

# High School RTI<sup>2</sup> Implementation

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Intervention Tools & Resources

**1. Does the TDOE have a list of approved reading and/or math programs to utilize for intervention?**

The department completed a peer review process of intervention programs in the spring of 2015. Interventions submitted by vendors were rated on a rubric specific to RTI<sup>2</sup> in Tennessee by trained Tennessee educators in regional sessions throughout all eight CORE regions. The results of this review are available on our website ([here](#)) under "Peer Review of Intervention Programs." The rubric is also available for school and district leaders to review existing intervention resources available to them and evaluate options prior to purchasing new programs and can be found on pp. 285–290 of the [RTI<sup>2</sup> Implementation Guide](#).

**2. Are there any free online resources to supplement Tier II and Tier III interventions for math and literacy?**

Free resources are available. Please reach out to Ryan Mathis ([Ryan.Mathis@tn.gov](mailto:Ryan.Mathis@tn.gov)) for math and literacy interventions, tools, resources, and guidance.

**3. Are there any free resources (websites, etc.) that you recommend for helping our intervention teachers build lessons that are appropriate for secondary learners who need remediation with "elementary" level skills?**

This summer, the department's Regional Educator Summits will offer a course focused on "Intervention and Differentiation in Secondary Literacy." This course will focus on strategies for students in grades 6–12 and is relevant for all tiers of instruction. More information about available courses is available online ([here](#)).

### Communications

**4. Are there any communication tools available for high school parents?**

The [RTI<sup>2</sup> Implementation Guide](#) provides many templates that can be used to communicate important messages about RTI<sup>2</sup>. Form letters should be customized based on your district's implementation. Form letters for grades 6–12 can be found on pp. 83–99.

### Special Education

**5. What's the easiest way to articulate the difference between Tier III and Special Education to schools?**

Special Education intervention is designed to be more intensive than Tier III. Services for students with special education needs are going to be determined through an IEP team and his/her services will be delivered through a special education teacher.

**6. Can students with IEPs be involved in Tier II or Tier III classes if their data suggests that they would benefit from those classes?**

A student with disabilities can receive Tier II or Tier III interventions when appropriate (i.e., the intervention matches the student's associated area of deficit). For example, if a student has

reading goals on their IEP, the assumption is that their needs will be met through the most intensive intervention through special education. There will be some cases, however, where a student has reading goals, but not math goals. For a student in this scenario, if data suggest that the student could benefit from a Tier II or Tier III intervention in math, then the student with a disability should not be excluded.

### **7. How does scheduling of RTI<sup>2</sup> look in a high school with the majority in Tier II and Tier III classes?**

RTI<sup>2</sup> is a decision-making framework based on the needs of your students, not a “one-size-fits-all” solution. Therefore, schedules look different school-to-school depending on how many students would benefit from support, current master schedule, and available educator support. Typical high school approaches to scheduling time for intervention include (but are not limited to):

- **Approach A:** A daily 30-45 minute block of time in which all students have enrichment, intervention, or remediation. All tiers are addressed at this time.
- **Approach B:** Tier III interventions are scheduled as a class using a Tier III course code. Tier II interventions occur during another flexible time.
- **Approach C:** Tier III interventions are scheduled as a class using Tier III course codes AND the whole school has a daily 30 minute block for enrichment, remediation, and intervention.

Sample Schedules can be found on pp. 254–260 of the [RTI<sup>2</sup> Implementation Guide](#).

### **8. What if a student needs intervention in math and ELA? Is it required that the student receive intervention in both?**

In this scenario, the school RTI<sup>2</sup> data team should make the determination as to what is best for the student. Data teams can decide to prioritize one deficit area or split time spent in intervention between multiple areas (e.g., three days in literacy and two days in math during a week). Once a decision has been made as to whether the student will receive intervention in both deficit areas or only one, progress monitoring will be important to determine if the approach is working or not. If the student is not making expected progress in one or both areas, the data team should reconsider the approach.

### **9. Is there a requirement as to whether interventions have to be skills-based rather than standards-based?**

RTI<sup>2</sup> is designed to identify student needs and address the needs with specific supports. If a student is behind in a specific class and would benefit from standards-based support, the student would require a type of support called “remediation.” On the other hand, if a student lacks the foundational skills to access grade-level content, the student requires skills-based support, which is referred to as “intervention.” In Tennessee’s RTI<sup>2</sup> framework, both Tier II and Tier III, refer to skills-based interventions. However, many schools benefit from a schedule that allows them to support students across a continuum, including enrichment, remediation, and intervention during time set-aside during the day for all students.

### **10. Is Tier II required at the high school?**

It is required for districts to identify at-risk students with deficits and provide aligned

interventions to meet student need. A multi-tiered approach is the most effective way to make sure the district is able to accommodate all students in need of tiered interventions. Specific program and scheduling decisions should be based at the school and district level and dependent on the number of students identified and their specific areas of deficit.

**11. Does the paperwork from progress monitoring need to be submitted at any point during the year, or is that just something that we will need to keep documentation of "in house"?**

No, the department does not collect any progress monitoring data. The data from progress monitoring should be analyzed by school and district teams in order to assess students' responsiveness to instruction and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring data should be used continuously to drive instruction for the student.

### Data and Progress Monitoring

**12. Is there a requirement for the number or schedule of "fidelity check observations" that each Tier II/III teacher will need to have?**

In Tier II, fidelity must be monitored at least three times (two direct and one indirect) before making a data-based decision to increase the intensity of the interventions (moving a student into Tier III). In Tier III, fidelity monitoring will focus on the interventions specific to each student and should be monitored at least five times (three direct, two indirect) before making a decision to refer a student to special education.

**13. Are the expectations for progress monitoring different at the high school level compared to the elementary and middle school?**

No, the expectations for progress monitoring are the same at each grade level. Progress monitoring data and regular meetings of the RTI<sup>2</sup> data team are essential to evaluating the effectiveness of interventions.

**14. Please address the correct procedure for progress monitoring in reading deficits, especially comprehension.**

Progress monitoring should be done in the student's area of deficit. A survey-level assessment will help identify the student's foundational area of deficit. For example, if a student's area of deficit is comprehension, then a probe or tool of measurement should be used that measures their progress in comprehension.

The state does not endorse specific vendors and/or products; however, three universal screeners and progress monitoring tools were identified through a request for proposals (RFP) process. The three skills-based tools that were identified to meet the criteria were AimsWeb, Dibels, and Easy CBM. Easy CBM and Dibels both offer limited free versions.

**15. What type of measurement tool do you suggest for identifying students needing RTI<sup>2</sup> in the high school setting?**

Because high school students already have many academic and non-academic data points, it is not necessary to screen every high school student with a universal screener. It is recommended that high schools develop and use an Early Warning System to use pre-existing data to identify students who are most at-risk. Data to use may include (but is not limited to) attendance,

discipline, prior screening data, state and national assessment scores, etc. The state developed an Early Warning template and tutorial that you can access [here](#). Once schools have identified students who are most at-risk, probes or survey-level assessments should be used to determine the students' associated areas of deficit in order to determine what interventions those students could benefit from.

**16. How can we best help our Tier III teachers prepare to teach interventions? Will the two-day literacy training this summer be enough?**

The two-day training offered this summer is an excellent opportunity to prepare teachers who will serve as interventionists. Additionally, you may reach out to your CORE office for additional professional development to be delivered within your districts. Each CORE office is staffed with an interventionist who can assist with training, resources, and support.

**17. How are other schools handling parents who want to opt out of intervention?**

RTI<sup>2</sup> is a general education initiative and is not optional. It is important to proactively communicate to families why RTI<sup>2</sup> is being implemented and how it will impact all students. If your school or district needs support related to this issue, please contact Theresa Nicholls, director of special education eligibility, at [Theresa.Nicholls@tn.gov](mailto:Theresa.Nicholls@tn.gov).