/CDPM>** during the same time period which demonstrates a discrepancy ratio of **<insert #>** **(a discrepancy ratio of 2.0 should normally be needed except for younger or older students when the ratio may vary)**.
- The student's instruction performance level is **<insert #>** and his current grade placement is **<insert #>** **(two or more is needed to identify low performance except for younger students)**. The student's grade equivalent on the **<insert name of intervention program>** and instructional grade placement probes of the **<insert name of program >** indicate that the student's instructional level is more than two grade levels below the student's grade placement. This information is consistent with the student's **<insert name of testing used>** score as well as **<insert name of additional testing>**.

c) Resources necessary to support the child to participate and progress in the general education curriculum are beyond those available in the general education setting.

The Student's reading/math skills have not improved at the anticipated rate despite direct and intense interventions at Tier III. The Student requires specially designed instruction or continuation of direct and small group instruction will be necessary for a longer period of time. Academic support as well as curricular modifications and adaptations within the general education classroom are also necessary. The following special education services are suggested: **<insert detailed recommendations indicating specially designed instruction in the specified areas and related services that are needed>**

**NOTE:** In order to establish eligibility for special education services, the evaluation report should also include a conclusion that the student's SLD creates an adverse affect on his or her educational performance in one of the areas outlined under IDEA 2004 (20 USC § 1402(30) (2004)) and WAC 392-172-128 that is not primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. The report should also rule out limited English proficiency, a lack of instruction in mathematics, or a lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction. The report should also include a conclusion that the student requires specially designed instruction and make sufficient recommendations about the student's service needs so that an IEP may be developed. If appropriate, attach intervention plans, graphs and relevant reports.

\*\*\*\* Modified from documents originally developed by Wayne Callender



## Appendix I – District and School RTI Readiness Checklist\*\*\*\*

This checklist is a self-evaluation tool provided to assist districts and schools in examining its readiness to adopt RTI practices. The checklist is intended to be completed by a team of district or building level leaders. It includes five indicators to ensure successful implementation of RTI systems.

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Completing the Checklist:

_____ Name/Title	_____ Name/Title
_____ Name/Title	_____ Name/Title
_____ Name/Title	_____ Name/Title

Leadership	Established	Willing to Implement	No
District level and building level support at the highest levels, including agreement to adopt a RTI model and allocate required resources (general education, special education and other programs)			
Understanding of and commitment to a long term change process (3 or more years)			
Long term commitment of resources among general education, special education Title, ELL and other programs (staff, time and materials) for screening, assessment, and interventions			
District leadership team with basic knowledge of the research relative to RTI and the desire to learn more			
Expertise at the district level and building level with respect to research based practices for academics and behavior			

**Narrative:** For “Established” items documented in the space below include specific information related to the involvement of the School Board, Central Office Administrators, and Principals. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

**Narrative:** For “Willing to Implement” items, describe current conditions that would support change in each area. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

Teaming	Established	Willing to Implement	No
Commitment to collaborative teaming (general education, special education and other programs) at both the district and school levels			
Principal leadership and staff (general education, special education and other programs) willing to participate at each school			
Willingness for general education, special education, and other programs to work together at both the district and school levels			
Commitment from all team members to making student decisions through problem solving			
Focus on student outcomes vs. eligibility (team's main purpose is not special education referral)			

**Narrative:** For “Established” items documented in the space below include specific information related to teaming structures currently in place at the district and school levels and specific initiatives that involve collaboration between general education, special education and compensatory programs. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

**Narrative:** For “Willing to Implement” items, describe current conditions that would support change in each area. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

Curriculum	Established	Willing to Implement	No
Use of a research-validated core reading program (as outlined in the OSPI K-12 Reading Model); core math program; writing program and behavior at each elementary or secondary school identified as RTI ready with 80% success rate			
Use of or ability to acquire supplemental intervention materials			
A range of research-based instructional interventions for any student at risk of not reaching potential, including those identified as gifted/talented or those already experiencing academic failure (systematic model in place such as 3 tiered approach, pyramid of interventions, etc.)			
System in place to evaluate research-based interventions as to integrity/fidelity of implementation			
Capacity to provide ongoing training and support to ensure fidelity of implementation			

**Narrative:** For “Established” items documented in the space below list the core reading, math, writing and behavior programs adopted by the district, any supplemental intervention materials currently in use, and systems in place to provide training related to their implementation. Identify each school involved. If the district and/or schools are not adopting research validated programs in reading, math, writing, or behavior explain the area in which RTI is not being adopted and how this will impact the district/school’s overall approach to RTI. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

**Narrative:** For “Willing to Implement” items, describe current conditions that would support change in each area. Include possible options for funding additional curricular materials that may be necessary. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

Screening	Established	Willing to Implement	No
Universal screening system to assess strengths and challenges of all students in academic achievement, talents and behavior			
Structured data conversations occurring to inform instructional decisions			
Direct measurements of achievement and behavior (learning benchmarks) that have a documented/predictable relationship to positive student outcomes			
Progress monitoring that is systematic, documented and shared			
Data management systems in place (technology support)			

**Narrative:** For “Established” items in the space below describe the data collection and management system used by the district, including details about the current progress monitoring system and calendar. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

**Narrative:** For “Willing to Implement” items, describe current conditions that would support change in each area. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

<b>Ongoing Professional Development</b> (Addresses relevant areas essential to effective implementation of RTI and improved student outcomes)	<b>Established</b>	<b>Willing to Implement</b>	<b>No</b>
Across all staff/roles			
Involves families			
Includes follow-up (e.g., coaching, professional dialogue, peer feedback, etc.)			

**Professional development addresses relevant areas such as:**

Collaborative decision-making (e.g., professional learning communities)			
Effective use of data, including that gathered through ongoing progress monitoring, in making educational decisions			
Collaborative delivery of instruction/interventions			
Research-based instructional practices, including supporting materials and tools			
What constitutes “interventions” versus “accommodations and modifications”			
Prescriptive and varied assessment techniques (targeted assessments, CBMs, error analysis, etc.)			
Progress monitoring techniques			
Parent engagement strategies			
Other:			

**Narrative:** For “Established” items in the space below describe the current professional development system and calendar. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

**Narrative:** For “Willing to Implement” items, describe current conditions that would support change in each area. (Use additional pages as necessary.)

## ACTION PLAN

Indicator or Sub-Topic	Specific Actions	Resources	Timeline	Who is Responsible	Evidence of Change

Planning Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\* **Modified from documents originally developed by the states of Oregon and Colorado**

## **Appendix J – IDEA Federal Regulations Concerning Response to Intervention (RTI)**

On August 14, 2006, the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) published final federal regulations to implement Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) that was reauthorized on December 3, 2004. The regulations will take effect on October 13, 2006. Below are excerpts from the federal regulations pertaining to using RTI to identify students with specific learning disabilities (SLD).

- **Scientifically Based Research Defined:** 34 CFR § 300.035 adopts the definition contained in No Child Left Behind: Scientifically based research-
  - a. Means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and
  - b. Includes research that--
    - (1) Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
    - (2) Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
    - (3) 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;
    - (4) 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;
    - (5) Ensures that 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; and
    - (6) Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.
- **RTI Allowed:** 34 § 300.307 requires states to allow the use of RTI as part of its specific learning disability (SLD) criteria. 34 CFR § 300.309(a)(2)(i) allows an evaluation group to determine that a student does not make sufficient progress in the SLD areas (discussed below) based on RTI data.
- **Early Intervening Services:** 34 CFR § 300.226(a) allows school district to use up to 15% of federal special education funds, minus any maintenance of effort reductions, in combination with other funds, to develop and implement coordinated early intervening services. This may include financing structures, for kindergarten through grade 12 students (with particular emphasis on students K-3) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.

- **Early Intervening Services Activities:** 34 CFR § 300.226(b) states that early intervening services activities may include:
  - a. Professional development on scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions including instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and
  - b. Educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports.
- **Screening:** 34 CFR § 300.302 provides that screening by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation is not an evaluation for special education eligibility requiring parental consent.
- **SLD Areas:** 34 CFR § 300.309(a)(1) provides that to identify an SLD an evaluation must show that a student does not achieve adequately for his or her age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or State-approved grade-level standards, in one or more of the following areas:
  - a. Oral expression;
  - b. Listening comprehension;
  - c. Written expression;
  - d. Basic reading skills;
  - e. Reading fluency skills;
  - f. Reading comprehension;
  - g. Mathematics calculation; or
  - h. Mathematics problem solving.
- **Rule Out Other Factors:** 34 CFR § 300.309(a)(3) provides that in order to determine a student has SLD his or her lack of sufficient progress in the above areas may not primarily result from:
  - a. A visual, hearing, or motor disability;
  - b. Mental retardation;
  - c. Emotional disturbance;
  - d. Cultural factors;
  - e. Environmental factors or economic disadvantage; or
  - f. Limited English proficiency.
- **Appropriate Math and Reading Instruction:** 34 CFR § 300.309(b) requires an evaluation group ensure underachievement shown by a student suspected of having SLD is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction in math and reading and consider:
  - a. Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as part of, the referral process the student was provided appropriate instruction in the general education setting, delivered by qualified personnel; and
  - b. Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction.
- **Reporting Progress to Parents:** 34 CFR § 300.309(b)(2) requires that parents be provided documentation of the repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals as described above.



- **Promptly Request Consent and Evaluate:** 34 CFR § 300.309(c) provides that a school district must promptly request parental consent to evaluate the student to determine if he or she needs special education and related services and must adhere to evaluation timeframes (unless extended by mutual agreement of the parents and a group of qualified professionals):
  - a. If, prior to referral, the student did not make adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided appropriate math or reading instruction (including repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals); and
  - b. Whenever a child is referred for an evaluation.
  
- **Observation:** 34 CFR § 300.310 requires school districts to ensure that a student is observed in his or her learning environment, including the general education setting, to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the suspected areas of difficulty. When identifying SLD, an evaluation group should either use information from observation of the student in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the student's performance that was done before the student was referred for an evaluation; or have at least one member of the evaluation group conduct an observation of the student's academic performance in the general education classroom after a referral has been made and consent obtained. In the case of a student who is less than school age or out of school an evaluation group member must observe the student in an environment appropriate for a student of that age.
  
- **RTI Eligibility Documentation and Specific Notice to Parents:** 34 CFR § 300.311(a)(7)(i) requires when using RTI, eligibility documentation must state the instructional strategies used and the student-centered data that was collected. 34 CFR § 300.311(a)(7)(ii) requires RTI eligibility documentation to contain a statement that parents were notified of:
  - a. State policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data collected and the general education services that would be provided;
  - b. Strategies for increasing the child's rate of learning; and
  - c. The parents' right to request an evaluation.
  
- **SLD Determination:** 34 CFR § 300.311(a)(5) states that SLD evaluations determine whether the student does not achieve adequately for her or his age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards; and
  - a. The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards; or
  - b. The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards or intellectual development that is determined by the evaluation group to be relevant to the identification of SLD using appropriate assessments consistent with evaluation procedures.