

Florida Department of Education
Statewide Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI)
Implementation Plan



Florida Department of Education
2008

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Foreword

Our Purpose

The Florida Department of Education is here to increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system, by providing them with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities, and to maintain an accountability system that measures student progress.

According to the 2008 Quality Counts report—a national comparison of state education systems – Florida ranked among the top 15 in the country. Since last year, Florida schools have jumped from 31st place in the nation to 14th. In the K-12 Student Achievement section of the report, Florida ranks seventh in the nation. Florida was recognized for:

- Outstanding student participation in and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) programs
- Academic gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (also known as the nation’s report card)
- Closing the achievement gap between white and minority students
- Preparing, attracting and recognizing quality teachers
- Preparing our students for the future by setting high standards and measuring progress

“This report recognizes that student success in the future rests not just on the quality of our K-12 education system but with many partners working together to prepare students for the future, from preschool through college, in and out of the classroom. Let this inspire us to remain unyielding and provide a catalyst to urge further educational progress.”

Chairman T. Willard Fair, State Board of Education 2008

It is this partnership toward common goals that benefits all Florida students, thus the state of Florida at large. It is the responsibility of every educator, organization, and parent to actively engage in collaborative efforts to meet Florida’s goals. In the unified effort, all schools in Florida should ensure evidence-based practices, instructionally relevant assessments, systematic problem-solving to meet all students’ needs, data-based decision making, effective professional development, supportive leadership, and meaningful family involvement. These are the foundation principles of a Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI) system, which provides us the framework to elevate the efficacy of our statewide improvement efforts.

It is my pleasure to present the Florida Department of Education’s RtI Implementation Plan, which provides the RtI framework to assist districts with critical components, definitions and applications of RtI to support the development of schoolwide RtI implementations. It is my belief that this framework will promote schoolwide practices that align with and accelerate our collective existing efforts to ensure the highest possible student achievement in both academic and behavioral pursuits.



Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner of Education
June 2008

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Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to facilitate the successful implementation of Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI) and to formalize statewide efforts to promote schoolwide practices that ensure highest possible student achievement in both academic and behavioral pursuits within the RtI framework. Florida's students have experienced significant growth in reading as a result of efforts using the key components of RtI through the Reading First Grant, as evidenced by a decrease in special education placement rates of approximately 40 percent (Torgesen, 2007). Florida's students have also experienced significant improvements in positive behaviors as a result of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) implementations supported by Florida's PBS Project. Schools that implemented PBS with fidelity had 40 percent fewer office discipline referrals, in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions in comparison to schools that did not implement PBS with fidelity (Kincaid, 2007). As similar efforts continue to evolve in the areas of mathematics, science, and school improvement, we learn from these data how to proceed most efficiently. Meanwhile, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require the use of evidence-based practices to ensure that all students receive appropriate instruction as a contingency requirement for eligibility for special education programs. Therefore, it is both necessary and worthwhile to apply the principles of problem solving (PS)/RtI to all schoolwide academic and behavioral access and acceleration efforts. This plan provides districts with the critical components, definitions, and applications of RtI to support the development of district plans.

Overview of RtI in Florida

Response to Intervention is defined as the change in behavior or performance as a function of an intervention (Gresham, 1991). The RtI model is a multi-tiered approach to providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs, and using learning rate over time and level of performance to inform instructional decisions. RtI involves the systematic use of assessment data to most efficiently allocate resources in order to improve learning for all students.

Response to Intervention is "data-based decision making" applied to education. The essential components of RtI include:

- Multiple tiers of evidence-based instruction service delivery
- A problem-solving method designed to inform the development of interventions
- An integrated data collection/assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery

Context of RtI within Existing State Initiatives

The basic elements of RtI are required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); therefore, they are included in the broad-based initiatives for schools striving to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) such as Reading First, Florida's Continuous Improvement Model, Florida's Positive Behavior Supports, Problem-solving/RtI State Pilot Project, and the Early Learning Success Initiative. Significant state initiatives have emerged since the enactment of the NCLB legislation. Although these initiatives share common core elements and goals for all Florida schools, they are each facilitated by different offices within the Department of Education that address specific content areas or stakeholder groups.

Efforts in the area of reading are coordinated through the Just Read, Florida! office primarily based on the K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan, which contains the components of RtI. In addition, Reading First grants assist Florida school districts and schools to implement proven methods of scientifically based reading instruction in classrooms to prevent reading difficulties in grades K-3. Simultaneously, efforts specifically targeted to low-performing schools are managed through the Bureau of School Improvement based on Florida's Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM), which contains some of the components of RtI. Other examples of efforts consistent with the RtI components includes statewide projects such as the Florida's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Model addressing behavioral needs across all three tiers and the Problem-solving/RtI (PS/RtI) Pilot Project. An initiative called Early Learning Success (ELS) focused on building a strong foundation for Florida's children through early success in reading and math has recently emerged. To achieve a strong foundation in early reading and math, Florida's standards, instruction, and assessments in Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) through third grade must be structured so that learning builds progressively from grade-to-grade. Instruction must be developmentally appropriate. Data on each child's progress must be used by teachers to adjust/differentiate their instruction. Children must be provided with effective interventions if they are not making adequate progress and also with opportunities to accelerate their learning.

Clearly, each set of efforts is built upon common elements, but with single-purpose resources and in segregated activities. Each separate effort also involves a unique set of terminology, professional development requirements, and data collection and reporting systems, which result in district and school personnel perceiving that an overwhelming number of parallel initiatives are either required or encouraged. In sum, the basic components of RtI are included in broad-based general education reform initiatives. It is the recommendation of stakeholders that the Florida Department of Education unify its efforts and resources to maximize efficacy and elevate the common beliefs through mutual understanding of the principle foundation of RtI and integration of that foundation throughout all statewide efforts.

Parent Involvement

Meaningful and effective parental/family involvement is critical to student progress and required by both NCLB and IDEA. It is vital that parents be informed and involved at each step in the process. Regardless of whether the parent or the teacher initiated a concern, parent involvement should be facilitated throughout the process. The district should communicate the information obtained from progress monitoring to the parent each time the data are analyzed to make instructional decisions and/or at regular intervals. Parents should be actively engaged in all the decisions regarding adjustments to interventions and related changes to a student's curriculum.

Parent education on the RtI process, and technical assistance to districts and schools, in collaboration with such entities as the Parent Training and Information (PTI) center, funded by IDEA, and the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC), funded by NCLB, should be one of the first steps taken in implementing RtI. It is of supreme importance that all involved parties understand that RtI is a process, not another categorical system that a student must progress through laterally to become eligible for special education. Implementing RtI does not override the other rights under IDEA, such as a parent's right to request a comprehensive individual evaluation at any time. All elements of the RtI process are relevant to students who are served in both general and special education, and measuring a student's response to intervention should continue regardless of

whether a student meets eligibility criteria under IDEA to make on-going, informed adjustments to the instruction provided.

Scaling –up Evidence-based Practices: Foundation Beliefs of Florida Stakeholders

Florida’s stakeholders involved in a collaboration to scale-up statewide implementation of Response to Intervention share the following set of beliefs about what creates the ideal conditions to promote student achievement. Using these beliefs to guide our efforts is one way to ensure consistent movement toward maximizing student achievement. Maximum benefits to students occur if:

- Scientific, research-based instruction is delivered by highly qualified personnel
 - Curriculum and instructional approaches must have a high probability of success for most students
 - Differentiate instruction to meet individual learning needs
- Reliable, valid, and instructionally relevant assessments are used
 - Screening: Collecting data for the purpose of assessing effectiveness of core instruction and identifying students needing more intensive interventions and support
 - Formative: On-going progress monitoring to guide instruction and monitor student progress and intervention effectiveness
 - Diagnostic: Gathering information from multiple sources to determine why students are not benefiting from instruction and what specific areas of need must be addressed
- Problem-solving method is used to make decisions based on a continuum of student needs
 - Provide strong core curriculum, instruction, and assessment
 - Provide increasing levels of support based on increasing levels of student needs
 - Use school-based (and district-level) problem-solving teams
 - Apply to systems (district, school, grade, class, group) and individual students
- Data are used to guide instructional decisions
 - To align curriculum and instruction to assessment data
 - To allocate resources
 - To drive professional development decisions
 - To create student growth trajectories to target and develop interventions
- Professional development and follow-up modeling and coaching are provided to ensure effective instruction at all levels
 - Provide ongoing training and support for all personnel delivering instruction and interventions to students
 - Anticipate and be willing to meet the newly emerging needs of instructional personnel based on student performance
 - Provide regular times for educators to interact and collaborate to improve instruction and intervention efforts
 - Provide tools for communicating with parents and educators using graphic displays of student achievement and rates of growth in academic, behavioral, and social skills development
- Leadership is vital
 - Strong administrative support to ensure commitment and resources
 - Strong teacher support to share in the common goal of improving instruction
 - Leadership team to build staff support, internal capacity, and sustainability over time

- All students and their families are part of one proactive and seamless educational system
 - Believe that all students can learn
 - Use available resources to teach all students
 - Use instructional time efficiently and effectively
 - Inform and involve parents continually, meaningfully, and effectively

RtI Implementation: Description

Within an RtI framework, resources are allocated in direct proportion to student needs. This framework is depicted as a three-tier model (see Figure 1 and Appendix A) that uses increasingly more intense instruction and interventions. Data collected at each tier are used to measure the efficacy of the interventions so that meaningful decisions can be made about which instruction and interventions should be maintained and layered.

Tier 1 is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based **core** instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices, and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum.

Tier 2 consists of **supplemental** instruction and interventions that are provided *in addition to and in alignment with effective core instruction and behavioral supports* to groups of targeted students who need additional instructional and/or behavioral support.

Tier 3 consists of **intensive** instructional or behavioral interventions provided *in addition to and in alignment with effective core instruction* with the goal of increasing an individual student's rate of progress. Tier 3 interventions are developed for individual students using a problem-solving process. Students receiving Tier 3 level supports *may or may not* be eligible for specially designed instruction and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

Special education is not a tier, nor is RtI a series of events conducted for the purpose of identifying a disability. RtI is, conversely, a process used for the purpose of revealing what works best for groups of students and individual students, regardless of placement.

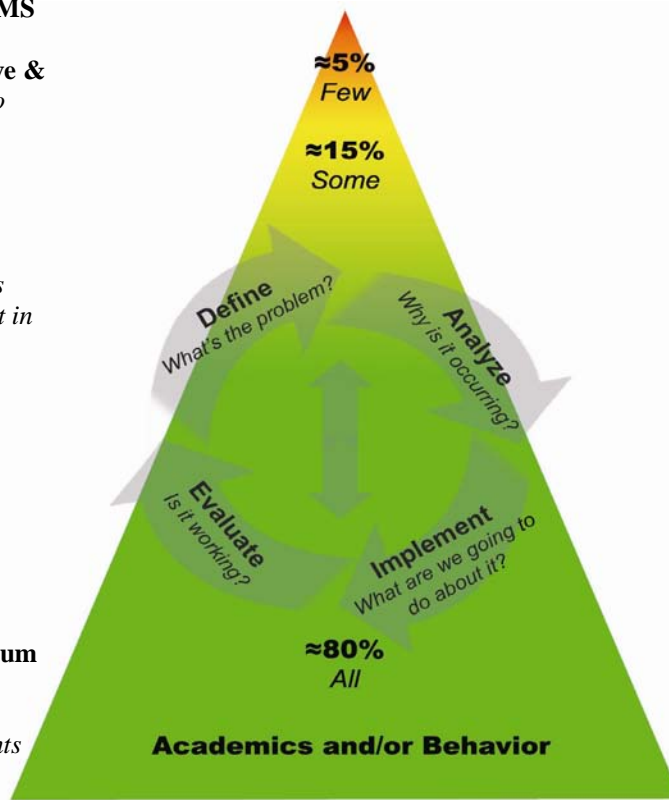
Figure 1: Three-tier model of school supports incorporating the problem-solving process.

ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

Tier 3: Comprehensive & Intensive *Students who need individualized interventions.*

Tier 2: Strategic Interventions *Students who need more support in addition to the core curriculum.*

Tier 1: Core Curriculum *All students, including students who require curricular enhancements for acceleration.*



BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions *Students who need individualized intervention.*

Tier 2: Targeted Group Interventions *Students who need more support in addition to schoolwide positive behavior program.*

Tier 1: Universal Interventions *All students in all settings.*

Across the tiers, the **problem-solving method** is used to match instructional resources to educational need. The problem-solving method (see Figure 1 and Appendix A) is as follows:

1. **Define** the problem by determining the discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring. Ask, “What’s the problem?”
2. **Analyze** the problem using data to determine why the discrepancy is occurring. Ask, “Why is it taking place?”
3. Establish a student performance goal, develop an intervention plan to address the goal, and delineate how the student’s progress will be monitored and **implementation** integrity will be ensured. Ask, “What are we going to do about it?”
4. Use progress monitoring data to **evaluate** the effectiveness of the intervention plan based on the student’s response to the intervention plan. Ask, “Is it working?” If not, how will the intervention plan be adjusted to better support the student’s progress?

RtI Implementation: Application

Each tier of the RtI approach defines the level and intensity of services required for a student to progress. A student is described as receiving Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 services. The three intervention tiers are on a continuum that is fluid, as the student’s level of need dictates the level of support. The actual length of time that an intervention is implemented depends on the student’s response to the intervention and time period required for the target skills or behavior to develop. The problem-solving process is used to make the necessary decisions within each tier.

The “response” component of RtI requires two specific actions. First, a student’s need for intervention must be defined accurately and target skills/behaviors identified for interventions. Second, the student responses that reflect those needs must be assessed in a reliable and valid manner. The “intervention” component of RtI also requires two specific skill applications. First, interventions must be verified by scientifically-based research (evidence-based) as defined by Section 9101(37) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and amended by the NCLB Act of 2001 for the type of need, the demographics of the student population (e.g., gender, race, language), and the setting factors (levels of supervision, number of students in the room). Second, evidence must exist that the intervention was implemented with fidelity and that the level of implementation (e.g., number of minutes per week) was documented.

The basic components of RtI are applied first to all students in a school (i.e., grade level and classroom level) to determine what percentage of the students are responding to the Tier 1 instruction using the “core curriculum” (both academic and behavior). Four questions are asked and can be answered using valid and reliable assessment data:

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

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

Supplemental interventions are provided to those students identified as “at-risk.” The primary characteristics of Tier 2 interventions are:

- Interventions are delivered to smaller groups of students, either in the general education environment or outside of the classroom as part of the general education instruction.
- Interventions must be provided in addition to core instruction (Tier 1). Increased Academic Engaged Time (AET) influences student academic achievement to a significant extent (Cancelli, 1993).
- Interventions focus on particular skill areas that need strengthening.

Progress monitoring of student performance is conducted frequently with the same measures used to assess Tier 1 performance, as well as additional measures specific to the particular skill targeted or the supplemental intervention implemented. In an effective Tier 2 intervention, approximately 70 percent of the students receiving Tier 2 instruction should have a positive response to intervention and demonstrate rates of progress represented by aim lines that will reach benchmark performance. A small percentage of students will not respond to Tier 2 levels of instruction and will require the most intensive instruction (Tier 3).

Tier 3 interventions are developed based on individual student needs following a problem-solving process that will use additional formal and/or informal diagnostic assessment, allowing more in-depth problem analysis to inform intervention development. Additional methods of progress monitoring of intervention effectiveness include those used at Tiers 1 and 2, but may also include additional measures that are unique to more narrowly defined skills. Characteristics of Tier 3 interventions are:

- Interventions are delivered to very small groups of students or to students individually.
- Interventions must be highly focused on targeted skill areas with increased duration and frequency and be provided in alignment with and in addition to the effective Tier 2 and Tier 1 instruction.
- All Tier 3 interventions must be integrated with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. These cannot be three completely different interventions that do not strengthen the work of the other interventions and core instruction.

Impact of RtI Implementation

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

One of the greatest impacts of the RtI model is the reduction in over-representation of diverse student groups in low academic performance (e.g., FCAT Level 1), special education, suspension/expulsion, and alternative education (VanDerHeyden, 2005). The impact of this model and its application to issues related to over-representation are research based. In our own work in Florida, both referral rates and special education placement rates of minority students dropped approximately 40 percent in schools characterized by early identification (kindergarten), early intervention, frequently collected data, and evidence-based interventions (Torgesen, 2007). Amanda VanDerHeyden's (2005) research indicated that the growth rates in early literacy skills for African-American students of low socioeconomic status (SES) increased more dramatically than for any other racial group when provided with interventions within an RtI framework.

We can improve achievement rates and reduce disproportionality through intensive intervention, delivered early, monitored frequently, and modified to meet the needs of students. A commitment to early assessment of all students (within the first 30 days of school), improved core instruction, early intervention with at-risk students (no more than three months from the beginning of school), and frequent monitoring of student progress using efficient assessment procedures will result in significantly fewer students failing.

State and District Responsibilities

The Florida Department of Education will:

- Establish an RtI Advisory Group, State Transformation Team, State Management Group, and District/School Based Leadership Teams to obtain on-going stakeholder input and build capacity to sustain implementation over time

- Collaborate to ensure aligned professional development efforts and a common terminology across related initiatives
- Integrate PS/RtI language and concepts with Florida’s Continuous Improvement Model training for low performing schools
- Integrate PS/RtI language and concepts into the Bureau of School Improvement Technical Assistance Book annually sent to all schools in Florida
- Conduct regional meetings to assist districts in implementing RtI for students with behavior problems
- Provide a series of online professional development courses beginning with the Florida RtI Introductory Training Course: http://floridarti.usf.edu/intro_course
- Initiate collaboration between FLDOE and the Parent Training Information Center (PTI) of IDEA and the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) of NCLB to develop a resource and dissemination plan for families
- Revise relevant state statutes, rules, and policies to support RtI implementation
- Develop and disseminate technical assistance related to programs for students who are gifted or English language learners, assessment and accommodation practices, pre-service efforts and teacher qualifications, secondary implementation, special education eligibility requirements, etc., across the state through workshops, Web-based resources, newsletters, and parent organizations
- Provide Web-based self-assessment (see Appendix B) and planning tool (see Appendix C) for district use
- Review and approve district implementation plans linked to Student Progression Plans, School Improvement Plans, and/or K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plans
- Evaluate the effects of the RtI process and activities through review of student outcomes, professional development training reviews, and the Problem-solving/RtI Pilot Project

Districts will, based on self-assessment results (see Appendix B), and in conjunction with the Student Progression Plan and K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan, develop a multi-year Response to Intervention implementation plan organized around Consensus, Infrastructure, and Implementation. To assist in this planning process, districts may use the document entitled, “Critical Components of the District RtI Plan” (see Appendix C). Districts should also address the following areas in their planning process:

- How current resources and practices will be used to implement RtI and identify what additional resources are necessary to implement the district plan
- How district stakeholders will be educated about RtI
- How district stakeholders (e.g., teacher organization leadership, parent organization leadership) will be involved in the process

Current Activities

The following state efforts are currently active and illustrate the various ways in which the state is striving to meet its responsibilities as stated above. This is a snapshot representation of efforts that will grow and change over time.

Statewide Projects Funded	These projects have been established and have on-going, direct impact on RtI implementation. For complete details, see their respective Web sites. (See Appendix D, Florida’s RtI: Core Supports Network Summary.)
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through the Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) (http://floridarti.usf.edu/) • Positive Behavior Support (PBS) (http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/) • Response to Intervention’s Teaching Learning Connections (RtI-TLC) (site forthcoming) • Student Support Services Project (http://sss.usf.edu/) • Reading First (http://www.justreadflorida.com/reading_first.asp) • Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) (http://www.fcrr.org) • Florida Center for Research – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (FCR-STEM) (http://www.fcstem.org/center11.aspx)
Partnerships	<p>Partnerships are developing among the following offices and specialized projects in an effort to increase the Department’s collaboration toward awareness and consistent application of RtI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Pilot Project • Positive Behavior Support Project • Response to Intervention’s Teaching Learning Connections • Student Support Services Project • Florida Center for Reading Research • Just Read, Florida! • Florida Center for Research – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math • Bureau of Instruction and Innovations • Florida State University – Learning Disabilities Center • Office of Early Learning • Bureau of School Improvement, including student progression • Assessment and School Performance • Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services • Office of Academic Achievement through Language Acquisition • Family and Community Outreach
Technical Assistance and Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of Technical Assistance Papers to address on-going needs • Integrate PS/RtI language and concepts with Florida’s Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) Training in collaboration with the FLDOE Bureau of School Improvement • Integrate PS/RtI language and concepts with Annual School Improvement manual in collaboration with the FLDOE Bureau of School Improvement • Develop the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR), an assessment system by the Florida Center for Reading Research, in collaboration with Just Read, Florida! FAIR provides teachers with screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring information. • Refine the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) to be available for data reporting, including reading and math data. PMRN will also contain tools for linking assessment results to classroom instruction. • Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation (SAPSI) (Appendix B) • Critical Components of District RtI Plan (Appendix C) • Florida RtI Introductory Training Course: http://floridarti.usf.edu/intro_course
Professional Development Activities	<p>Technical Assistance Related to the Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities Rule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences for Professional Organizations (e.g., FASP) • Technical Assistance Paper • Administrators Management Meeting and regional meetings

Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention Project Efforts (<http://floridarti.usf.edu/>)
Statewide Training Initiative

- In January 2008, the Project initiated statewide training for school-based teams from school districts across Florida. During the 2007-2008 school year, three days of training to be followed by two more days in the fall of 2008 were provided in each of the three state regions (North, Central, and South). The training is being conducted by the regional coordinators and project leader.
- Technical assistance (TA) is provided to the school-based teams participating in the statewide training on a quarterly basis.
- TA needs assessment is conducted by the regional coordinators to determine the content of the TA sessions to ensure an efficient TA Process.
- In addition to these face-to-face meetings, Web-based TA is provided. The Web-based TA is provided according to the on-going input of the school-based teams.

Demonstration District/Pilot Site Initiative

- Forty elementary schools (in eight demonstration school districts—12 percent of school districts in Florida) have been awarded mini-grants to serve as Pilot Sites for the purpose of evaluating the impact of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention. Additional information is available at http://floridarti.usf.edu/floridaproject/demonstration_districts/index.html

• Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Project Efforts (<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/>)

- Training and Support Activities.
- To date, the Florida PBS Project has trained over 375 schools in initial implementation of Tier 1 RtI/PBS. An established PBS Web site (<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/>) is identified as a state and national model for disseminating information and support. The PBS Project collaborates at the national level with the OSEP-funded Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support.
- 2006-2007: 77 schools were trained in Tier 1 PBS and 46 schools received booster training in Tier 1. In addition to Tier 1 training, the PBS Project trained 79 school teams on Tier 2 interventions and 65 teams on Tier 3 interventions. Tier 2 and 3 training included problem solving, progress monitoring, and materials for implementing interventions.
- 56 schools were identified as implementing Tier 1 PBS at a model school level. Nearly 60 percent of Florida schools trained in Tier 1 PBS are implementing with fidelity (national average between 20 and 30 percent). Outcome, implementation, and process data are gathered from nearly 90 percent of active Tier 1 PBS schools.
- 2008: Each district submitted a request for support to the PBS Project regarding their anticipated training and support needs in 2008. Requests for training and technical assistance were received from 36 districts.
 - A total of 404 school teams are requesting training in 2008, consisting of Tier 1 PBS training for 125 teams, booster training for 90 teams, and retraining for 29 teams.
 - Because of the high implementation level of established Tier 1 PBS schools, 112 schools have requested targeted group (Tier 2) training and 48 schools have requested individual PBS training (Tier 3).

State-level Infrastructure Development

The following teams are being established at various levels to serve a variety of functions, including policy level changes to support implementation, building the capacity of districts to implement evidence-based practices and establishing integrated RtI academic and behavior systems in each school, implementing the initial educational practices (RtI, Reading, PBS) at the district or regional level, and providing on-going stakeholder input to the Florida Department of Education.

Team	Role	Members
State Management Group (SMG)	Provide leadership and facilitate policy-level changes to support implementation of effective educational practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Todd Clark, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Instruction and Innovation • Shan Goff, Executive Director, Office of Early Learning • Evan Lefsky, Executive Director, Just Read, Florida! • Bambi Lockman, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services • Jay Pfeiffer, Deputy Commissioner, Accountability Research and Measurement • Hue Reynolds, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Office of Communications and Public Affairs, FLDOE • Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services, Office of the Chancellor • Iris Wilson, Deputy Chancellor for Student Achievement, Office of the Chancellor • Representatives from State Transformation Team
State Transformation Team (STT)	Analyze progress toward statewide efforts, recommend actions for improvement, and support District and School Based Leadership Teams (DBLT/SBLT) to build the capacity of districts and schools to implement evidence-based practices and to establish integrated RtI academic and behavior systems in each school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ginger Alberto, Office of Achievement through Language Acquisition, FLDOE • George Batsche, Mike Curtis, Clark Dorman – Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention Project, USF • M. Denise Bishop, Office of Early Learning, FLDOE • Liz Crawford, Florida Center for Reading Research, FSU • Heather Diamond, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, FLDOE • Sandy Dilger, Bureau of School Improvement, FLDOE • Don Kincaid, Heather George, Karen Childs – PBS Project, USF • Mary Little, Response to Intervention’s Teaching Learning Connections, UCF • Martha Murray, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, FLDOE • Melinda Webster, Just Read, Florida!, FLDOE • Rob Schoen, Office of Mathematics and Science, FLDOE

<p>District Based Implementation Team (DBLT)</p> <p>See the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) RtI Blueprints for Implementation: District Level available at http://www.nasdse.org/</p>	<p>Provide leadership, advisement, and training at the district level and assist schools in their implementation efforts by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing and implementing a plan to ensure that general education, special education and other program personnel work together at the district level to effectuate the successful implementation of PS/RtI in the district pilot schools 2. Assigning district personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience to the PS/RtI initiative to support district coordination and implementation of the initiative across the pilot school sites 3. Putting in place a district-level leadership team to help pilot schools with the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative 	<p>A sample team composition is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District PS/RtI Coordinator • District PBS Coordinator • District reading, math, and behavior personnel • District general and special education personnel • District student services personnel
<p>School Based Leadership Team (SBLT)</p> <p>See the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) RtI Blueprints for Implementation: School Building Level available at http://www.nasdse.org/</p>	<p>Develop a school implementation plan. The school based team will become “trainers” and “coaches” for the school staff and will be responsible for school-wide implementation.</p>	<p>A Sample team composition is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School PS/RtI coach • School PBS coach • School reading, math, and behavior specialists • School general and special education personnel • School-based student services personnel • School administrator
<p>Advisory Group</p>	<p>Provide on-going stakeholder input</p>	<p>Representatives from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Implementation Teams (district contacts, coaches, etc.) • Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) • Florida Center for Research – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (FCR-STEM) • Early Childhood Association of Florida (ECA) • Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) • Florida Association of School Administrators

		<p>(FASA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Educators Association (FEA) • Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) • Family Network for Students with Disabilities (FND) • Florida Association of Student Services Administrators (FASSA)
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Future Activities Related to Policy Development

The following activities will be initiated:

- **Laws:** The following laws will require revision to support RtI principles.
 - Student Progression (s.1008.25 F.S.)
 - School Improvement (s.1008.33 F.S. and/or 1008.345 F.S.)

- **Rules:** The following State Board of Education Rule will require revision to support RtI principles:
 - School Improvement (6A-1.09981, FAC.)

- **Policies:** Policies related to the following areas will require revision to support RtI principles.
 - Student Progression Plan Integration (Progress Monitoring Plans)
 - K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan Integration
 - District RtI Implementation Plans
 - Compliance Self-Assessments
 - Alternative Education
 - English Language Learners
 - Juvenile Justice
 - Programs for Students who are Gifted
 - Annual District Assistance and Intervention Plans for D and F Schools
 - Annual District Improvement Plans (Title I Mandate)
 - Charter School Requirements
 - Private School Collaborations
 - Data Management (A technology for collecting and reporting data within an RtI system must be established and maintained. Potential actions for this purpose may include the expansion of the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) to incorporate both math and behavioral data.)

Funding Considerations

When planning for training and ongoing implementation, districts should anticipate fiscal needs in relation to, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Substitutes for staff to participate in training
- Release time for staff for ongoing collaboration, planning, and implementation
- Registration fees for professional development as needed
- Resource needs: review of core curriculum and assessment practices, review of schoolwide behavioral practices, interventions, progress monitoring tools, coaching support, etc.
- Annual revision of School Improvement Plans
- Annual Needs Assessment Process

Districts have the responsibility and flexibility to align available resources to support the full implementation of their RtI activities. Districts are encouraged to plan for the possible use of the following funding sources to support training and implementation of the critical plan components. District funds must be used for appropriate instruction and intervention practices in support of RtI to include:

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

Potential Funding Sources:

Title I, Title II, Title III

Title funds, under certain circumstances, can be used to help support the district RtI activities. The cost of professional development can be shared among several federal programs. Because the state is not mandating particular interventions, resources, and materials—and districts have the flexibility to choose district-appropriate interventions, resources, and materials—Title I paid staff can assist in working with identified students to provide intervening services, and resources and materials may be shared among programs. Title II funds designated for professional development could be used to support RtI implementation. Title III funds may be used to support supplemental services for English Language Learners (ELL).

Reading First Grants

Reading First grants assist Florida school districts and schools to implement proven methods of scientifically based reading instruction in classrooms to prevent reading difficulties in grades K-3. This competitive sub-grant process ensures that Florida school districts meet the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Reading First federal legislation and Florida's state grant application.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Districts allocate part of their IDEA, Part B, flow-through funds for professional development. This allocation may be used for training to support implementation of the RtI plan. Districts may also use up to 15 percent of special education funds to support implementation of the RtI plan (i.e., to develop and implement scientific, research-based interventions for students in grades K-12 not identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment). Those districts determined to have significant disproportionality based on race/ethnicity in the identification, placement, or discipline of students with disabilities must use 15 percent of their funds for this purpose.

Research-based Reading Instruction Allocation (s. 1011.62 F.S.)

The Research-based Reading Instruction Allocation is provided through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), ensuring that reading is funded annually as a part of the public school funding formula. To receive this reading funding, districts must write a K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan detailing the role of administration, professional development, assessment, curriculum, and instruction in the improvement of student learning.

Annual School Improvement Allocations to all School Advisory Councils (state funds)

All schools in a district must have an approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) designed to achieve the state education priorities and student proficiency on the Sunshine State Standards. Each plan must address student achievement goals and strategies based on state and school district proficiency standards and include an accurate, data-based analysis of student achievement and other school performance data. School Advisory Councils are allocated funds every year to develop and implement SIPs. These state funds could be used to provide professional development on RtI, pay for substitutes so that faculty can attend RtI training, provide student monitoring system costs, etc., provided that RtI is included in a goal, objective, or strategy of the SIP.

Application of RtI to English Language Learners

A challenge facing educators is the difficulty in determining an English Language Learner's (ELL) actual learning potential using standardized intelligence assessments and testing procedures. Educators often misinterpret ELL's lack of full proficiency in English as low intelligence (Oller, 1991) or as a language or learning disability (Langdon, 1989). RtI models hold promise for preventing academic failure by providing support for culturally and linguistically diverse students within the general education environment. Ideally, this will decrease the number of ELLs who are inappropriately referred to and placed in special education (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003).

Application of RtI to Special Education Eligibility

The successful implementation of RtI principles encompasses general education initiatives first and special education application second. RtI has received considerable attention from practicing educators since its inclusion as one criterion for eligibility for specific learning disabilities in the statute and regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. In Florida, RtI is part of the eligibility process for the Emotional and/or Behavior Disorders (E/BD) category, and additional program areas will be revised to include RtI over time. For example, current State Board of Education rules that require the implementation of RtI are presently in development, such as the Proposed Administrative Rule, the Draft Specific Learning Disabilities Rule, and the Draft Language Impairment Rule.

The traditional model of addressing student needs by conducting pre-referral activities as required in the process of finding a student eligible for special education is based on a "wait to fail" practice that self-identifies students. The problem with this model is that once a student is identified, typically the gap between student performance and grade-level skill requirements is too great (more than two years) to respond successfully (close the gap) based on the level of intervention resources available in schools. The RtI model is more equitable, efficient, and cost-effective in the long term than other models designed to promote benchmark performance for all students.

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

Florida recognizes that some districts are currently further along in the implementation of RtI than others and processes may vary accordingly. Further development and refinement of technical assistance for the implementation of RtI and its role in eligibility determination will continue through the state advisory group comprised of representatives from key stakeholders.

Appendix A

Three-tier Model of School Supports Incorporating the Problem-solving Process

ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

Tier 3: Comprehensive & Intensive *Students who need individualized interventions.*

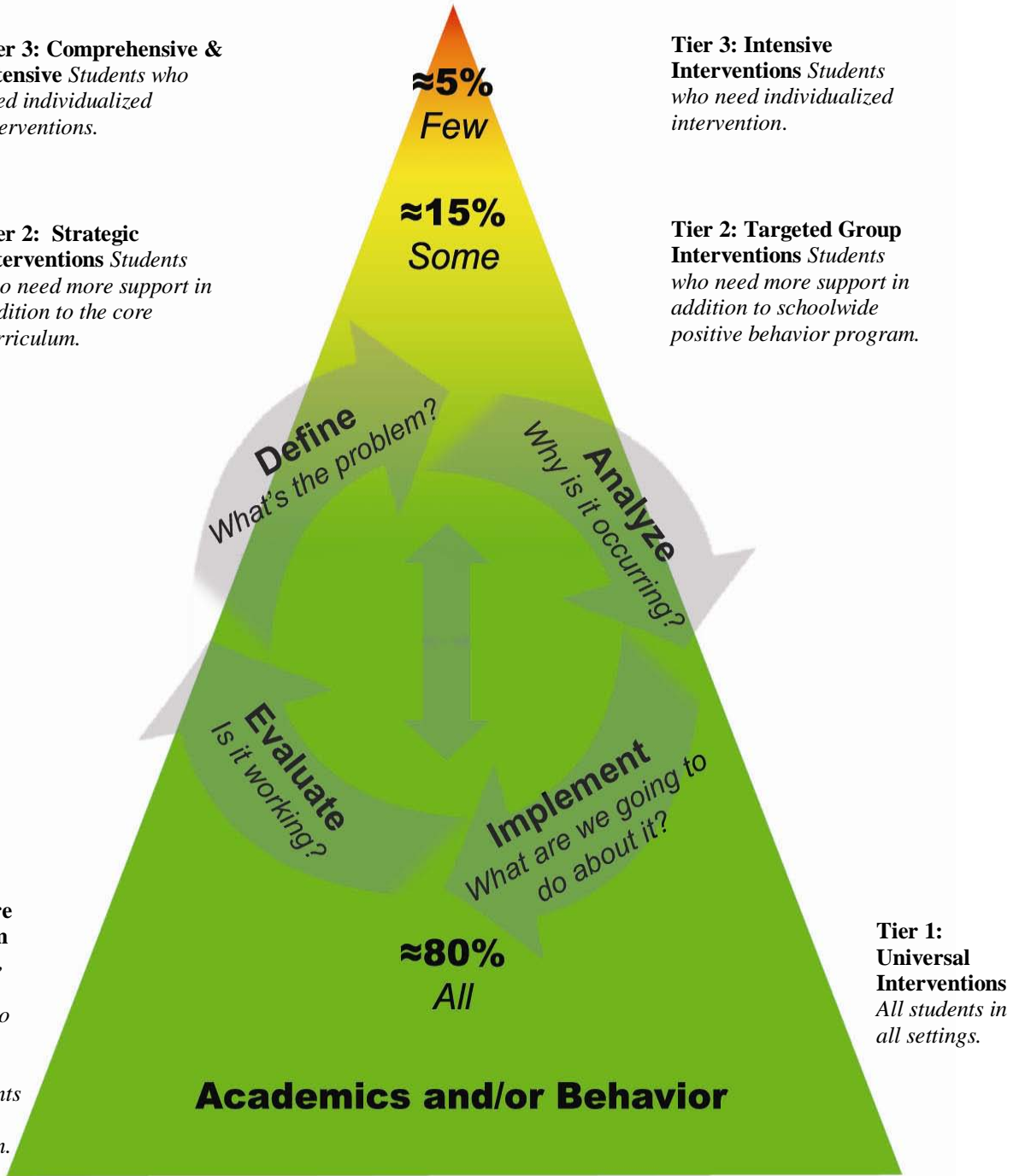
Tier 2: Strategic Interventions *Students who need more support in addition to the core curriculum.*

Tier 1: Core Curriculum *All students, including students who require curricular enhancements for acceleration.*

BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions *Students who need individualized intervention.*

Tier 2: Targeted Group Interventions *Students who need more support in addition to schoolwide positive behavior program.*



Appendix B

Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation (SAPSI)*

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment

Directions:

In responding to each item below, please use the following response scale:

Not Started (*N*) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)

In Progress (*I*) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)

Achieved (*A*) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

Maintaining (*M*) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

For each item below, please write the letter of the option (N, I, A, M) that best represents your School-Based Leadership Team’s response in the column labeled “Status”. In the column labeled “Comments/Evidence”, please write any comments, explanations and/or evidence that are relevant to your team’s response. When completing the items on the SAPSI, the team should base its responses on the grade levels being targeted for implementation by the school.

<u>Consensus: Comprehensive Commitment and Support</u>	Status	Comments/Evidence
1. District level leadership provides active commitment and support (e.g., meets to review data and issues at least twice each year).		
2. The school leadership provides training, support and active involvement (e.g., principal is actively involved in School-Based Leadership Team meetings).		
3. Faculty/staff support and are actively involved with problem solving/RtI (e.g., one of top 3 goals of the School Improvement Plan, 80% of faculty document support, 3-year timeline for implementation available).		
4. A School-Based Leadership Team is established and represents the roles of an administrator, facilitator, data mentor, content specialist, parent, and teachers from representative areas (e.g., general ed., special ed.)		
5. Data are collected (e.g., beliefs survey, satisfaction survey) to assess level of commitment and impact of PS/RtI on faculty/staff.		

Additional Comments/Evidence:

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment (Cont'd)

- Scale:** Not Started (*N*) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)
In Progress (*I*) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)
Achieved (*A*) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)
Maintaining (*M*) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

<u>Infrastructure Development: Data Collection and Team Structure</u>	Status	Comments/Evidence
6. School-wide data (e.g., DIBELS, Curriculum-Based Measures, Office Discipline Referrals) are collected through an efficient and effective systematic process.		
7. Statewide and other databases (e.g., Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network [PMRN], School-Wide Information System [SWIS]) are used to make data-based decisions.		
8. School-wide data are presented to staff after each benchmarking session (e.g., staff meetings, team meetings, grade-level meetings).		
9. School-wide data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of core academic programs.		
10. School-wide data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of core behavior programs.		
11. Curriculum-Based Measurement (e.g., DIBELS) data are used in conjunction with other data sources to identify students needing targeted group interventions and individualized interventions for academics.		
12. Office Disciplinary Referral data are used in conjunction with other data sources to identify students needing targeted group interventions and individualized interventions for behavior.		
13. Data are used to evaluate the effectiveness (RtI) of Tier 2 intervention programs.		
14. Individual student data are utilized to determine response to Tier 3 interventions.		
15. Special Education Eligibility determination is made using the RtI model for the following ESE programs:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) b. Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) 		

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment (Cont'd)

- Scale:** Not Started (*N*) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)
In Progress (*I*) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)
Achieved (*A*) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)
Maintaining (*M*) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

<u>Infrastructure Development: Data Collection and Team Structure (Cont'd)</u>	Status	Comments/Evidence
16. The school staff has a process to select evidence-based practices.		
a. Tier 1		
b. Tier 2		
c. Tier 3		
17. The School-Based Leadership Team has a regular meeting schedule for problem-solving activities.		
18. The School-Based Leadership Team evaluates target student's/students' RtI at regular meetings.		
19. The School-Based Leadership Team involves parents.		
20. The School-Based Leadership Team has regularly scheduled data day meetings to evaluate Tier 1 and Tier 2 data.		

Additional Comments/Evidence:

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment (Cont'd)

- Scale:** Not Started (*N*) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)
In Progress (*I*) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)
Achieved (*A*) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)
Maintaining (*M*) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

<u>Implementation:</u> <i>Three-Tiered Intervention System and Problem-Solving Process</i>	Status	Comments/Evidence
21. The school has established a three-tiered system of service delivery.		
a. Tier 1 Academic Core Instruction clearly identified.		
b. Tier 1 Behavioral Core Instruction clearly identified.		
c. Tier 2 Academic Supplemental Instruction/Programs clearly identified.		
d. Tier 2 Behavioral Supplemental Instruction/Programs clearly identified.		
e. Tier 3 Academic Intensive Strategies/Programs are evidence-based.		
f. Tier 3 Behavioral Intensive Strategies/Programs are evidence-based.		
22. Teams (e.g., School-Based Leadership Team, Problem-Solving Team, Intervention Assistance Team) implement effective problem solving procedures including:		
a. Problem is defined as a data-based discrepancy (GAP Analysis) between what is expected and what is occurring (includes peer and benchmark data).		
b. Replacement behaviors (e.g., reading performance targets, homework completion targets) are clearly defined.		
c. Problem analysis is conducted using available data and evidence-based hypotheses.		
d. Intervention plans include evidence-based (e.g., research-based, data-based) strategies.		
e. Intervention support personnel are identified and scheduled for all interventions.		

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment (Cont'd)

- Scale:** Not Started (*N*) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)
In Progress (*I*) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)
Achieved (*A*) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)
Maintaining (*M*) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

<u>Implementation: Three-Tiered Intervention System and Problem-Solving Process (Cont'd)</u>	Status	Comments/Evidence
f. Intervention integrity is documented.		
g. Response to intervention is evaluated through systematic data collection.		
h. Changes are made to intervention based on student response.		
i. Parents are routinely involved in implementation of interventions.		

Additional Comments/Evidence:

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment (Cont'd)

- Scale:** Not Started (*N*) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)
In Progress (*I*) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)
Achieved (*A*) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)
Maintaining (*M*) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

<u>Implementation:</u> <i>Monitoring and Action Planning</i>	Status	Comments/Evidence
23. A strategic plan (implementation plan) exists and is used by the School-Based Leadership Team to guide implementation of PS/RtI.		
24. The School-Based Leadership Team meets at least twice each year to review data and implementation issues.		
25. The School-Based Leadership Team meets at least twice each year with the District Leadership Team to review data and implementation issues.		
26. Changes are made to the implementation plan as a result of school and district leadership team data-based decisions.		
27. Feedback on the outcomes of the PS/RtI Project is provided to school-based faculty and staff at least yearly.		

Additional Comments/Evidence:

*Adapted from the IL-ASPIRE SAPSI v. 1.6 Center for School Evaluation, Intervention and Training (CSEIT)
 Loyola University, Chicago

Appendix C

Critical Components of District RtI Plan

NOTE: Each of these components should address Tier 1, 2 and 3 levels of implementation.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Self-assessment (SA): Items on the SAPSI that inform critical components</i></p>
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- I. Infrastructure (SA 1,2,4)**
 - a. Establish a District-Based Leadership Team to guide RtI plan development and implementation
 - b. Establish School-Based Leadership Team in participating schools to support school-based implementation.

- II. Components of the Plan: Multi-Year Plan (3-4 Years) organized around Consensus, Infrastructure Development, and Implementation Guidelines**
 - a. Consensus (SA 3,5)**
 - i. Legal and best practices basis
 - ii. District/building data evaluating effectiveness of core instruction
 - b. Infrastructure (SA 6-20)**
 - i. Data availability and analysis
 - ii. Evidence-based interventions (Tiers 2 and 3—academic and behavior)
 - iii. Intervention support, integrity, and documentation
 - iv. Integration of the tiers
 - c. Implementation (SA 21-27)**
 - i. Policies and procedures
 - ii. Decision rules
 - iii. Intervention effectiveness evaluation
 - iv. Special education eligibility

- III. Resources for the Plan**
 - a. Professional development
 - b. Coaching
 - c. Technical assistance

- IV. Plan Evaluation (SA 24-27)**
 - a. Evaluation model
 - b. Data sources and personnel

Appendix D

Florida’s Response to Intervention (RtI): Core Supports Network

The Response to Intervention (RtI) model is a multi-tiered approach to providing services and interventions to all students at increasing levels of intensity based on progress monitoring and data analysis. To accomplish the vision for statewide implementation of RtI in Florida, a system of policy, professional development, and aligned resources must be created and enhanced. To support the efforts of multiple statewide organizations and projects, three core projects funded through the Florida Department of Education collaborate to promote schoolwide practices that ensure the highest possible student achievement in both academic and behavioral pursuits under the framework of RtI.

Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/	Problem-solving/Response to Intervention State Pilot Project http://floridarti.usf.edu/	Response to Intervention’s Teaching Learning Connections (TBA)
Common Efforts: Systems-Change, Building Capacity, Scaling-Up, Program Evaluation, Data-based Decision-making, Fidelity of Implementation, Research and Evaluation		
Focus: Student Behavior	Focus: Research and Program Evaluation	Focus: Academic Performance
Activities: Training, Support, Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training: Provide training for implementation of schoolwide, classroom, targeted group and individual student interventions • Support: Provide support to districts and their schools for building capacity and scaling-up evidence-based practices • Evaluation: Conducting school, district, and statewide evaluation and research of PBS activities 	Activities: Policy, Training, Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: Support the DOE in the development of policy, regulations, and technical assistance papers regarding the implementation of RtI practices for general and special education implementation • Training: Provide training and technical assistance support for implementation of district- and school-based RtI practices at school, classroom, and individual student levels through demonstration and statewide training initiatives • Evaluation: Conduct student, school, district, and statewide evaluation and research of RtI activities. 	Activities: Training, School Improvement, Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training: Provide training and technical assistance support for implementation of evidence-based instructional practices in the specific content areas of in literacy and mathematics • School Improvement: Collaborate with DOE teams in scaling-up evidence-based practices • Evaluation: Conduct student, classroom school, district, and statewide evaluation and research of high fidelity implementation of evidence-based instructional practices
PIs: Dr. Don Kincaid and Dr. Heather George	PIs: Dr. George Batsche and Dr. Michael Curtis	PI: Dr. Mary Little
FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS: Promote the use of the data-based, decision-making model to develop, implement with high fidelity and evaluate evidence-based instruction and interventions that result in improved academic and behavior outcomes for all students. Ensure that families, students, and educators are involved partners in ensuring student success through visionary leadership within one proactive, seamless system.		

These Projects are funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES), through federal discretionary dollars under the Individuals with Disabilities Education ACT (IDEA).

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Florida Department of Education
Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner