

Hardee District Schools

**Problem Solving/Response to Intervention
(PS/RtI)**

**Multi-Tiered System of Student Supports
(MTSSS)**

Manual



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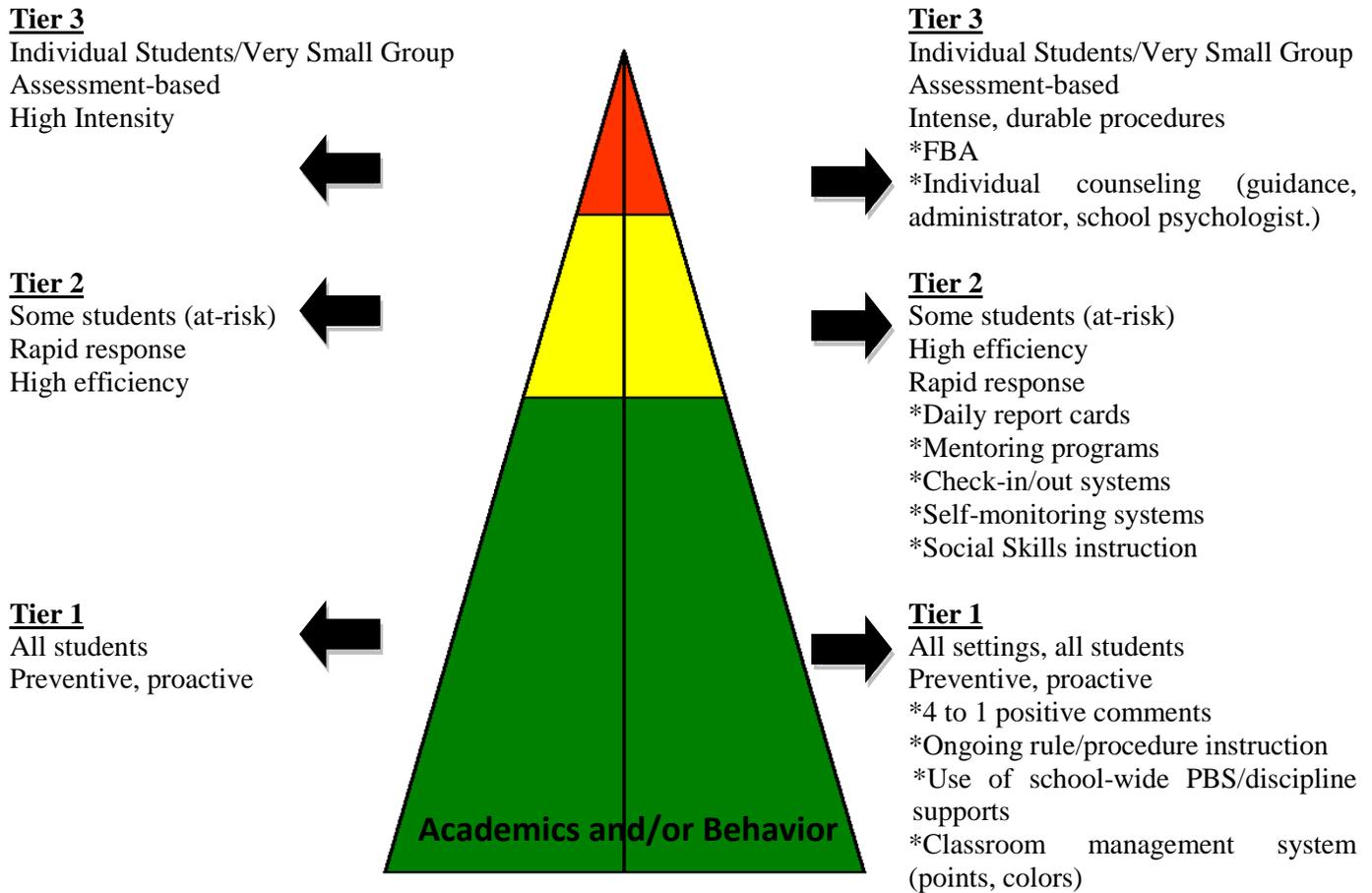
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Introduction to “RtI”

Response to intervention (“RtI”), simply defined, is a process of documenting changes in learning and/or behavior as a result of evidence-based interventions. It is an ongoing process of using student performance and other data to guide instructional and behavioral decisions. Response to Intervention utilizes a multi-tiered problem solving approach for service delivery.

Multi-Tier Model



Why Use the Response to Intervention Model?

The following conclusions are the collective result of research referenced in Technical Assistance Paper 12740 from the Florida Department of Education:

- Students receive interventions based on reliable and valid data earlier than in the “wait to fail” scenario (discrepancy requirement);
- “RtI” identifies specific skill deficits, whereas teacher referrals are more frequently general statements of need;
- Scientifically-based interventions are used more frequently and earlier;
- Racial disproportionality is reduced in programs for students with learning disabilities and mental handicaps;
- Greater numbers of at –risk students achieve benchmarks;
- Adequate yearly progress (benchmarks) and disaggregated data (NCLB) move the focus of attention to student progress, not student labels;
- Building principals and superintendents want to know if students are achieving benchmarks, regardless of whether the student is served in general education, gifted education or as a student with a disability;
- Placements in a program defined by a label for a category of special education services do not guarantee that students will be exposed to interventions that maximize their rate of progress;
- Effective interventions result from a combination of valid and reliable information from assessment and from good problem solving;
- Progress monitoring is done best with valid and reliable assessments that are sensitive to small changes in student academic and social behavior;
- Interventions must be evidence-based (NCLB/IDEA);
- Response to intervention “RtI” is the best measure of problem severity;
- Program eligibility (initial and continued) decisions are best made on “RtI” because it links directly to instruction;
- Staff training and support(e.g., coaching) improve intervention skills; and
- Tiered implementation of interventions improves service efficiency and decreases delayed services due to the discrepancy requirement.

How Should the Three Intervention Tiers of “RtI” be implemented?

Each intervention tier of the “RtI” model defines the level and intensity of services required for a student to progress. A student is described as receiving tier one, tier two, or tier three services. The three intervention tiers are on a continuum that is fluid; a student may receive services with tier 2, then move forward to receive more intensive tier 3 services or backward to receive less intensive tier 1 services. 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 realistic time periods required for the target skills to develop. It is possible that students will receive interventions in more than one tier at any given time.

***Tier 1:** These interventions are universal and by definition are supports that are available to all students. They are preventive and proactive in nature with 75-85% of students responding to these supports without the need for additional interventions. These supports represent the intervention strategies that instructors are likely to put into place at the first indication a student is struggling either academically or behaviorally.

***Tier 2:** These interventions are tailored to the unique needs of smaller groups of students who are struggling either academically or behaviorally. They are reserved for students with significant skills gaps (academic or behavioral) who have not responded successfully to Tier 1 interventions. Statistically 10-15% of students may require Tier 2 interventions.

***Tier 3:** These interventions are the most intensive academic and behavioral supports available in a school setting and are reserved for students with chronic and severe needs. Statistically 1-5% of students may require Tier 3 interventions.



Chapter 1:

A student that needs Tier 3 intervention continuously may require special education services.

This is an example of how the Tier system would organize reading instruction. Note that as the Tiers progress, the time that a student spends in reading instruction increases, the instruction becomes more specifically focused, and progress monitoring increases in frequency.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Time	90	120	180
Curricular Focus	All 6 Areas: fluency phonics phonemic awareness comprehension vocabulary oral language	Less than 6	3 or less
Curricular Breadth	Core	Core + Supplemental	Core + Supplemental + Intensive
Frequency of Progress Monitoring	3 or 4 Times a Year	Bi-monthly or More Frequently	Weekly to Daily

Chapter 1: A Closer Look at the Essential Components

The core features of the “RtI” process are as follows:

1. High quality, research-based instruction and behavioral support in general education.
2. Universal screening of academics and behavior in order to determine which students need closer monitoring or additional interventions.
3. Multiple tiers of increasingly intense scientific, research-based interventions that are matched to student need.
4. Use of a collaborative approach by school staff for development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.
5. Continuous monitoring of student progress during the interventions, using objective information to determine if students are meeting goals.
6. Follow-up measures providing information that the intervention was implemented as intended and with appropriate consistency.
7. Documentation of parent involvement throughout the process.

Universal Screening

Universal screening of all students occurs at least three times per year (usually at the beginning, middle, and near the end of the school year). The data obtained from these universal screenings must identify which students are proficient in the target skill, which students are developing the skill, and which are deficient in the skill. The data are then utilized to make decisions about how to create instructional change so that all students reach proficiency and which students need more intensive interventions.

Please see the Appendix for examples of Universal Screening tools.

Tiered Interventions

Each intervention tier of the “RtI” model 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 tiers of interventions are on a continuum that is fluid, in that a student may move up and down within the tiers depending on the frequency and intensity of services required to sustain progress through the curriculum. The student’s level of need dictates the level of support that is provided. The actual length of time that an intervention is implemented depends on the student’s response to the intervention, in conjunction with realistic time periods required for a target skill to develop. It is also possible for a student to receive interventions in more than one tier at the same time. A student’s level of risk is assessed based on how much of a gap exists between the student’s actual level of performance and the performance of peers who are achieving benchmarks.

Tier 1

Core classroom or universal instruction

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

Tier 1 level instruction involves:

- Scientifically-based core instructional programs delivered by highly qualified teachers to ALL students
- At least 75% of students are meeting instructional expectations (scoring 70% or above) or achieving prescribed benchmarks as evidenced by progress monitoring measures, class average, and grade-level average.
- Universal screening at least three times a year (e.g. FAIR)
- Monitoring and graphic documentation of the rate of academic growth or behavioral improvement of all students quarterly or more frequently
- Instructional techniques for all students in the classroom through whole or small-group differentiated instruction provided by general education teacher(s)
- Identification of students who continue to lag behind the group on critical measures of performance for additional supports at Tier 2

See Appendix for a list of possible Tier 1 interventions.

Tier 2

Supplemental support and interventions

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 2 level instruction involves:

- Continuation of Tier 1 interventions
- Conducting individual screenings (e.g. cold fluency reads, math minutes, etc.)
- Identifying specific strengths and weaknesses of individual students
- Addressing barriers to learning, e.g. lack of instruction, poor attendance, limited English proficiency, environmental concerns, etc.
- Increasing the intensity or frequency of the interventions and/or decreasing the size of the group receiving instruction
- Introduction of supplemental interventions provided primarily by general education teachers

- Narrow the focus of the interventions to the most deficient areas
- More frequent progress monitoring (monthly or biweekly)

See Appendix for a list of possible Tier 2 interventions.

Tier 3

Intensive supports and interventions

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.

Tier 3 level instruction involves:

- Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions continue
- Planning and providing very specific content instruction targeted to individual needs
- Increasing intensity or frequency of the interventions and/or decreasing further the size of the group receiving intervention (may be one-on-one if necessary)
- Frequent progress monitoring (weekly or more often)
- Interventions may be provided by general education and ESE certified personnel
- Interventions may be more customized to individual needs

The preceding information is captured in the table below.

Table 2. Example of What Occurs for Reading in Each Tier

	Tier 1: Core Class Instruction	Tier 2 Supplemental Instruction	Tier 3 Intensive Intervention
Focus	For all students	For students with marked reading difficulties, and who have not responded to Tier 1 efforts	For students with marked difficulties and who have not responded adequately to Tier 1 and Tier 2 efforts
Instruction	Evidence-based, differentiated, comprehensive instruction on students’ instructional level	Evidence-based, comprehensive instruction on students’ instructional level targeting assessed needs	Sustained, intensive, scientifically-based instruction targeting diagnosed needs

Grouping	Multiple grouping formats to differentiate instruction and meet student needs	Homogeneous small group instruction (1:3, 1:4, or 1:5)	Homogeneous small group instruction (1:1 – 1:3)
Time	90 minutes per day, preferably more	Minimum of 30 minutes per day in small group in addition to 90 minutes of core reading instruction in the classroom	Minimum of two 30-minute sessions per day in small group or 1:1 in addition to 90 minutes of core reading instruction
Assessment	Universal screening and benchmark assessment at beginning, middle, and end of academic year	Progress monitoring monthly or more often on target skill to ensure adequate progress and learning	Progress monitoring weekly or more often on target skills to ensure adequate progress and learning
Interventionist	General education teacher	Personnel determined by school (e.g., a classroom teacher, specialized reading teacher, external interventionist)	Personnel determined by the school (e.g., a classroom teacher, a specialized reading teacher, or external interventionist)
Setting	General education classroom	Appropriate setting designated by the school; may be within or outside of the classroom	Appropriate setting designated by the school
Adapted from J. McCook PowerPoint: <i>Implementing a Response to Intervention Model</i> . Oct. 2006			

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

Data and Progress Monitoring

Student intervention data is vital to successful problem solving. The frequency of data and the types of data will vary according to the type of problem, the severity of the problem, and the nature of the school’s response. There are essentially three types of data used in the “RtI” process:

1. Baseline data that compares the student’s current level of functioning to performance standards and/or the performance of peers (classroom and/or grade level),
2. Progress monitoring data that tells us a student’s rate of learning (graphs with trend lines),
and
3. Diagnostic information that will provide information about specific skills acquisition.

Baseline data includes:

1. The gap between the student’s current performance and the performance standard, **and**
2. The gap between the student’s current performance and the performance of classroom and/or grade-level peers. Grade level data is preferable because it includes a larger pool of information, but class average is acceptable when grade-level data is not conveniently available.

Academic baseline data is generally obtained via the universal screenings done at the beginning of each school year. Students’ performance is compared to some pre-established benchmark and to the performance of like peers in both the individual classroom and/or the grade as a whole.

Behavioral baseline data is obtained through a variety of means. Data from the school wide discipline plan, Positive Behavior Support, and Genesis tracking system may be used in conjunction with data gathered by other individuals working with the student. Please see Chapter 4 for more information regarding behavior.

Fidelity of Instruction:

If at least 75% of the students in a particular classroom or a specific grade are meeting academic and/or behavioral benchmarks, then fidelity of instruction will be presumed. However, if ***less than*** 75% of a particular classroom or specific grade are meeting benchmarks, it may be presumed as an instructional issue and any interventions should focus on the classroom or grade at large rather than on individual students. *Individual students cannot proceed into the upper tiers of the “RtI” process until at least 75% of classroom and grade-level peers are meeting benchmarks via Tier 1 core instruction, unless an administrator certifies in writing that the instruction is being delivered with fidelity.*

Progress Monitoring: provides an ongoing systematic method of collecting data to determine the academic or behavioral performance of a student. It consists of quick, brief probes designed to gauge progress toward grade-levels goals and to direct instructional changes as needed. Progress monitoring answers three key questions:

1. How fast is the student progressing?
2. How does his or her rate of progress compare to the rate of the rest of the class or grade?
3. Is the student progressing fast enough to catch up to his peers within a reasonable period of time as determined by the PST?

More information on these three questions and how they are answered may be found in a subsequent section of this manual.

Tier 1 Progress Monitoring: consists of the Universal Screening measures administered at least three times per year and is embedded in the district plan. See Appendix for a list of Universal Screening Tools. Hardee District Schools’ “RtI” procedures allow for more frequent progress monitoring at the teacher’s discretion, but more frequent progress monitoring is not required. Tier 1 progress monitoring may also consist of just a pre-test and a post-test, *provided a minimum of 8-12 weeks has transpired between the two.*

Academic interventions **MUST** be implemented for a minimum of eight weeks. However, if, after four weeks, a negative response can be documented, the intervention may be terminated and a second intervention attempted for an additional amount of time. In all cases in which a questionable or positive response is observed, academic interventions must be implemented and documented for a *minimum* of 8-12 weeks before enough data exists to determine its efficacy.

Tier 2 Progress Monitoring: consists of assessments specific to the student and the interventions identified to address that particular student's needs. Progress monitoring in Tier 2 occurs more frequently than in Tier 1, at least monthly and oftentimes biweekly or weekly. As with Tier 1, academic interventions must be implemented and documented for a *minimum* of 8-12 weeks before enough data exists to determine the efficacy of an intervention, unless a negative response is documented after the first four weeks, in which case, the initial intervention may be terminated and a new intervention attempted for additional weeks.

Please see Appendix for more information regarding Tier 2 progress monitoring.

Tier 3 Progress Monitoring: consists of assessments specific to the student and the interventions customized to address that student's needs. Standard protocols (research-based standardized interventions that are designed for groups of students with a specific skill deficit) are somewhat less common in Tier 3, although some may still be applicable if specifically designed for that intensive level of intervention. Individualized interventions, which are more customized to the individual needs of a particular student and which may or may not be research-based, are sometimes implemented in Tier 3. Progress monitoring in Tier 3 occurs more frequently than in Tier 1, at least biweekly and oftentimes weekly. As with Tiers 1 and 2, academic interventions must be implemented and documented for a *minimum* of 8-12 weeks before enough data exists to determine the efficacy of an intervention, unless a negative response is documented after the first four weeks, in which case, the initial intervention may be terminated and a new intervention attempted.

Please see Chapter 4 for more information regarding Tier 3 progress monitoring.

Interventions at Tier 3 closely resemble interventions used in special education as far as intensity, frequency, and duration, but they are still considered to be general education interventions because they are usually delivered by general education personnel and are provided to students who are not already determined to be ESE eligible. In some cases, these interventions may be implemented in consultation with special education personnel, as they have the knowledge and expertise to deliver them with the fidelity required. This also helps to rule out any concerns that the student's difficulties may be the result of a lack of effective instruction.

Responses to Intervention

There are three possible responses to interventions: 1) a positive response, 2) a negative response, or 3) a questionable response.

❖ A Positive Response is defined as one in which:

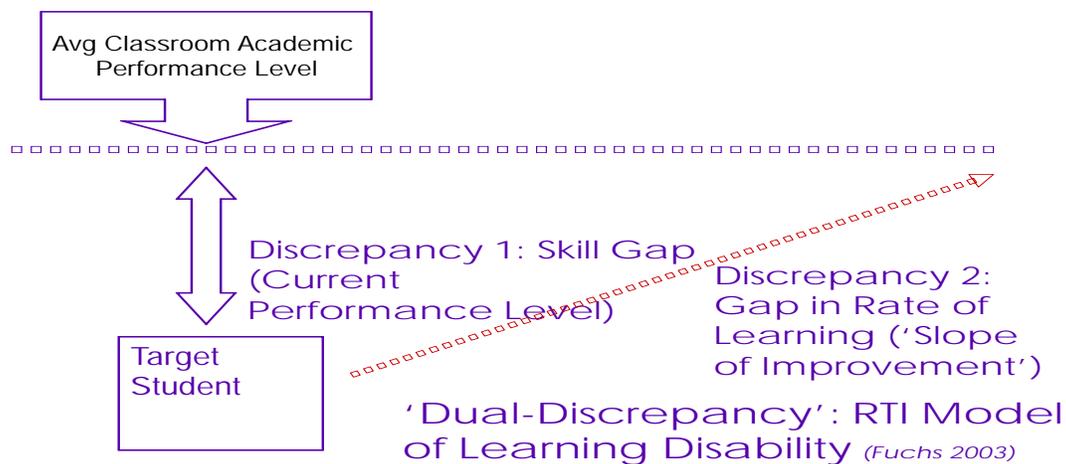
- The gap between the identified student and the peer group is closing **and**,
 - The team can estimate the point at which the identified student will reach the academic or behavioral target if the rate of progress remains relatively constant--even if this is long range
- ❖ A Negative Response is defined as one in which:
 - The gap between the target student and peer group continues to widen with minimal to no change in rate.
 - ❖ A Questionable Response is defined as one in which:
 - The rate at which the gap is widening slows considerably, but the gap is still widening **or**,
 - The gap stops widening but closure does not occur

A decision tree to assist the team in utilizing data to make appropriate decisions can be found in the Appendix.

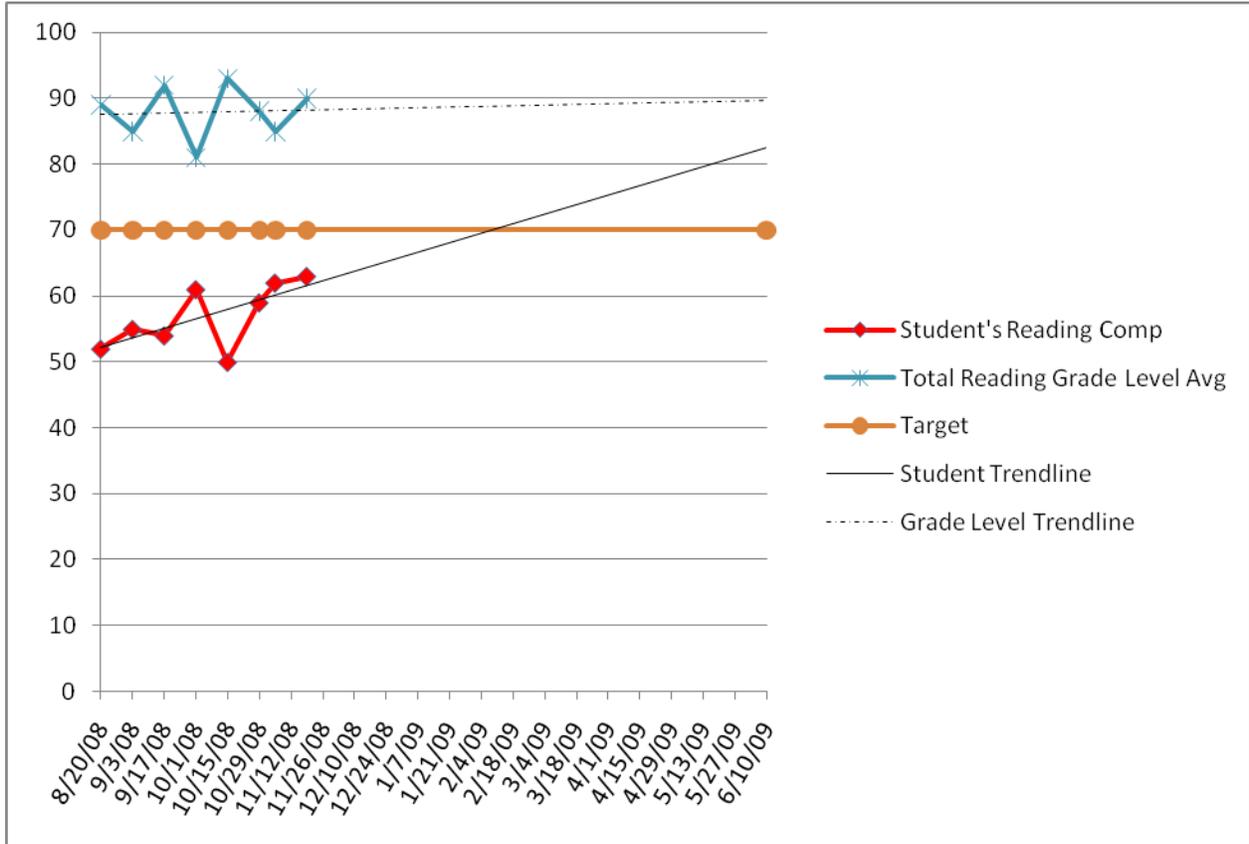
What does “RTI” look like when applied to an individual student?

A widely accepted method, and the one adopted by Hardee District Schools, for determining whether a student has a Learning Disability under “RtI” is the ‘dual discrepancy model’ (Fuchs, 2003).

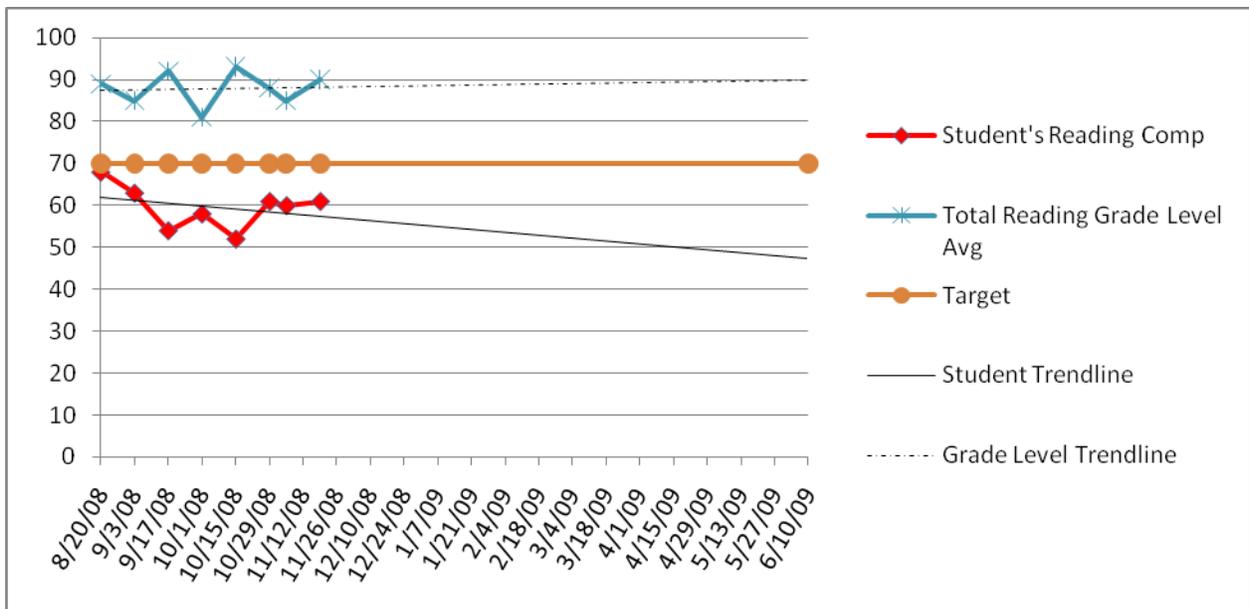
- ❖ Discrepancy 1: The student is found to be performing academically at a level significantly (20% or more) below that of his or her typical peers (discrepancy in initial skills or performance), **and**
- ❖ Discrepancy 2: Despite the implementation of one or more well-designed, well-implemented interventions tailored specifically for the student, he or she fails to ‘close the gap’ with classmates (discrepancy in rate of learning relative to peers).



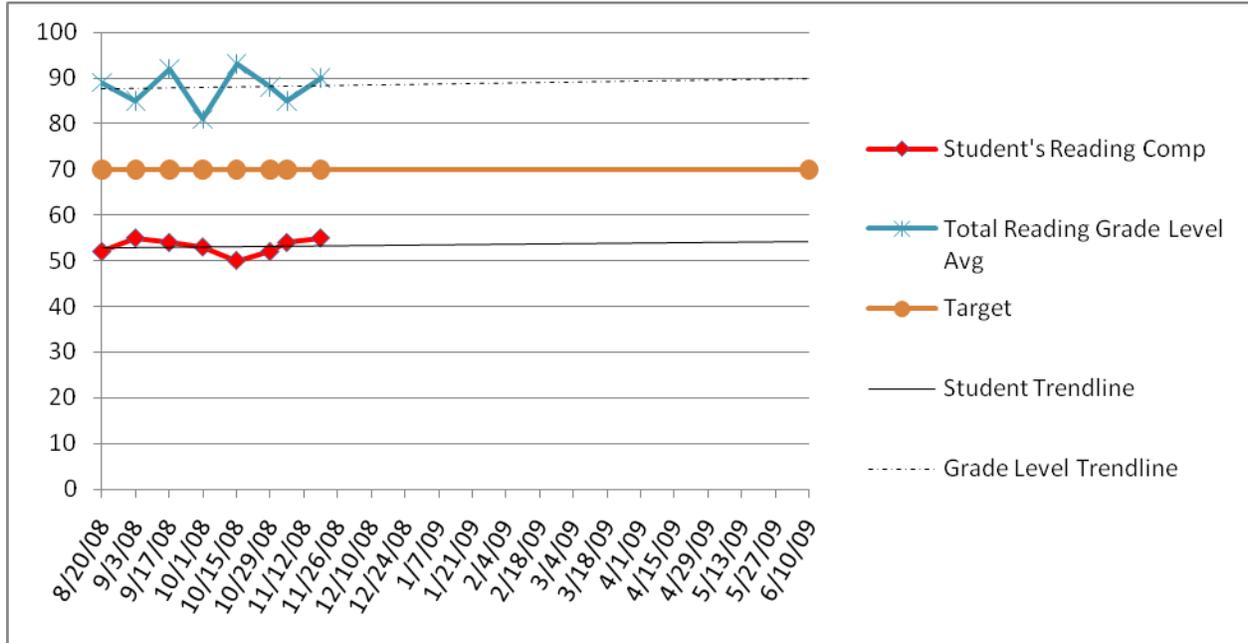
A positive response will result in a progress monitoring graph that looks something like this:



A negative response will result in a progress monitoring graph that looks something like this:



A questionable response will result in a progress monitoring graph that looks something like this:



Once the process is understood, the next step is to learn more about the Problem Solving Teams (PST) and how they function. The next chapter goes into more details about the composition of the PST, the roles and responsibilities of its members, and how the problem solving process works.

Chapter 2:

Chapter 2: Roles and Responsibilities of the Problem Solving Team

The engine that powers any school-wide Response to Intervention Program is the “RtI” Problem Solving Team (PST). This group of school professionals meets with referring teachers to assist them in identifying their central concerns about struggling students and to design intervention plans to help those students achieve success.

Problem Solving Teams may include but are not limited to: administration, guidance counselors, academic intervention coaches, remediation teachers, staffing specialists, inclusion teachers, speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, and classroom teachers. Individual schools will structure the assignment of responsibilities not designated to specific personnel based on the expertise and talents of their team members. Problem Solving Teams are fluid by nature. The members involved in various meetings will vary dependent upon the needs of the students being addressed at each scheduled meeting.

While each PST will be tailored to match school needs there are essential core principles that are critical to its success and should not be changed. These core elements include:

- **Diverse representation:**
The PST is composed of a mix of educational staff, including teachers. Teams whose membership is truly multidisciplinary possess the breadth of experience and professional skills to find superior solutions for academically and behaviorally challenging children. Also, having classroom instructors on the PST increases its credibility with referring teachers.
- **Collegiality:**
A philosophy must be prevalent that all members at the table provide equally valuable insight into the needs of the child.
- **Structured Problem-Solving:** The PST follows a structured format when analyzing possible reasons for a student’s academic or behavioral difficulties and planning interventions. Adopting a structured problem-solving approach when exploring, defining, and prioritizing the referring teacher’s concerns helps the team make efficient use of time and increases the probability that it will select the right interventions to meet the student’s needs. *(See Appendix J)*
- **School Focus:**
The PST team focuses upon helping the student in the school setting. The team identifies strategies that will benefit the student within the school environment.
- **Research-Based Interventions:**
The PST recommends academic and behavioral strategies that have been researched and found to be effective in school settings. Schools have the responsibility to use scientifically validated intervention methods to prevent wasting time and effort, and to give students the best chance to be successful.

- **Parent Involvement:**
Parents are kept informed of PST meetings and are welcomed as full participants. Parents bring unique and valuable information about their child to PST discussions. They must be invited to attend problem-solving meetings, and every effort should be made to ensure parental participation in the PST meetings. Parents must receive a copy of the “RtI” Parental Notification Letter. The letter must be signed and become a part of the student’s permanent record. If parents cannot attend a meeting, they should be sent a courtesy copy of the student’s intervention plan.



Roles:

There are specific roles that must be filled in order for the PST to function effectively. With the exception of the school psychologist, the personnel assigned to fulfill these roles may vary by school site dependent upon the expertise and availability of personnel.

Coordinator/Facilitator:

Schedules students for PST meetings, manages and monitors paperwork for completion and accuracy. Conducts the PST meeting, ensures problem solving model is followed, documents and records information, asks clarifying questions, manages the pacing of the meeting.

School Psychologist:

Monitors the student’s progress through the “RtI” process to ensure continuity in review of procedural compliance. Serves as the liaison to determine if the expertise of the school psychologist is required to develop strategic interventions at tiers 2 or 3. Determines that PST decisions are adequately supported by data.

Data Analysis:

Format of the data collected will determine the appropriate personnel to provide analysis. This may include: classroom teachers, academic intervention coaches, school psychologists, remediation teachers, speech/language clinicians, inclusion teachers and administrators.

Personnel Providing Information or Expertise:

The nature of the interventions provided for the student will determine the appropriate personnel to provide information and expertise. This may include: classroom teachers, academic intervention coaches, school psychologists, remediation teachers, speech/language clinicians, and administrators.

Responsibilities:

Below is a list of personnel and their possible roles in the “RtI” process. Responsibilities printed in bold print are specifically assigned to these positions.

<i>RESPONSIBILITIES</i>	<i>POSSIBLE ROLES</i>
Administration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets vision for problem solving process • Responsible for allocation of resources • Supports program evaluation • Monitors staff support/climate • Facilitates review of fidelity of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leader
Guidance Counselor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists administration and staff to understand the familial, cultural and community components of students’ response to instruction, learning and academic success. • As determined by school site, may collaborate with teachers to track documentation and schedule students for PST meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator • Facilitator
Academic Intervention Coach	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to select, design, implement, and interprets whole school screening programs and dynamic assessments. • Participates in the design and delivery of professional development. • Supports colleagues through mentoring and close collaboration to provide consistency in reinforcing skills. • Provides expertise on appropriate interventions for identified needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator • Data Analysis • Personnel Providing Information or Expertise • Supports colleagues through mentoring and side by side coaching

School Psychologist	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts Functional Behavior Assessments • Supports the PST in development of individual Behavior Intervention Plans. (As noted in the behavior section of the manual, this will most often occur when the BIP developed at the beginning of Tier 2 is not producing desired results and an adapted behavior plan is being developed at Tier 2) • Observes students in the instructional environment in order to help identify appropriate intervention strategies, to identify barriers to intervention, and to collect response to intervention data. This may occur at Tier 3 if the situation warrants the expertise of the school psychologist, or at an earlier point if deemed necessary. • Provides consistent guidance, monitoring of procedural compliance, and overview of a student’s progress throughout the “RtI” process. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining that PST decisions are adequately supported by data • Engages in ongoing consultation regarding implementation issues as well as individual student needs. • Identifies team training needs and provides, or helps the team obtain, relevant training (including training in applying progress monitoring procedures to decision-making). • Assists staff in interpreting data as part of the ongoing decision-making process. • Evaluates the student’s relevant academic, behavioral, and mental health functioning. • Provides small group Tier 2 interventions for behavior as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis • Personnel Providing Information or Expertise • Collaborates with PST on effective instruction and specific interventions
Staffing Specialists	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor components for compliance after receipt of consent for evaluation • Facilitate eligibility for ESE services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate process for ESE staffing
Speech/Language Pathologists	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the role that language plays in curriculum, assessment, and instruction. • Provide expertise in language, its disorders, and treatment. • Consult and collaborate with teachers to meet the needs of students in initial “RtI” tiers with a specific focus on the relevant language underpinnings of learning and fluency. • Interpret screening and progress assessment results to staff and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis • Personnel Providing Information or Expertise

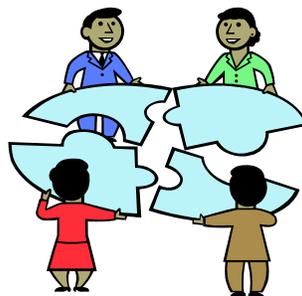
Reading Remediation and Inclusion Teachers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide push-in and/or pull-out intervention for students • Provide expertise on appropriate interventions for identified needs • Serve as a resource and support for the classroom teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis • Personnel Providing Information or Expertise
Classroom Teachers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, implement, document, and analyze evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions. • Differentiate instruction for a diverse classroom. • Engage in ongoing collaboration to address small group and individual student needs. • Collaborate with other school personnel in data collection and analysis. • Collect data within the instructional environment in order to help identify appropriate intervention and to collect response to intervention data. • Maintain log of homeroom students involved in the RtI Process • Notify/contact parent when the student is not responding to Tier 1/core curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis • Personnel Providing Information or Expertise
Parent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative member of the “RtI” team • Provide relevant home/community information • Provides relevant medical/social information • Accesses appropriate community resources • Collaborates with school personnel in implementing interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative partner

Schedule:

PST teams must meet regularly to provide ample opportunities to monitor and review ongoing student progress. Schedules will be unique to school sites based on their structure and needs. Sample schedules reflecting diversity are listed below.

SAMPLE:

FORMAT	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	FACILITATOR	ATTENDEES
Progress Monitoring (PMP) Meeting	To review all students in the classroom and determine those students to be placed on a PMP. Students may be identified in this setting to begin Tier 1 of the “RtI” process.	2 X per Year	Guidance and/or Academic Intervention Coach	Classroom Teachers
FAIR Meetings	To review results of progress monitoring data. Students may be identified in this setting to begin Tier 1 of the “RtI” process.	3X per year	Academic Intervention Coach	Classroom Teachers as a grade level, administrators may opt to attend.
PST Meetings	To monitor and discuss students moving between Tiers in the “RtI” process.	Scheduled as needed	Guidance Counselors	Members of PST appropriate to review. May include: Academic Intervention Coach, School Psychologists, Classroom Teacher, Language Clinician, Remediation and Inclusion Teachers, Parent



<p>RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION: IS IT WORKING?</p>	<p>Determine if interventions were effective.</p>	<p>Interventions used were: _____</p> <p>They were available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole class • Small groups • Individuals <p>Assessments used were: _____</p> <p>Results indicate: _____</p> <p>Next steps are: _____</p>
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Once the site based Problem Solving Team has been established with the appropriate members and an effective schedule developed; the problem solving model will be used to address student needs and determine movement between the tiers, as detailed in the following chapter.



Chapter 3:

Chapter 3: Movement Between the Tiers

The success or failure of the Response to Intervention process rests on several vital components:

1. Effective instruction delivered with fidelity in general education classrooms by highly qualified instructors.
 2. Accurate and timely data compiled graphically and interpreted by someone with the appropriate expertise.
 3. The data is used to target specific skill or behavioral deficits and to make logical and reasonable decisions about an intervention plan.
 4. Intervention plans are written with realistic goals and are implemented for realistic periods of time.
 5. Progress is monitored regularly and revisions made as needed to provide as many opportunities as possible for progress to be made in the regular education setting.
- 1. Effective Instruction Delivered with Fidelity: What Research Based Instruction IS & What it is NOT**

“RtI” is predicated on the belief that all students can learn. Those who have not had access to effective instruction can make satisfactory progress when effective research-based instruction is provided, while those who have a true “learning disability” will not. The requirement for the use of research-based instruction can be found in both the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). Both laws stress the importance of research-based instruction being made available to all students by highly qualified teachers.

For the purposes of this manual, the terms “research-based”, “evidence-based”, and “scientifically-based” will be used interchangeably. Research-based interventions are backed by rigorous evidence, have proven track records, and can prove that they work with the vast majority of students. They consistently produce the same results from one student to the next, target specific skill or behavior deficits, and are replicable over time. While the “home grown” interventions used by many teachers over the years still have their place, most of them are not supported by research, and are thus not acceptable interventions for students in the “RtI” process. Research-based interventions do **NOT** include:

- Shortened assignments
- Additional time on classroom assignments, homework, or tests
- Preferential seating
- Computer activities that have no instructional component, e.g. Reading Counts
- **Retention**
- Referral for ESE (Exceptional Student Education) services

2. Accurate and Timely Data Presented Graphically

While anecdotal or narrative data is preferred by some teachers, and certainly has its uses in the problem-solving process, the emphasis in the “RtI” process is on quantifiable data presented in graph form. Graphs take reams of numbers that may have no discernable pattern and translate them into meaningful data that can then be used to make informed decisions regarding the extent of skill strengths or deficits, the rate of learning, and the effectiveness of interventions.

Prior to the first PST meeting, the teacher must have had at least two conferences with the child’s parent. Preferably, these conferences should have occurred face-to-face, but if that is not possible, phone conferences are acceptable. During these two conferences, at least part of the discussion should focus on any academic or behavioral concerns reported by the teacher and/or the parent. Possible classroom interventions to address those concerns should be developed and discussed with the parent. Parent input regarding intervention development is encouraged.

As soon as those concerns are identified and interventions developed, the teacher should begin gathering data and tracking the student’s progress. **Preferably at the first parent conference, the teacher provides the parent with a copy of the “RtI” Parent Information Letter (see Appendix) explaining the “RtI” process. The parent’s signature is obtained on it verifying that they have been notified that their child may be involved in the “RtI” process if significant academic or behavioral struggles are exhibited during the school year.** If the parent does not attend the parent conference, or if it is done via telephone, a copy of the letter is to be sent home to the parent. The teacher documents on the file copy of the letter that no face-to-face conference occurred, but that a copy of the letter was sent home to make the parent aware that their child may, at some point, become part of the “RtI” process.

If those classroom interventions developed by the parent and the teacher do not produce satisfactory progress, as confirmed by objective data measures, the student may need to be referred for review by the PST (Problem Solving Team) to determine if more intensive interventions are needed to produce satisfactory progress. Please refer to Chapter 3 to learn about the function and composition of the PST.

How the Process Begins: A referral to the PST begins with a conference with the student’s guidance counselor. Certain performance data would be indicative of the need for a referral, such as FAIR, benchmark, BOY and EOY assessment scores in one or more areas that are in the red “High Risk” level, FCAT scores of Level 1 in reading or math, or below the 16th percentile in reading or math. Renaissance reading or math results may also be utilized to assist in determining the appropriateness of a referral. Referrals should never be made to the PST on the basis of concerns as to what *might* happen with a student in the future. PST referrals are based on the here and now, and current data forms the basis for any referrals. If the student begins to struggle at some point in the future, it is at that future time that a referral may be appropriate. Please see Appendix for a sample of the required forms and a copy of the flow chart that illustrates the process.

For the PST #1, certain pieces of information are vital in the graphs presented to the problem-solving team. There is one additional piece of data required in Tier 1 graphs that is not required in graphs for Tiers 2 and 3.

The Tier 1 required data elements are:

1. All dates of progress monitoring for specific skill areas
2. Baseline data for student (performance *prior* to interventions) for each targeted skill not on Tiers 2, 3 graphs
3. 8-12 weeks of progress monitoring data (do NOT include zeroes received due to absences on a progress monitoring date)
4. Grade Level Average AND/OR Class Average for each target skill, whichever is available
5. Percentage of class this is achieving benchmark (or received 70% or above on a PM measure)
6. Trend line for each target skill area identified

The Tier 2 and Tier 3 graphs require the same data elements *except* element #2. Baseline data are no longer required in Tiers 2 and 3 because once the student moves beyond Tier 1, the gap between the target student and his peers is no longer the focus. The focus becomes his *rate of progress*.

Graphing is the responsibility of the classroom or intervention teacher. An excel graphing template is ***recommended***. Graphs made from other graphing programs may not include all the required information, particularly the trend lines. A graphing tutorial is available. To request a tutorial, please contact your school principal, academic intervention coach or school guidance counselor. Typically, teachers will be graphing performance in one or more of the components of reading or math in which the student is showing a deficit. The five components of reading and math include:

Reading	Math
Fluency	Number Sense
Comprehension	Geometry
Vocabulary	Algebraic Thinking
Phonics	Measurement
Phonemic Awareness	Data Analysis & Probability
Oral Language	

These are NOT the only areas that may be graphed, but they are, by far, the most common types of information graphed for “RtI” purposes.

If the intervention being used with the student is below his/her current grade level, there should be two sets of graphs provided to the PST:

- 1. one set showing the student's progress on assessments at the student's instructional level, and**
- 2. one set showing the student's progress on grade-level assessments.**

For example, if a third grade student is receiving below grade level fluency in a small group with the reading remediation teacher, intervention graphs should be provided showing the students progress for 8-12 weeks on the lower level fluency measures as well as graphs showing the student's progress on grade-level fluency measures, in order to provide a means to compare the student to his/her peers.

To enable all participants to review the data and develop questions or intervention strategies, ***all data and graphs must be made available to all team members at least five school days prior to the meeting date and should include all data available up to the date the graphs were prepared.*** The data may be made available via hard copy at the discretion of the guidance counselor, team members, and/or individual school's protocol. The guidance counselor determines if the information and documentation is complete. If everything is complete, the meeting may take place as scheduled. If the information is not complete or documentation is missing, the guidance counselor may request that the meeting be postponed until complete information is received.

3. Data are Used to Target Specific Skill or Behavioral Deficits and to Make Logical and Reasonable Decisions About an Intervention Plan

Almost all decisions in the "RtI" process are made using data. For Tier 1 students, the data are typically obtained via the results of universal screenings, e.g. FAIR. Students whose performance is significantly below grade level expectations are flagged for additional instruction, with the goal of bringing their performance up to grade level expectations within a reasonable period of time. Once students who are deficit in the target skill(s) are identified, the data is reviewed by the PST in order to determine if the instruction was delivered with fidelity and, if so, to assist in the development of an Academic Intervention Plan or a Behavioral Intervention Plan.

How is fidelity verified? If at least 75% of the students in the student's grade and student's classroom are achieving benchmarks, then the team will assume fidelity of instruction.

If less than 75% of the students in the grade and/or classroom are achieving benchmarks, then fidelity of instruction will need to be verified *in writing* by an administrator familiar with the curriculum who has observed the teacher delivering the instruction. A Fidelity of Implementation Verification Form for certifying fidelity under these circumstances may be found in the Appendix. **(HDS133RtI pg. 6 Appendix)** *(Pertinent to Inclusion classes)*

If fidelity is verified, then the PST reviews the data provided by the teacher and other individuals working with the student. The team must look at the data objectively and scientifically to answer the following questions (including but not limited to):

1. Is the student's performance significantly below that of similar peers?
2. Specifically, in what area(s) is the student deficient?
3. Are there multiple measures that show similar performance deficits?
4. Have the instructional strategies used been appropriate for the area of deficit?
5. Is there other information needed before the team can develop a plan?
6. Are there factors outside of school that may be impacting the student's performance?
7. Is the student's progress monitoring data showing a positive response, a negative response, or a questionable response?
8. At the current rate of progress, will the student achieve grade-level benchmarks within a reasonable and realistic period of time?
9. Has the student's attendance in previous school years been poor enough (absences totaling more than 10% of the school year) that a lack of exposure to instruction is possible/probable?
10. Is chronic tardiness an issue, (i.e. is the student's deficit a result of his/her arriving late and missing instruction in that particular content area)?
11. Is the student from a language different background? Is the student an English Language Learner? Please submit IPT and CELLA results.

4. Intervention Plans are Written with Realistic Goals and are Implemented for Realistic Periods of Time

Once the team has answered the above questions, and any others it has, to its satisfaction, and taken all the unique factors of the case into account, the team then determines if the student requires additional interventions to become successful. If additional interventions are determined necessary, the student is moved to the next higher tier. The team then develops an Academic Intervention Plan or a Behavioral Intervention Plan. The requirements for each are slightly different. For a more comprehensive explanation of the Behavioral Intervention Plan, please refer to Chapter 4.

The Academic Intervention Plan includes the following components:

- Student identifying information
- Summary of current performance
- Long-term goal (where the team wants the student to be at the end of the "RtI" process)
- Short-term objectives (how the team will know the student is making adequate progress toward the long-term goal)
- What interventions will be utilized with the student

- Who is responsible for implementing the intervention and tracking progress
- How often the intervention will occur
- Materials needed to implement the intervention
- Where the intervention will take place
- How progress will be monitored
- How often progress monitoring will occur

Information on the Academic Intervention Plan should be as specific as possible without being overly detailed. Goals and objectives must be measurable using progress monitoring instruments. For example, a short-term objective for reading comprehension might be written as, “The student will score above 70% on five out of eight MacMillan weekly comprehension tests during the next intervention period” or “The student will increase his reading fluency by an average of two words correct per minute per week during the next intervention period.” The Academic Intervention Plan includes spaces for up to three interventions. It is not necessary to develop three interventions for each student in the process, but the space is available if the team determines that two or three separate interventions are necessary.

The term “reasonable and realistic period of time” has no specific definition and is left up to the team to determine, although in most cases, 6-12 months is probably a good rule of thumb. However, certain factors should be taken into consideration when attempting to determine a reasonable period of time for a particular student:

1. How far below expectations the student is performing (the further below expectations the student is performing, the longer it will take him/her to catch up to peers),
2. The particular skill to be learned (some skills naturally take longer to learn than others),
3. The intensity of the instruction provided
4. The point in the school year at which the interventions are first implemented (sometimes “reasonable and realistic” means that the interventions will need to continue into the next school year before benchmarks can be expected to be achieved)

At the conclusion of the PST meeting, a copy of the Academic Intervention Plan is given to all teachers working with the student and the parents. If the parents are not in attendance, a copy of the Academic Intervention Plan must be sent home.

5. Progress is Monitored Regularly and Revisions Made as Needed to Provide as Many Opportunities as Possible for Progress to be Made in the Regular Education Setting

When a reasonable period of time has been determined by the team, a date is scheduled to meet again to review the student’s progress toward the goals. Once again, the complete documentation **MUST** be provided to the PST members, either in hard copy form or electronically, at least five school days prior to the meeting. If the documentation is not provided at least five school days ahead of time, the meeting may have to be postponed until completed documentation is received.

The team reviews the Tier 2 documentation provided. If the student's trend line is showing a **positive response** to the interventions, the most likely outcome would be that the team will continue the current interventions until the student reaches the desired goal, at which time, the interventions would likely be faded out. If the student continues to be successful after the Tier 2 interventions are removed, **then the student receives a Tier 1 instruction again**, and progress is monitored via universal screenings.

If the student's trend line is showing a **negative response**, the team will most likely want to consider revising the Academic Intervention Plan and implementing a more intensive intervention. A negative response *may* indicate that the interventions developed were not the appropriate ones for the student's particular difficulty. If the team's assessment concludes that the intervention was not the appropriate one to address the real underlying issue for the academic difficulty, then a different Tier 2 intervention should be attempted. If the team concludes that the intervention was appropriate for the student, movement to Tier 3 interventions may be the most appropriate decision.

If the student's trend line is showing a **questionable response**, the team may need to revisit the problem solving process. As with a negative response, a questionable response *may* indicate that the interventions developed were not the appropriate ones for the student's particular difficulty. If the team's assessment concludes that the intervention was not the appropriate one to address the real underlying issue for the academic difficulty, then a different Tier 2 intervention should be attempted. If the trend line shows improvement, but the *rate* of progress is not sufficient to achieve the desired goal in a reasonable and realistic period of time, the team may wish to continue the current intervention, but increase the frequency, intensity, and/or duration of the intervention to try to accelerate the student's progress.

This cycle of reviewing progress continues throughout the "RtI" process and the interventions are changed, modified, or discontinued as indicated by the data. The tiered system is very fluid, with students moving up and down within the tiers as needed. There is no prescribed time on any tier, other than the minimum amount of time required to obtain valid data. The amount of time required to identify and verify the effective interventions will vary by skill (decoding, algebraic equations, etc.), the age, and the grade level of the student. Interventions should be continued as long as the student exhibits a positive response. The interventions should be modified as appropriate when a student's progress is less than expected.

What happens after a student is determined eligible for ESE? If a student is determined eligible for Exceptional Student Education, *progress monitoring continues indefinitely while they receive ESE services*. The frequency and duration of progress monitoring for an ESE student is a determination that is made by the IEP team and documented in the IEP.

Special Note Regarding Students With Two or More Retentions:

The philosophy behind retention is to provide the student with the opportunity to fill in the gaps in the foundation of their learning that they missed the first time through a grade. In the unlikely event that a student has been retained twice, has not received “RtI” interventions in past school years, and does not meet the criteria for having a “severe deficit” as defined in the previous section, and is still performing at a failing or “passing but below average” grade level, the PST should immediately place the student in Tier 2 to receive supplemental interventions. If the student meets the definition of a student with a severe deficit, then the previous section would take precedence, and the student could immediately be placed in Tier 3.

A Word About Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in the “RtI” process is not only desirable, it is required by law. To ensure that all parents of students in the “RtI” process are informed of their child’s participation, an informational letter has been developed *that must be given to the parent of every student on a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) at the first parent-teacher conference.* The letter explains the “RtI” process in easy-to-read, but detailed, language, so that no parent is unaware that their child may become involved in the process if their academic struggles continue. “RtI” does not require parental consent, but it does require that the parent be informed. The letter has a signature line at the bottom. The parent signs the letter to indicate that they have read and understand the information provided. The signed copy is attached to the child’s PMP and the parent is given a copy of the letter to take home with them. If the parent does not attend the parent-teacher conference, the teacher must send a copy of the letter home to the parent and document that action on the PMP. If the parent attends the parent-teacher conference, but refuses to sign the letter for some reason, they are still provided a copy of the letter. The “RtI” Problem Solving process continues, if appropriate for the student, whether the parent agrees or not. The school is obligated to implement the interventions necessary for the student to gain mastery in whatever skill they are displaying a deficit.

Parents should be informed at every significant step of the process. Schools involve parents at different points, but in general, parents should be informed of their child’s progress in “RtI” at least at parent conferences, after district progress monitoring periods, and at PST meetings.

How is Eligibility Determined Under “RtI”?

Flawed or not, it was relatively easy to determine eligibility using the discrepancy method. Its simplicity was one of the reasons for its adoption in the mid-1970’s. Under “RtI”, eligibility determination is no less of a science, but it does become something of an art as well. In reality, it is not a difficult process, but it will take practice before it becomes comfortable. As with any new procedure, it takes time to learn it, adjust to it, accept it, and become proficient at it.

With the discrepancy method, a comprehensive evaluation was the culmination of a process whose initial goal was the placement of the student in ESE. Using “RtI”, the entire process often IS the comprehensive evaluation. How then, if there are no IQ and achievement testing scores to compare, do we determine a student’s eligibility for SLD? The answer to that question is, with a comprehensive review of the process and the data obtained from it.

If a student is provided a series of research-based interventions taught by highly qualified teachers, valid and reliable progress monitoring measures have been used, and all the required components have been present and verified throughout the process, then the PST may consider a student for SLD eligibility. The PST must be satisfied that all the aforementioned criteria have been met at all points in the process. If even one component is lacking, eligibility for SLD ***cannot*** be determined.

There are two possible scenarios to determine SLD eligibility:

1. The student shows a negative response to all interventions attempted.
2. The student exhibits a positive response to interventions, but progress halts or the student regresses when the Tier 3 interventions are faded (the frequency, duration, and intensity of the interventions are decreased). In this scenario, the intensity of the interventions required to maintain satisfactory progress is significantly above what the general education setting can provide; thus, ESE services would be necessary to maintain progress.

If a student does not exhibit a positive response at *any* point during the process, the PST should examine closely the interventions that were used with the student and the procedures utilized as part of the problem solving process from which the interventions were developed. While consistently negative responses to interventions may occur in some students, they may also suggest inappropriate interventions, a lack of implementation fidelity, or the possibility that SLD may *not* be the appropriate suspected disability. These possibilities must be ruled out before the PST may find a student with a consistently negative response to intervention eligible as a student with a Specific Learning Disability.

The most common scenario as far as eligibility is concerned. In most cases, if the PST has done its job effectively, a student will show a positive (or at least a questionable) response to interventions at some point in the process. If a student achieves his long term goal, the team would then consider “fading” the interventions. Fading involves decreasing the frequency, duration, and intensity of the interventions. The rationale is that, once the student has mastered the requisite skill, the interventions can gradually be withdrawn, and the student can move back to Tier 1. However, if a student masters the target skill, but when the intensive Tier 3 interventions are faded the student cannot maintain satisfactory progress, then the student may be considered as having a specific learning disability.

How do ESOL and “RtI” interface with one another?

When using the discrepancy method for Specific Learning Disability eligibility determination, the Child Study Team recommended that students who qualified for ESOL services needed to have been receiving those services for at least one full year before they could be evaluated for SLD. This was based on the fact that English language proficiency (or lack thereof) had a direct impact on the results of the tests that were used to determine the IQ/achievement discrepancy. It was necessary to wait a sufficient period of time for ESOL services to improve the student's English language proficiency to make sure the test results were valid.

With “RtI” being the sole method for SLD determination, it is even more important to make sure the difficulty is not really due to an English language proficiency issue. However, since testing will play less of a role in the determination of SLD, the reason for being in ESOL one full year may not apply under “RtI”.

Under “RtI”, it would be unwise to *determine eligibility* for an ESOL student prior to him or her having been in ESOL for a full year. But, there is also no basis for delaying the student’s entry into the “RtI” process until after twelve months of ESOL services have been completed. “RtI” interventions should be occurring concurrently with the ESOL services. Doing so, however, would mean that, in most cases, time on the tiers would need to be extended significantly, because language acquisition takes longer in most cases than a skill acquisition, in general. However, waiting a full year to even begin the “RtI” process with an ESOL student would potentially deprive that student of a year of extra support he/she could be receiving.

Private Evaluations

With the change in the process for determining whether or not a student has a specific learning disability (SLD), IQ/Achievement/Process tests completed by private evaluators may not completely address the new eligibility criteria as provided in State Board Rules. The district is not in a position to dictate how private evaluators complete their assessments. However, the requirements as outlined in this manual must be documented. The private evaluator may document the process or the parents shall follow the intervention procedures established by the school district. Private evaluations will be considered as a part of the process.

What the Process Might Look Like from Start to Finish

Susan Jones

Susan Jones, one of Mrs. Smith’s second grade students, is scoring well below benchmark on all of her fluency measures. The fall target for second grade ORF is 44 wcpm, but Susan’s first DIBELS score of the current school year was 25 wcpm. Susan is performing 43% below the benchmark. Fluency timings done by Mrs. Smith also fall well below average, ranging from 19 wcpm to 26 wcpm. The average of Susan’s fluency timings is 23 wcpm as well. Two

separate measures confirm Susan's fluency deficits and verify performance significantly below grade level benchmarks. Nonsense word fluency is also below expectations for Susan. The second grade fall target for NWF is 50, but Susan's score was 27, falling 46% below benchmark.

At the end of first grade Susan's 1st STAR results were at the 11th percentile in reading and at the 42nd percentile in math. Her grades in first grade were satisfactory, although notes on the report card indicate concerns with Susan's struggles acquiring basic reading skills. There were also issues with Susan's phonics skills.

At the first parent conference, Mrs. Smith presented Susan's mother, Mrs. Jones, with a Progress Monitoring Plan specifying the concerns about Susan's oral reading fluency and phonics skills and outlining an intervention plan to improve her skills in those two areas. Mrs. Jones signed the plan. Mrs. Jones also signed the "RtI" Parent Information Letter, which Mrs. Smith attached to the PMP. Mrs. Jones was given a copy of the PMP and the "RtI" Parent Information Letter to take home with her.

The PMP was implemented as specified. At the end of January, after the second progress monitoring period, the teacher reviewed Susan's progress. The mid-year ORF benchmark for second grade is 68 wcpm, but Susan's DIBELS score was only 41 wcpm. Likewise, the NWF benchmark remained at 50, while Susan's NWF score increased to 34. Susan continues to perform well below expectations in reading fluency. An ERDA completed in December shows Susan's phonemic awareness and listening comprehension skills are basic, but her phonics and fluency are below basic.

Mrs. Smith decides to request a PST meeting to discuss providing Susan with more intensive interventions. Mrs. Smith enters Susan's progress monitoring data onto Excel graphs and turns the PMP/Teacher "RtI" Input Form in to her guidance counselor. A PST meeting is scheduled for early February. Five days prior to the meeting, Mrs. Smith turns her graphs in to her guidance counselor who distributes them, along with the PMP/Teacher "RtI" Input Form to all team members.

Scenario #1:

Upon reviewing the data, the team notes that only 60% of Mrs. Smith's class is achieving the benchmark. Because less than 75% of Mrs. Smith's class is proficient in the skill areas under review, the fidelity requirement has not been met. NO decisions regarding interventions for Susan can be made at this time. Interventions developed should be directed at improving the skills of the *entire* class, so as to increase the proficiency of the class to a minimum of 75%. However, because this scenario indicates an issue with classroom instruction, it is an issue that the team should immediately bring to the school's administrative team. If an administrator or designee can certify in writing that Mrs. Smith is delivering instruction with fidelity, despite the generally poor showing of her class, the team can then meet to look at interventions for Susan.

Scenario #2:

The PST meets to review the data. Comparison to peers indicates that 82% of Mrs. Smith's class is achieving benchmark. Therefore, fidelity is assumed and the team can examine the data to develop interventions for Susan. The team discusses Susan's case and Susan's mother, who was invited to the meeting as required, mentions that she and her husband are getting a divorce. Mrs. Jones also reports that she recently lost her job, so the family is now surviving on welfare and food stamps. Susan spends half the week at her mother's and the other half of the week at her father's house across town. When she is at her father's house, she usually arrives at school at least half an hour late and is often observed to be dozing off in class. In such a case, interventions developed should address not only the identified reading weaknesses, but they should also attempt to address the issues of inconsistent sleep patterns, chronic tardiness, and Susan's need for some emotional stability given the upheaval in her family life. A child in this situation cannot focus on academics until the family issues are addressed in some manner. In-school counseling/mental health services may be appropriate.

Scenario #3:

As with scenario #2, the fidelity requirement is met. In this scenario, however, Susan's family remains intact and less stressed. The team reviews the data and develops an Academic Intervention Plan for Susan. The Plan calls for Susan to work with the Reading Remediation teacher 2-3 times per week in a small group using the MacMillan Intervention Kit for phonemic awareness and oral reading fluency as well as the computer lab's oral reading fluency program. Progress monitoring will be accomplished by the classroom teacher tracking Susan's performance on the MacMillan weekly assessments. The reading coach will also monitor progress by tracking the weekly "cold" read scores at the instructional level of the intervention. The team sets the long term goals of having Susan's ORF rate at 80 wcpm by the first Fluency screening of third grade and Phonics grades consistently falling above 70%. The team's short term goals can be written several different ways. For example, the team could word them this way: Susan's ORF will increase by an average of 1.75 wcpm per week over the course of the intervention and her Phonics grades on the MacMillan reading assessments will increase by between 3% and 5% per week. The team could also write the short term goal as a target the team wants the student to reach by the end of the 8-12 week intervention, e.g. Susan's ORF will be at or above 58 wcpm by the end of the intervention and she will achieve a Phonics score of 70 or above on 6 out of 9 of the weekly MacMillan reading assessments.

Ten weeks later, the team reconvenes to review Susan's progress. The new data has been graphed, and the trend lines indicate that Susan is making significant progress toward the goals. Susan has achieved her short-term goals (even if she hadn't actually "hit" her short-term targets, as long as she comes close and continues to make good progress, the team shouldn't be overly rigid about the target). Using the graph's ability to project the trend line into the future, the team can predict that (if Susan's progress is relatively constant) she will hit the target by the fourth week of September. The team notes that a meeting will need to be scheduled in early October to review Susan's progress one more time. If she comes close or

surpasses her long term goal, the team should consider fading out the intervention and consider allowing Susan to return to Tier 1.

What if Susan doesn't continue to improve and reach her goal?

In mid-October, the PST reconvenes to review Susan's data. Unfortunately, despite the Tier 2 intervention continuing since school resumed in August, Susan's progress has virtually stalled. Allowing time for Susan to have made an adjustment to her new teacher and the new school year, the PST decides that a more intensive intervention is necessary for Susan. The most recent data for Susan shows that her ORF has increased to 64 wcpm at the last screening, and that classroom fluency timings have hovered around the upper 50's since the school year started. Her Phonics grades have stalled as well. She obtained a 70 on three of her last MacMillan reading tests, but received scores ranging from a low of 38 to a high of 54 on the others.

Because Susan made satisfactory progress last year while receiving this intervention at Tier 2, it was obviously providing her some benefit. The team should begin their examination of Susan's case by attempting to identify factors other than academics that may have changed and may now be impacting her progress. This examination might include a comparison and contrasting between this year's teacher's instructional style and last year's teacher. It might include a re-examination of what's going on in the family outside of school. Another factor to be considered might be whether or not Susan is now suffering from a health problem. There are a number of factors to be considered. If all other factors have been addressed, then an examination of the appropriateness of the interventions would be in order.

The team must remember that Susan received NO academic instruction since early June, so it would not be out of line for Susan to need some extra time to reach her target once school started. However, since there has been no real improvement in two months, the PST needs to review Susan's plan. Since Susan had been successful at Tier 2 the previous year, it would be prudent first to evaluate if there might be a different Tier 2 intervention to try before hastily making a decision to move her to Tier 3.

If no appropriate alternate Tier 2 intervention is available, then the team would likely consider moving Susan to Tier 3. The Tier 3 interventions developed by the PST include Susan utilizing the MacMillan Intervention Kit four to five times per week, participating in one-on-one tutoring three times per week, and seeing the reading remediation teacher four to five times per week to work on improving oral reading fluency and phonics. In addition, Susan will utilize phonics flash cards on a daily basis.

Eight weeks later, the team meets to review Susan's progress. Based on her progress monitoring graphs, Susan is meeting the targets established by the PST (i.e. her ORF measures consistently show fluency scores between 78 and 86 wcpm and her phonics test scores have been above 70 on seven out of eight of her last tests.) Because Susan has achieved her long-term goal, as set by the team, it is time to begin the process of fading the interventions to see if Susan can maintain her progress with less intensive interventions.

Accordingly, the team scales back Susan's interventions to Tier 2 levels and schedules a review in eight weeks.

Eight weeks later, the team reconvenes to look at Susan's progress monitoring data. The documentation indicates that Susan started losing ground when Tier 3 interventions were removed. Her ORF measures have actually decreased to between 60-70 wcpm on every measure taken since the interventions were faded. Similarly, her phonics scores have dropped an average of 17% in the most recent intervention period, with scores above 60 on only two of the last eight phonics tests.

In this scenario, the team is now at the point at which it may wish to consider eligibility for SLD. If consent has not already been obtained from the parent, it should be obtained now. If all components are in place to make an eligibility decision, the team may proceed. If not, the team should note the components that are missing, schedule an eligibility meeting, and obtain those missing components prior to the eligibility meeting. Once complete, eligibility may be determined.

Chapter 4:

Chapter 4: Response to Intervention (“RtI”) for Behavior

Response to Intervention, commonly referred to as “RtI”, focuses on “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying student response data to important educational decisions.” (NASDSE, 2007)

What are the core principles of “RtI” for Behavior?

Response to Intervention strategies can be applied to students’ social behavior, as well as to academic achievement. The core principles of “RtI” remain the same regardless of the problem solving target. A Response to Intervention approach is based on three main components:

1. Continual application of a structured problem-solving process;
2. Reliance on an integrated data system that is used to inform problem solving; and
3. Utilization of a multi-tiered model of support delivery that enables the efficient use of school resources.

What is a structured problem solving process?

Hardee District Schools, in accordance with the State of Florida, has adopted a four-step process that includes:

Problem Solving Steps:

Step 1: Problem Identification–What’s the problem?

Step 2: Problem Analysis–Why is it occurring?

Step 3: Intervention Design–What are we going to do about it?

Step 4: Response to Intervention–Is it working?

The four-step, problem-solving model of “RtI” for Behavior looks very simple. First, problem behaviors of all students, groups of students or individual students must be identified. Next, it is critical to understand why those behavior problems are occurring. This step is the problem analysis. Based on an understanding of why the behavior is occurring, school personnel and teams can develop effective and efficient interventions to address the problem behavior and then progress monitor whether students are responding to the interventions.

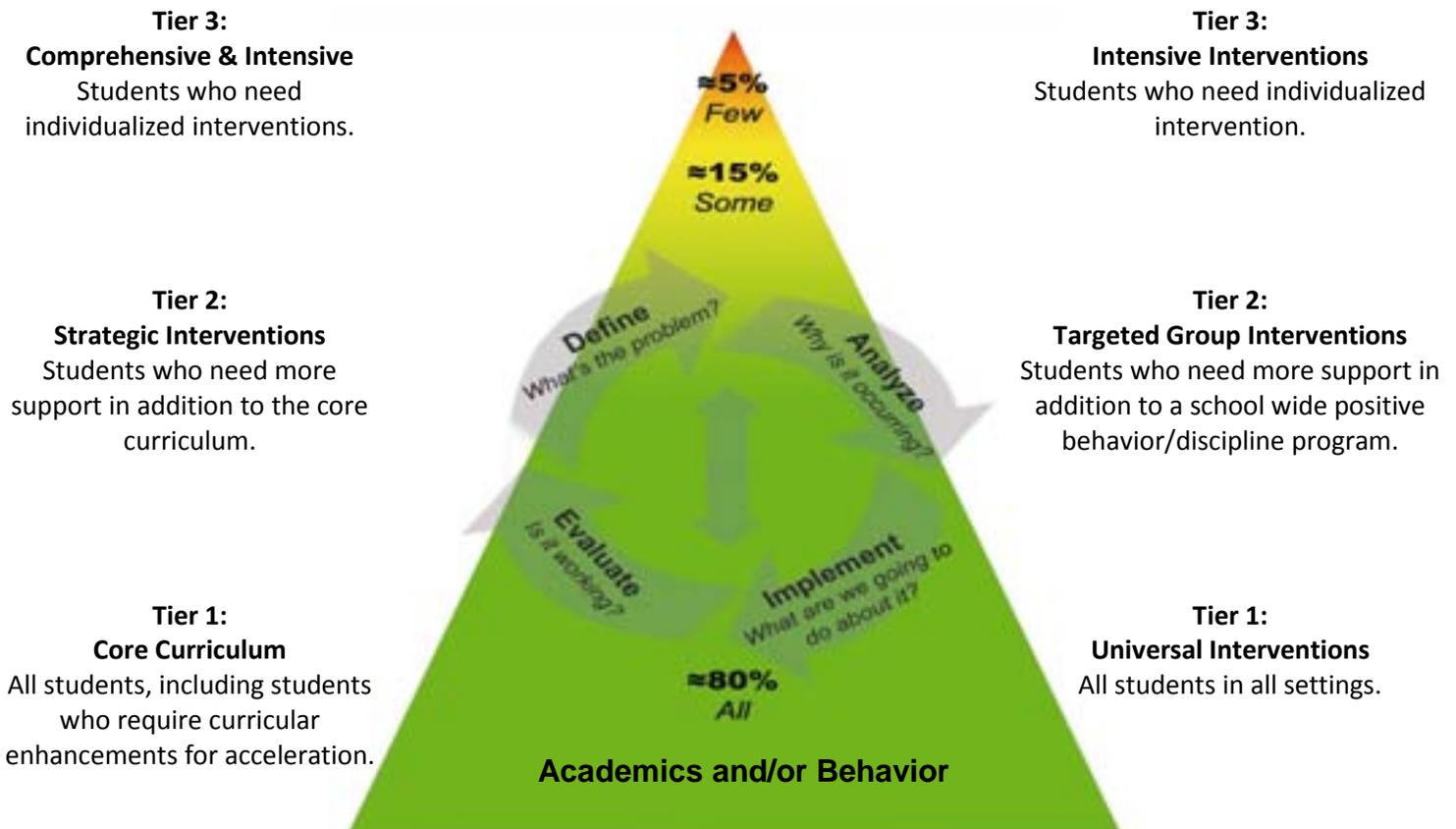
Why is an integrated data system so necessary for problem-solving?

The success of the “RtI” for Behavior process is dependent on a number of critical features. First, the problem-solving approach requires the use of accurate data for decision-making at each level and step of the process. This means that schools must have ways of collecting, maintaining, and accessing their data that are easy to use, relevant, and accessible to decision makers, and easily summarized in a way that’s understandable to teachers and parents.

The types of data collected will differ according to the focus of the problem-solving process. For example, problem solving at the entire school level requires the analysis of summary data that is based on the behaviors of the entire student body; while problem solving for an individual student requires the analysis of specific patterns of behavior for that student. Understanding which kinds of data to collect requires a deeper understanding of each level or tier of support.

What does this multi-tiered support system look like?

A three-tiered model for instruction and intervention expresses the concept that academic and behavioral supports are provided at a **core or universal level** that is intended to effectively address the needs of **all** students in a school. This is referred to as Tier 1. However, not all students will respond to the same curricula and teaching strategies. As a result, at Tier 2 **some** students with identified needs will receive **supplemental or targeted instruction** and intervention. Finally, at Tier 3, a **few** students with the most severe needs will receive **intensive and individualized** behavioral and/or academic support.



This three-level support system allows educators to identify the needs of all students, match the level of support to the severity of the academic and behavior problems and then assess the students’ response to intervention. On the “behavior” side of the triangle, an approach called School-Wide Positive Behavior Support provides a problem-solving and response to intervention model that aims to prevent inappropriate behavior and teach and reinforce appropriate behaviors.

What is School-Wide Positive Behavior Support?

A major advance in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a patchwork of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, restrooms, etc.). Positive behavior support (PBS) is an application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. In other words, PBS uses evidence-based practices to change school systems, school environments and ultimately the behavior of staff and students. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining universal (school-wide), supplemental (classroom and targeted groups), and intensive (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional. There are many “positive behavioral support” programs available. At this time, some of the schools in the Hardee District are implementing “Florida’s Positive Behavior Support “RtI” for Behavior Project” at the elementary and middle school level.

Why is it so important to focus on teaching positive social behaviors?

In the past, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important part of a student’s educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of School-Wide PBS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

What is a systems approach in School-Wide PBS?

An organization is a group of individuals who work together to achieve a common goal. Systems are needed to support the collective use of best practices by individuals within the organization. The School-Wide PBS process emphasizes the creation of systems that support the adoption and durable implementation of evidence-based practices and procedures, and fit within on-going school reform efforts.

School-Wide PBS is an interactive approach that includes opportunities to correct and improve four key elements:

- Outcomes: academic and behavioral targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators.
- Practices: interventions and strategies that are evidence based.

- Data: information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions.
- Systems: supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBS.

What is Tier 1 Response to Intervention for Behavior?

The goal of “RtI” for behavior at the Tier 1 level is the prevention of problem behavior and promotion of positive behavior by establishing processes that should facilitate success for 75% of the student body. An effective Tier 1 system should reduce the number of students who need more expensive and time consuming resources at Tiers 2 and 3. So, if more than 75% of students respond to Tier 1 supports, the school has maximized their resources and is able to meet the needs of more students more effectively. At Tier 1, data are collected to determine the effectiveness of universal (e.g. school-wide positive behavior support, comprehensive discipline plan) interventions.

Two questions should be answered at Tier 1.

1. Do 75% of the students in the school respond positively to the school-wide discipline plan?
2. Does the behavior level of the target student-differ significantly from that of the peer group? Alternatively, does a gap exist?

What is Tier 1: Universal Support?

Tier 1: Universal Support involves system-wide efforts to prevent new cases of a condition or disorder. As a system-wide Universal Support effort in schools, positive behavior support consists of rules, routines, and physical arrangements that are developed and taught by school staff to prevent initial occurrences of problem behavior. For example, to prevent injuries to students caused by running in hallways, schools may develop Universal Supports by:

1. establishing and teaching the rule, “walk in the hallways;”
2. creating a routine in which staff station themselves in the hallways during transition times to supervise the movement of pupils; or
3. altering the physical arrangement, such as making sure that an adult is with any group of students when they are in the hallways.

What are we trying to prevent?

It goes without saying that we want to prevent the major “behavioral earthquakes” that we hear about in the news: violent acts against teachers or other students, theft, bullying behavior, drug use, and the like. Research; however, has taught us that efforts to prevent these serious problems are more successful if the “host environment”—the school as a whole—supports the adoption and use of evidence-based practices. Practices that meet these criteria include teaching and rewarding students for complying with a small set of basic expectations for conduct, such as:

1. “Be safe,”

2. “Be responsible,” and
3. “Be respectful.”

These expectations translate into sets of rules that differ according to various settings in the school. Thus, on the playground “be safe” means stay within boundaries and follow the rules of the game. In hallways and on stairs, it means to keep your hands and feet to yourself and to walk on the right side. Some parents and educators believe that students come to school knowing these rules of conduct, and that those who don’t follow them simply should be punished. However, research and experience have taught us that systematically teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. It also establishes a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. Finally, the use of Universal Support strategies has been shown to result in dramatic reductions in the number of students being sent to the office for discipline in elementary and middle schools. In effect, by teaching and encouraging positive student behavior (i.e., positive behavior support), we reduce the “white noise” of common but constant student disruption that distracts us from focusing intervention expertise on the more serious problems.

What are the components of a comprehensive Tier 1: Universal system of discipline or positive behavioral interventions and supports?

Effective school-wide behavioral systems have seven major components:

- a. An agreed upon and common approach to discipline,
- b. A positive statement of purpose,
- c. A small number of positively stated expectations for all students and staff,
- d. Procedures for teaching these expectations to students,
- e. A continuum of procedures for encouraging displays and maintenance of these expectations,
- f. A continuum of procedures for discouraging displays of rule-violating behavior and,
- g. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the discipline system on a regular and frequent basis.

How do we know if Tier 1: Universal Support systems of discipline or positive behavior supports are effective?

It is essential that schools, when implementing a school-wide system of discipline or positive behavior support, monitor its effectiveness on a regular and frequent basis. Regular monitoring and evaluation are needed in order to:

- a. Prevent ineffective practices from consuming time and resources,
- b. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current procedures,
- c. Eliminate elements of the system that are ineffective or inefficient, and

- d. Make modifications before problem behavior patterns become too durable and resistant to change.

Different kinds of data can be used to assess the outcomes and fidelity of Tier 1 supports and include but are not limited to:

1. **Office discipline referrals (ODR)** provide a school-wide measure of the impact of Tier 1 activities for all students.
2. **Out-of-school and in-school suspensions (OSS/ISS)** provide a measure of the impact of Tier 1 activities on students who may require Tier 2 and 3 supports.
3. **Exceptional education referrals/requests for assistance** may provide a measure of whether classroom support processes are lessening the need for teachers to consider referrals for more intensive supports.
4. **Faculty surveys** will provide a measure of the overall attitude and response of the faculty to changes in Tier 1 supports.
5. **Observations** of school settings including classrooms can provide data on the fidelity with which interventions are being implemented and the outcomes of those interventions.
6. **School Climate Surveys** can identify if staff, students and parents are pleased with the PBS process and outcomes (i.e., school is safer, students are able to learn, the system is easy to implement, etc.).

These outcome data can be used in conjunction with other measures that determine the level of fidelity of a Tier 1 program (the degree to which procedures reflect best practice and are carried out as intended). Formal evaluations of fidelity, such as the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ), School Evaluation Tool (SET), or custom measures are typically used at least once a year while additional tools can also be used to evaluate outcomes and fidelity on a more frequent basis.

What are the decisions that the “RtI” for Behavior team will need to make at Tier 1?

The first question is **“Did we do what we said we would do?”** If Tier 1 procedures are not carried out the way they were designed (with fidelity), then schools cannot determine whether or not students are responding to the interventions. In this scenario it is unlikely that there will be a reduction in the overall number of students who need more intensive services.

The second question is **“Did it work?”** Problem Solving Teams (PST) will use their data to make this decision. **If all or most of the students are not responding to the Tier 1 intervention, then the Tier 1 supports may need to be reassessed and reworked.** Many of the interventions in Tier 1 will target all the school environments, but it is likely that the Tier 1 data analysis will identify the need for some classroom-level supports and targeted training opportunities. For instance observations, ODR, referrals for support and other data might indicate that many teachers and classrooms are experiencing behavior issues. Therefore, the entire school faculty would benefit from professional development activities that focus on classroom behavior supports. When a few staff members generate a substantial number of the disciplinary referrals, targeted support should be provided to those teachers.

What if Tier 1 Universal Supports don't work?

Tier 1: Universal support, through positive behavior support, does work for over 75% of all students in a given school (based on a criterion of the number of students who have one or fewer office discipline referrals per month). But obviously, it will not work for everyone. For a variety of reasons, some students do not respond to the kinds of efforts that make up Tier 1: Universal Supports.

Implementing systematic Tier 1: Universal strategies offer several advantages:

1. It reduces the “white noise” caused by large numbers of office discipline referrals for minor problems.
2. Having a system for documenting the occurrence of problem behaviors (e.g., office discipline referrals) provides a way to determine which students need more intensive intervention. For example, one criterion for considering the need for moving into supplemental support for a student or group of students might be four or more office discipline referrals in a month. Without Tier 1: Universal Supports, the number of students meeting this criteria; thus requiring additional help, may be much larger.
3. Finally, a Universal system determines whether the school is meeting the needs of all students, prior to the consideration of more intensive and expensive Tier 2 and 3 supports.

Are there other ways to identify students who may need additional support?

There will be some students who need additional support even after Tier 1: Universal Supports have been delivered and implemented with fidelity. How are these students, who require additional support, readily identified? ODR (Office discipline referrals) are one way to identify these students; ODR will target *some* students in need of intervention, but may fail to identify a large portion of students who have additional mental health or behavioral needs. If schools are trying to implement “RtI” with fidelity, they will need to develop a process for identifying students in need of supplemental supports who are not identified by ODR data.

Consistent with the “RtI” philosophy, **screening measures** should be used to make sure we identify students who need additional supports EARLY, and not wait for them to have ongoing problems.

Just as with academic screening tools, behavioral screening needs to:

1. Be easy to administer,
2. Be completed quickly,
3. Provide accurate data about students who need more intensive services,
4. Identify students with internalizing *and* externalizing mental health issues, and
5. Be administered up to 2-3 times each year, or on an as-needed basis for new students and students with sudden changes in their mental health status.

Screening Tools

Hardee District Schools utilize an adapted version of the following universal screening tools: (See forms in the appendix)

1. **Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) (Drummond, 1994)** for the identification of externalizing behavior.
2. **Student Internalizing Behavior Screening Scale (SIBSS)** for the identification of internalizing behavior.

Once a student has been identified through a screening process, schools need to determine whether the student has been taught the school-wide expectations in context, and whether he/she has been rewarded for displaying those expectations. If not, then schools cannot assume the student is having a poor response to the Tier 1 interventions and the PST should consult with these students' teachers to increase their use of the school-wide system.

How do we organize our school's team to provide effective "RtI" for Behavior?

As schools move towards providing a more comprehensive system of behavioral supports for their students, they will need to investigate ways in which their staff members can work together more effectively and efficiently.

With "RtI", schools will need to identify a group of individuals (PST) who can lead their school through the problem solving process at all tiers of service, for academic problems as well as behavior problems. *Refer to Chapter 2 of the Hardee District Schools' Response to Intervention Manual for a description of the PST process.*

What are Tier 2 Supplemental Supports?

If the target student's behavior differs significantly from that of peers and the peer behavior meets school expectations, then the interventions move to Tier 2.

Tier 2 Supplemental Supports are designed to provide additional or targeted interventions to support students who have access to Tier 1 Universal Supports and are not responding positively to them. Supplemental Supports are more intensive since a smaller number of students within the middle part of the triangle are at risk for engaging in more serious problem behavior; therefore, needing more support. Common Supplemental Support practices involve small groups of students or simple individualized intervention strategies. Supplemental Support is designed to be used with students who are at risk of chronic problem behavior, but for whom high intensity interventions are not essential.

Supplemental Support often involves targeted group interventions with a few students or larger groups (30 students or more). Supplemental Supports are an important part of the continuum of behavioral support needed in schools and can be implemented by typical school personnel. Supplemental interventions also are recommended as an approach for identifying students in

need of more intensive, individualized interventions. Specific Supplemental Supports include practices such as:

1. “social skills group,”
2. “check in/check out”
3. Daily report card examples
4. Mentoring programs
5. Self-monitoring systems
6. Behavior contracting
7. Social skills instruction or school counseling
8. Anger management intervention
9. Bullying prevention intervention

How many students may need Tier 2 Supplemental Supports?

Approximately 15-25% of your student body may need Tier 2 supports. This percentage is not absolute; schools with strong Tier 1 supports will have a reduced need for Tier 2 supports.

Can students receive individual behavior support plans at Tier 2?

Yes. Individual student plans at the Tier 2 Supplemental Support level involve a simple assessment to identify the function a problem behavior serves (Functional Behavioral Assessment or FBA). This differs from the Tier 3 FBA in that the Tier 2 support plan is less comprehensive and is created by the PST. It may be comprised of individualized, assessment-based intervention strategies that include a range of options such as:

1. Teaching the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviors,
2. Rearranging the environment so that problems can be prevented and desirable behaviors can be encouraged, and
3. Monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing this simple plan over time.

This assessment and behavior planning process should be simple and involve a brief consultation with the student’s teacher(s) **and include one or more strategies which match the context of the classroom and the function** of the student’s problem behavior.

What differentiates Tier 2 Supplemental Supports from other systems of positive behavior support?

The main difference between supplemental and other levels of positive behavior support is the focus on supporting students at risk for more serious problem behavior. Supplemental Intervention addresses the needs of students who require more support than is available for all students (i.e., Universal Support) and less support than is available for individual students who need flexible, focused, personalized interventions (Tier 3 Intensive Support). This means that Supplemental Intervention allows teams to select features of the process (e.g., types of programs or interventions, data collection tools used, information gathered, and degree of monitoring) to

provide more focused behavior support to students with behavior needs that do not require intensive, individualized plans.

When should a program of Tier 2 Supplemental Supports be implemented and who should be involved?

Decisions to implement Supplemental Supports are usually grounded in records of student behavior compiled by classroom teachers or other professionals. The decision to use Supplemental Supports will be made by the school's PST. Supplemental Support should be a collaborative (rather than expert-driven) process. Tier 2 interventions should be research-based, easy to administer to small groups of students, and require limited time and staff involvement. The types of interventions applied within a school building should be dictated by the needs of its student population.

In addition, schools should rely on progress monitoring procedures to ensure that their interventions are effective and appropriate for the students. With effective progress monitoring in place, schools are, in essence, providing the research base for their selected interventions.

What are the key features of Tier 2 Supplemental Supports?

Tier 2 Supplemental Supports are implemented through a flexible, but systematic, process. Key features of Supplemental Support interventions include:

1. Continuous availability,
2. Rapid access (within 72 hr.),
3. Minimal implementation effort required from teachers,
4. Consistent with school-wide expectations,
5. Implemented with the awareness and assistance of all staff/faculty in a school,
6. Flexible intervention based on assessment,
7. A match between the function of the problem behavior and the intervention,
8. Adequate resources for implementation, and
9. Continuous monitoring of student behavior for decision-making.

With limited resources, how do we prioritize the students who may need or benefit most from Tier 2 supports?

Initially, schools may not have the interventions, personnel, or resources to address the needs of every student identified in the school-wide screening process. Teams will need to develop a process for prioritizing students according to their level of need. Data that can inform this process include:

1. A teacher recommendation process,
2. Number of ODR,

3. Number of minor classroom incidents,
4. Academic level,
5. Exceptional Student Education status,
6. Number of absences, etc., and
7. Parental input

Students with behavior concerns who are below grade level academically should receive interventions to address both areas of need. Students who do not meet priority criteria may be waitlisted and continue to receive Tier 1 supports until Tier 2 supports become available.

How do we know if we are implementing our Tier 2 Supplemental Support programs with fidelity? (Refer to forms in the appendix)

Even the best interventions, if they are implemented poorly, will be ineffective in changing a student's behavior. Teams cannot make decisions about whether an intervention was effective in helping a student unless the intervention was implemented as intended. If interventions are being implemented in non-classroom settings, fidelity will need to be measured in two locations: first, to be sure the intervention is being implemented as intended in the non-classroom setting, and secondly in the classroom, to be sure a generalization plan is being followed.

For example, teachers of students receiving pull-out, supplemental social skills lessons will need to know what skills are being taught during each session, so they can prompt for those skills and provide recognition as the student displays them in the classroom. Similarly, the facilitators of the pull-out sessions will need to hear from the classroom teachers about their students' progress outside of pull-out group.

How do we know when a supplemental intervention plan is effective?

Effective supplemental interventions produce measurable changes in behavior and improvements in a student's quality of life (e.g., participation in integrated activities, improved social relationships, independence and self-sufficiency). Behavioral data continues to be collected on target students throughout Tier 2 interventions. Tier 2 interventions are continued when the data demonstrate that the behavior of the target student is moving closer to benchmarks or peer group expectations. Direct observations and frequent monitoring of progress are widely-used methods for evaluating these outcomes, and determining adjustments that might be warranted when progress does not occur within a reasonable time.

Traditionally, evaluation of intervention effectiveness usually occurs only after a student has been receiving an intervention for several weeks. With "RtI" for Behavior, students' progress under different interventions is tracked much more consistently, and with much more specific data. While teacher ratings may still be used as the primary data source, **the ratings are given at least once each day, and a specific numerical value is assigned to them so that they may be graphed.** This attention to detail allows for more timely and accurate decision making. Progress monitoring tools should have the following characteristics:

1. They assess specific behaviors or skills that directly relate to the student's area of need,
2. They can measure small amounts of growth over time,
3. They can be completed efficiently,
4. They can be administered repeatedly, and
5. They can be easily summarized in graphic format.

The **Behavior Report Card (Refer to forms in the appendix)** is one such progress monitoring tool that can be used across the day with multiple teachers to track a student's progress in mastering replacement behaviors. The Behavior Report Card can also be adapted to collect student data on a wide range of Tier 2 interventions. Tier 2 Supplemental Supports are designed to be quick and efficient, and can be used with small groups of students as soon as their needs are identified. Once the additional supports are delivered and the students are responding positively, they may fade back to only receiving Tier 1: Universal Supports. Tier 2 interventions can be discontinued when data demonstrate that the target student's behavior is within peer expectations and is maintained by the universal intervention. Some students will continue to need the supplemental supports in order to be successful in a general education environment. Tier 3 services may need to be considered if a student is not making progress in spite of repeated Tier 2 Supplemental interventions.

What is Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports?

Intensive/Individual Supports are designed to focus on the needs of individuals who exhibit patterns of severe or extreme problem behavior. Students who require Tier 3 services generally require individually developed interventions delivered with a frequency and intensity that involve resources and personnel in addition to the general education teacher. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of positive behavior supports in addressing the challenges of behaviors that are dangerous, highly disruptive, and/or impede learning and result in social or educational exclusion. Positive supports/school-wide discipline plan have been used to support the behavioral adaptation of students with a wide range of characteristics, including developmental disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, as well as students with no medical diagnosis or Exceptional Student Education classification.

Intensive/Individual Support is most effective when there are positive universal and supplemental systems in place. In addition, the design and implementation of individualized supports are best executed when they are conducted in a comprehensive and collaborative manner. The process of developing supports should involve the student with behavioral challenges and the supports should be tailored to the student's specific needs and circumstances.

The goal of Intensive/Individual Support is to diminish problem behavior and to increase the student's adaptive skills and opportunities for an enhanced quality of life. Tier 3 supports should also meet the behavioral needs of students with the most intensive and/or persistent problems, in the most effective and efficient manner, and be offered in the least restrictive setting possible.

What are the critical components of Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports?

Intensive/Individual Supports involve a process of functional behavioral assessment (FBA) that investigates, in greater detail, why a behavior is occurring. This FBA is utilized in the development of a positive behavior intervention plan (PBIP) that includes more intensive research-based interventions, closer and more detailed progress monitoring, and more staff time and resources dedicated to problem solving for individual students. This FBA/PBIP differs from the Tier 2 FBA conducted by the PST.

The PBIP should be comprised of individualized, assessment-based intervention strategies, including a wide range of options such as:

1. Guidance or instruction for the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviors,
2. Some rearrangement of the antecedent environment so that problems can be prevented and desirable behaviors encouraged, and
3. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing the plan as necessary. In some cases, the plan may also include emergency procedures to ensure safety and rapid de-escalation of severe episodes (this is required when the target behavior is dangerous to the student or others—please review the Hardee District Schools’ Policy on Manual/Physical Restraint), or major ecological changes, such as changes in school placements, in cases where more substantive environmental changes are needed. However, this action should occur only after Tier 3 interventions have been attempted and have been proven ineffective.

Tier 3 supports can be provided at different levels of intensity, depending on the student’s level of need. Students with less intensive, but frequent behavior problems may benefit from a simplified consultation process between the teacher and a skilled school psychologist, during which information for a brief FBA is collected and the formal problem-solving process is applied to the individual student.

Students with more intense behavior problems, or a continued poor response to intervention as determined through a brief consultation, may be supported through a more comprehensive process that includes a structured consultation with the student’s teachers, which gathers specific information for a detailed FBA and the development of a more targeted and comprehensive BIP.

In order for this process to be most effective, school psychologists may need to have a role in training and coaching teachers and other school personnel in the individualized interventions, as well as assessing whether the interventions are being implemented as planned. The school psychologist should determine whether the interventions match the context of the school and classroom so that they are likely to be implemented after direct consultation and coaching are discontinued.

What differentiates Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports from other systems of positive behavior support?

The main differences between Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports and other levels of positive behavior support are the focus and intensity of the interventions. The defining features of Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports (i.e., identification of goals, data collection and analysis, summary statements, multi-element plans, and a monitoring system) address the needs of individual children in a more comprehensive manner. Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports allow teams to vary features of the process (e.g., data collection tools used, breadth of information gathered, specificity and number of hypotheses generated, extent of the behavioral support plan, and degree of monitoring) to provide the most individualized behavior support possible.

When should a program of Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports be implemented?

IDEA requires that a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) be completed and a positive behavioral intervention plan (PBIP) be implemented when disciplinary sanctions result in extended periods (i.e., the first removal beyond 10 cumulative days and every change in placement) in which a student is removed from an environment or suspended (34 C.F.R. 300.520 (b) (c)). Individual systems of support are warranted in other circumstances as well (e.g., when a problem behavior is interfering with educational progress, when students have chronic, durable problem behaviors that have not responded to previous Tier 1 and 2 interventions).

How do we identify students in need of Tier 3 supports?

Students are identified for Tier 3 supports when a poor response to intervention has been established at Tier 2. As part of this process, school teams need to ensure that students have had adequate exposure to Tier 1 and 2 interventions, and that those interventions have been carried out with fidelity. Crisis situations and the severity of the problem behavior for a student may require that they receive the more intensive assessment and support resources at Tier 3 even if they have not had adequate exposure to Tier 1 and 2 supports.

When a student receives Tier 3 supports, he or she will continue to utilize supports that are offered as part of Tiers 1 and 2. However, schools may have to amend how those supports are utilized based on the Tier 3 problem-solving process and ongoing progress monitoring information.

Why is it important to consider “peer comparisons” at Tier 3?

In order to ensure that a behavior problem is not a result of a maladaptive classroom environment, schools have to consider how a student’s behavior compares to that of his or her peers. While this is readily accomplished with academic assessments, the process becomes much more challenging when applied to behavioral performance. At a minimum, schools need to investigate whether a student’s behavior is noticeably different from other students in their class. In doing so, it may be discovered that a classroom-level intervention is called for, as opposed to an individualized behavior plan. It is unlikely that more than 1-2 students in a general education classroom should require Tier 3 supports (should be less than 5% of students if

Tiers 1 and 2 are in place and effective). If many students are struggling academically and behaviorally in a classroom, there are likely to be systems or classroom issues that need to be addressed before more intensive interventions are considered.

Who should be involved in functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention planning?

Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports are most effective when approached as a collaborative (rather than expert-driven) process. Support teams including the student and his/her family, educators, and/or other direct service providers should be involved in assessment and intervention. It is critical that personnel charged with implementing the plan be involved in the team process. It is also helpful to include people who have specific expertise in applied behavior analysis and intervention design. In general, support teams should include people who know the student best, have a vested interest in positive outcomes, represent the range of environments in which the student participates, and have access to resources needed for support.

How should goals for Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports be determined?

Individualized positive behavior support focuses not only on decreasing specific behaviors of concern, but also building adaptive (and replacement) skills, and improving the individual's overall quality of life. Goals should be based on a positive, long-term vision for the student developed with input from the student, the student's family, and the support team.

How are Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Interventions implemented?

Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Interventions are implemented through a flexible, but systematic, process of functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention planning. The following problem-solving process illustrates the general steps of the process.

Step 1: Problem Identification (What's the problem?)

Based on the available information, the team identifies the specific concerns and goals by determining:

1. What is the student doing that is problematic (observable behaviors)?
2. To what extent (frequency, intensity and duration) are these behaviors occurring?
3. What broad goals (academic/social behaviors to be decreased AND increased) does the team hope to achieve through intervention?

Members of the behavioral support team gather information through a variety of sources including review of existing records, interviews of support providers, and direct observation of patterns, antecedents, contexts, and consequences.

Step 2: Problem Analysis (Why is it occurring?)

The team uses the information to create summary statements or hypotheses that describe relationships between the student's behaviors of concern and aspects of the environments. These statements include:

1. When, where, and with whom the behavior is most/least likely to occur,
2. What happens following the behavior (consequences-what they get or avoid), and
3. Other variables that appear to be affecting the person's behavior.

Step 3: Intervention Design (What are we going to do about it?)

A plan is developed, based on the summary statements, to address the behavioral concerns and fit within the environments in which it will be used and should include:

1. A measure of the student's strengths,
2. Clear goals for the intervention(s),
3. Adjustments to the environment that reduce the likelihood of the problem,
4. Teaching replacement skills and building general competencies,
5. Contingent consequences to promote positive behaviors and deter problems, and
6. A crisis management plan (if needed). If the student has an IEP, the crisis management plan should be indicated in the IEP.

Step 4: Response to Intervention (Is it working?)

The team works together to ensure that the plan is implemented with consistency and is effective in achieving the identified goals. The team identifies the training and resources needed, determines how to evaluate outcomes (consistent data collection), determines who is responsible for monitoring implementation, and determines how often to review data-making adjustments in the plan, as needed.

How do we know when an individual Tier 3 plan is effective?

At Tier 3, fidelity of intervention implementation continues to be an important consideration for the school team. The school team will need to assess whether interventions are being done as often as necessary and as completely as necessary. Without clear measures of fidelity at Tier 3, it is impossible to assess a student's response to intervention. Also, at Tier 3, progress monitoring must be done with greater frequency (at least weekly, sometimes daily, or throughout the day) and with more detailed information gathered. Effective Tier 3 interventions produce measurable changes in behavior and improvements in a student's quality of life (e.g., participation in integrated activities, improved social relationships, independence and self-sufficiency). Individual PBIP's include objective methods for evaluating these outcomes, and determining adjustments that might be warranted when progress does not occur within a

reasonable time frame. However, a behavior rating scale and other tools that can collect data on a student's progress both quickly and accurately may be utilized.

Can we ever fade supports at Tier 3?

Many students can be successful in a general education setting when provided appropriate function-based support. Once a student demonstrates a consistent pattern of success, teams should consider whether elements of the PBIP can be reduced or gradually eliminated, without affecting the student's performance. Perhaps students can be successfully supported on Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions with a few additional supports. However, some students will need to continue to have a PBIP in place to support them; schools should continue progress monitoring these students to ensure their supports are appropriate and effective.

What may be done if a student does not respond to Tier 3 supports?

If a target student cannot maintain improved levels of behavior without the availability of intensive supportive services, then the student may be considered for ESE education eligibility as appropriate. For students with emotional and behavioral difficulties, exceptional education eligibility usually is considered when a separate setting is required or the services of additional qualified personnel are required throughout the school day.

What is the time frame for the Behavior "RtI" process?

Intervention plans are written with realistic goals implemented for a reasonable and realistic period of time. The term "reasonable and realistic period of time" has no specific definition and is left up to the team to determine, although in most cases, 6-12 months is probably a good rule of thumb. However, certain factors should be taken into consideration when attempting to determine a reasonable period of time for a particular student:

1. How far below expectations the student is performing (the further below expectations the student is performing, the longer it will take him/her to catch up to peers).
2. The particular skill to be learned (some skills naturally take longer to learn than others).
3. The intensity of the instruction provided.
4. The point in the school year at which the interventions are first implemented (sometimes "reasonable and realistic" means that the interventions will need to continue into the next school year before benchmarks can be expected to be achieved).
5. What else is going on in the student's life?

What should be done when there is a crisis situation?

Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports is a process that takes time, planning, organization and consistency to be effective. When severe episodes of problem behavior occur, it is important to provide a rapid response to ensure the safety of all involved and produce a rapid de-escalation of the behavior. To maintain Tier 3 Intensive/Individual Supports, safe crisis management procedures are needed and should be planned thoroughly in advance. It is important to

remember that the goals of crisis management procedures are to ensure the safety of the student and all others, and to de-escalate the problem as rapidly as possible in the least intrusive manner so as to reduce the probability of future occurrences. In certain instances some students may have an acute onset of emotional/behavioral characteristics where the severity of the emotional/behavioral manifestations requires immediate ESE services (Extraordinary circumstances, Rule 6A-6.030116FAC). An example could be a student coming from a residential hospital facility with a significant mental health diagnosis and a history of intensive support services in restrictive settings or a recent emotional trauma which produces a need for immediate emotional and/or behavioral supports. **The need for such immediate ESE services should be infrequent and closely monitored.**

* Much of the content of this technical assistance paper was borrowed from the www.pbis.org and the <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/> websites with permissions from the authors.

Hardee District Schools “RtI” Procedural Steps

1. Step one:

The classroom teacher identifies a specific behavior concern and communicates with parent/guardian in person or via telephone (**parent/teacher conference 1**). This conference is documented using the Hardee District Schools’ Tier 1 Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan Form. At the first parent conference, the teacher provides the parent with a copy of the “RtI” Parent Information Letter and obtains their signature. Proceed to step 2.

2. Step two:

Tier 1 interventions are implemented utilizing Hardee District Schools Tier 1 Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan Form. The method of Progress Monitoring (**PM**) of the Tier 1 Plan will be determined by the classroom teacher. A **progress review date is set**. Examples of Tier 1 Interventions may include:

- a. Teaching positive behavioral expectations to the whole class.
- b. Activities to promote rule clarity and acceptance.
- c. Positive reinforcement for displaying expected behavior (token economies, verbal praise).
- d. Utilizing a classroom point/color system to manage the interfering behavior.
- e. Correcting the inappropriate behavior and prompting expected behavior.
- f. 4:1 positive to negative interactions between adults and children.
- g. Instruction in: developing self-control, stress-management, responsible decision-making, social problem-solving and communication skills delivered over a long period of time.
- h. Individual and group reinforcement.
- i. Differentiated instruction and accommodations for student characteristics and learning styles.
- j. Written communication with parents/guardians of the student regarding behavioral issues.

3. Step three:

Parent/teacher **conference 2** is held to review Tier 1 progress. The three fidelity check questions are answered and supporting documentation attached. **All three fidelity check questions** must be answered **YES** in order to proceed. Any question which is answered **NO** requires that the expectation, concept or need for positive rewards be addressed. This may involve re-teaching and providing the necessary positive rewards.

If all fidelity check questions are answered **YES** and the student is continuing to experience behavioral difficulties then develop additional Tier 1 interventions utilizing the Tier 1

Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan Form. **Schedule a progress review date (PST # 1).** The teacher will complete the Teacher Input Form and attach the Behavior Screening Scale (SRSS/ SIBSS) prior to PST # 1. All data and graphs must be made available to all team members at least five school days prior to the meeting date and should include all data available up to the date the graphs were prepared.

4. Step four: PST # 1

- a. The PST will review Tier 1 data, disciplinary data, the Teacher Input Form, and Data Tracking Form with the attached behavior screening scale and any other pertinent or available data (academic needs) in order to assess the need for progression to Tier 2.
- b. A Tier 2 FBA (functional behavior assessment) will be completed by the PST and appropriate Tier 2 interventions determined.
- c. Should an additional PST meeting be required at the Tier 2 level due to insufficient behavioral progress, the school psychologist/guidance counselor may be consulted to assist with intervention planning. Sample Tier 2 interventions may include:
 1. Daily report cards (sample in appendix).
 2. Mentoring programs.
 3. Check-in/check-out systems (sample in appendix).
 4. Self-monitoring systems (sample in appendix).
 5. Behavior contracting (sample in appendix).
 6. Social skills instruction or school counseling.
 7. Anger management intervention.
 8. Bullying prevention intervention.
- d. Select a method for progress monitoring (PM) and include desirable short-term behavioral objectives. All Progress Monitoring data is to be presented in graphed form.
- e. Complete and distribute the Daily and Component Intervention Fidelity Form.
- f. Obtain parent signature/consent for sensory screening.
- g. Complete the Social/Developmental History.
- h. If necessary 1 observation form will be distributed to an identified team member.
- i. PST # 2 is scheduled.

5. Step five:

PST # 2 (review Tier 2 outcomes and consider Tier 3 interventions/evaluations, if needed).

- a. Tier 2 data is reviewed. Daily and component intervention fidelity data must be 75% or higher to proceed.

- b. Tier 2 behavior plan is revised as needed.
 - c. If the student is identified as **requiring Tier 3 interventions**, obtain consent for evaluation.
 - d. If necessary 1 observation form will be distributed to an identified team member.
 - e. Develop Tier 3 behavior intervention plan and update the FBA. These interventions are highly individualized and implemented based on non-responsiveness to Tier 2 interventions. Sample interventions may include:
 - 1. Function based behavior plan addressing: desired positive behaviors, skillful and safe reaction to problem behavior and teaching and reinforcing functionally equivalent replacement behavior.
 - 2. Individual counseling (guidance counselor or mental health professional).
 - 3. Referral for multi-system wrap around services (if severity warrants) to community agencies.
 - f. Progress monitoring plan will be developed and include desirable short term behavioral objectives. All Progress Monitoring data is to be presented in graphed form.
6. **Step six: PST # 3 held** to review progress. Student may be referred for ESE Staffing to determine eligibility, if warranted.

Chapter 5:

Chapter 5: Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. A student, who was referred for the “RtI” process due to reading comprehension difficulties, failed the language screening at the beginning of Tier 2. Language interventions were implemented, along with reading comprehension interventions, for 10-14 weeks. At the next PST meeting, the data showed marked improvement in the student’s reading comprehension. Does a full language evaluation still need to be done because the student initially failed the language screening?**

No. The goal of the “RtI” process is to bring about positive outcomes for all students whenever possible without necessitating the determination of an ESE exceptionality. If the interventions bring about the desired improvement in reading comprehension skills (or whatever academic skill was targeted), no further evaluation is warranted or necessary. The academic improvement suggests that, regardless of the reason for the failure of the language screening, the interventions successfully remediated the language issues as well as the reading comprehension deficits.

- 2. Are computer programs considered to be interventions?**

It depends on the program. If a computer program contains an instructional component, it could be considered an intervention, but only if it is research-based. Programs that contain no instructional component, such as Education City, Study Island, do not satisfy the requirements to be considered interventions. Programs such as Renaissance and Odyssey may be used for progress monitoring data.

- 3. What role do classroom grades play in “RtI”?**

Classroom grades are one valuable piece of data that can be used in the “RtI” process, but because grades involve some degree of subjectivity, they should never be used as the sole measure of a student’s progress. It is always preferable to use standardized instruments whenever possible.

- 4. What are we doing for math interventions and progress monitoring?**

At the present time, there are a few “scientifically-based” math interventions available. An examination of the research being done in the area of math indicates that a few math curricula and interventions are showing promise, but that none are producing strong results so far. The district has developed mini assessments for grades K-5 tied directly to the math curriculum that must be used for ongoing assessment of student progress. Additional math progress monitoring tools might include math minutes, chapter tests and quizzes, etc. Key Math is available as a diagnostic tool.

5. How does “RtI” work from one school year to the next?

Students in the “RtI” process do NOT begin at Tier 1 every time a new school year begins. Except for the 2009-2010 school year, the student will begin the school year on whatever tier he or she was on at the end of the previous school year. However, there is a caveat to this year-to-year transition:

Because it is necessary to “tease out” factors, other than a possible learning disability, that may be impacting academic performance, it will almost always be necessary to extend the time on the tier to allow for an adjustment period to the student’s new teacher, new peer group, different curriculum, etc. In general, students should remain on the current tier for at least 8 weeks into the new school year to ensure that these “adjustment” factors have been ruled out or dealt with satisfactorily.

This caveat would apply even if the student had already been on Tier 2 for several weeks prior to the end of the previous school year.

6. What do we do in the case of a student who went through the “RtI” process, was tested, but who did not qualify using the discrepancy method? Can these students immediately be reviewed for eligibility under the new rule?

No. During the 2009-2010 school year, many of the tools and interventions necessary for implementation of “RtI” were put into place. However, **all** the required components were not in place to utilize “RtI” alone for SLD eligibility purposes. For example, there was no “fidelity measure” in place. We also had no way to comprehensively compare a particular student’s performance to the requisite peer groups and subgroups, except on a very few instruments. For the July 2010 implementation in the elementary schools, these deficiencies will be remedied. All the required components will need to be in place and utilized before eligibility may be determined. Therefore, those students who were tested under the discrepancy method and found ineligible cannot automatically be determined SLD eligible under the new rule. They may, however, begin the process at Tier 2 and progress through the process as any other student. For the same reason, all students who were in Tiers 2 or 3 at the end of the 2009-2010 school year will begin the 2010-2011 school year in Tier 2 to ensure that all components of the “RtI” process have been complied with.

7. I have a student who may be up for retention. Must the student be in the “RtI” process before retention can be considered?

At a minimum, the student must have a current PMP; however, in most cases, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which a student is being considered for retention without already being in the “RtI” process. Therefore, outside of the exception specified below, any student being considered for retention should at least be in Tier 2 before the decision to retain is made.

Exception: For students who enroll during the third or fourth nine weeks of the school year, it may take the teacher some time to become fully cognizant of the student’s strengths and weaknesses. The student may also have a difficult time adjusting to his new school, his new

teacher, or his new peer group. True academic or behavioral difficulties may not become apparent for a number of weeks after entering the class. In those situations, students may be considered for retention even though they are not in Tier 2 or above of the “RtI” process.

8. What if a student’s academic performance is below expectations, but the cause appears to be a lack of effort or motivation, rather than a skill deficit?

In those cases, where the student appears to have the ability to perform grade level work, the focus should be primarily on behavioral interventions to address the lack of effort or motivation. However, it is often difficult to exclude academic deficits with certainty. Therefore, best practice would dictate that academic interventions be attempted in tandem with behavioral interventions.

9. Sometimes, a student whose behavior requires intervention, does not necessarily exhibit external behaviors displayed in an aggressive or disruptive manner. For example, I have a student in my class who becomes withdrawn, does not comply with my direction, or gets off task. She doesn’t act out in a disruptive way, and I am utilizing strategies in the classroom that are keeping the problem in check. However, it is taking a significant amount of time and effort on my part to deal with the behaviors successfully. How do I track behavioral progress in this kind of situation?

In this type of situation, it can be very difficult to graph behavior because there is really nothing overt to track. In this situation, the teacher can track and graph *his* or *her* response to the student’s behavior. For example, if off task behavior is a significant issue, and redirection by the teacher is dealing with the issue, there may be no easily graphed data. However, if the teacher is redirecting the student 75 times per day to keep her on task, that in itself documents some very intensive interventions to maintain the student’s productivity. Graphing teacher response to behavior is especially applicable in Tier 3, when/if the intervention is faded back to see if the student can maintain progress on her own.

10. I am using an intervention for a student that is below her grade level, but it is on her instructional level. Should I be graphing her progress on the below grade level intervention?

Absolutely. Progress on BOTH instructional level and grade level instruments should be tracked and graphed. While “RtI” requires a student to be compared to grade level peers, information as to how rapidly a student is progressing in a below grade level intervention will help the team determine a reasonable and realistic period of time before the student may be expected to achieve grade-level proficiency. Therefore, even if improvement on grade level progress monitoring instruments is not occurring at a desirable rate, rapid improvement on below grade level instruments would suggest that the student is moving toward proficiency and may only need more time in interventions to achieve it.

11. We are reviewing data for a student showing deficits in reading, but I am concerned that the student has had very poor attendance in previous years. Don’t we have to take attendance into account when looking at a possible learning disability?

We certainly do. If a student has missed more than 10% of any previous school year, the question must be asked whether or not that student may have missed a large enough chunk of the skills needed to build a solid foundation in the subject area to be causing the current academic concerns. This is a situation where more diagnostic testing in the subject area may reveal some basic skill deficits that below grade level interventions might address more quickly and efficiently. Once the gap in the foundation is patched, more advanced reading skills may soon follow.

12. How large a gap must there be between a targeted student and his peers before referral to the PST can occur?

The student must be exhibiting a gap of 20% or more, between himself and his peers, in at least one skill area before referral to the PST would be appropriate. The gap of 20% or more must be documented by two or more separate measures.

13. What does an “evaluation” look like within “RtI”?

Remember, the new SLD rule does not *require* ANY additional testing for eligibility. Lack of response to high quality interventions delivered with fidelity is the sole eligibility criterion. Thus, an “evaluation” within the “RtI” process may simply be a review of all the information obtained to the current day to determine if the data supports a classification of SLD.

Teams may request additional testing if they believe that pertinent information can only be obtained in that way, but there should be ample justification for it. Under the new rule, IQ scores and process tests are *not* directly relevant to SLD determination, so these types of testing would not be required for eligibility determination. However, they *may* be requested during the problem solving process if the team feels that this information would be useful in the development of appropriate interventions for the student. There should already be an abundance of academic information available from progress monitoring data which would make additional academic testing unnecessary. Therefore, PST’s should be very selective in their requests for additional testing if SLD is the suspected disability.

If the PST suspects a disability other than SLD, they should request the appropriate assessments as specified in the District’s Special Programs and Procedures manual.

14. When is parental consent for an evaluation obtained?

Because far less testing will be done for SLD eligibility purposes, the question of when to obtain parental consent for an evaluation is not as clear cut as it once was. In “RtI”, consent should be obtained when the team believes that it has acquired enough data to suspect eligibility/ineligibility for an exceptionality. Although at the beginning of Tier 3, there may be occasions when the team may *suspect* a disability, it is rare that they will have all the data necessary to make that determination. Generally, the results of the Tier 3 interventions would be necessary before any eligibility determination could be made. Therefore, consent for an evaluation may not need to be obtained until the end of Tier 3.

15. Are we comparing the student's performance to age-level or grade-level peers?

The first eligibility question to ask is whether or not the student is performing comparably to *grade-level* peers. If the student is performing on grade level for the grade he or she is currently in, the student could not be determined eligible for ESE on the basis of having a Specific Learning Disability.

Students who have been retained are generally subject to the same requirement, since the idea of retention is to allow a student to master skills they had not mastered the first time through a grade. As long as the retained student is meeting the standards for the current grade he or she is in, eligibility for ESE should not be considered.

Chapter 6:

Chapter 6: APPENDICES

- A. Academic Referral Forms Packet
- B. Behavioral Referral Forms Packet
- C. Miscellaneous Forms (Academic/Behavioral)
- D. Behavioral Interventions
- E. Academic Progress Monitoring
- F. Behavioral Progress Monitoring
- G. Academic Online Resources
- H. Behavioral Online Resources
- I. Acronyms
- J. Problem Solving Team Agendas
- K. Worksheet/Report for Specific Learning Disabilities and/or Language Impairment

