

Pennsylvania's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII)
Framework for Secondary Schools

Guidelines and Recommendations



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Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) in Secondary Schools: Guidelines and Recommendations

Introduction

Secondary schools across the nation are challenged to improve the academic achievement and relational (social/emotional) success of students. Twenty-first century students must be able to think critically and creatively to solve problems, be innovative, use complex communication skills to collaborate effectively, and have extensive knowledge across a number of domains including technology.

The following statistics represent the current status of our nation's adolescents:

- Nearly 7,000 high school students drop out each day (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006).
- Nationally, more than one-third of African American and Latino students who enter ninth grade will not complete high school with their peers in four years (www.edtrust.org, September 9, 2010).
- In Pennsylvania, 22% of ninth graders fail to graduate from high school within four years. Among those who graduate, many lack the skills and knowledge to succeed in postsecondary education and careers that yield family-sustaining incomes (PDE Ensuring Success for All High School Graduates, 2007).
- The Education Trust reports that many new hires are deficient in basic writing (72%), mathematics (54%), and reading comprehension skills (38%) (Casner-Lotto et al., 2006).
- About 15.9% of all students who graduated in 2009 had access to an AP experience that resulted in a score of 3 or higher (3 = predictive college success) (The College Board, 2010).
- About half of all first year college students are taking at least one remedial course (The College Board, 2010).

Drop-Out Prevention Programs & Key Components

According to current research, the three highest indicators associated with school drop-out include 1) failing core academic courses in secondary school, 2) failure to be promoted to the next grade level, and 3) low attendance. The first proactive step a school can take to prevent drop-out is to build an early warning system that contains accurate and specific data that will identify those students who may benefit from intervention. The use of an electronic data system that includes individual student-level data and can track students over time and also allow risk factors to be assessed is recommended (Jerald, 2006). Craig Jerald's 2006 paper, *Identifying Potential Dropouts: Key Lessons for Building an Early Warning Data System: A Dual Agenda of High Standards and High Graduation Rates*, outlines steps and considerations to take when building an early warning system.

Currently, there is not an extensive menu of proven strategies and interventions tailored for key dropout prevention initiatives, however, there are a few proven dropout prevention programs that feature the following key components:

1. attendance and behavior monitors
2. tutoring and counseling
3. establishment of small learning communities for greater personalization
4. engaging catch-up courses
5. Ninth Grade Academies
6. homerooms
7. benchmarking
8. progress monitoring
9. tiered interventions
10. a focus on equal access to rigorous coursework and high expectations
11. career/college awareness
12. community engagement
13. 8th-to-9th grade transition programs

Specific dropout prevention programs that have strong research showing positive or potentially positive effects include *Check & Connect*, *Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success* (ALAS), and *Career Academies* (What Works Clearinghouse, 2006). In addition, the Early Warning System (EWS) Tool, a free web-based system, enables schools and districts to identify students who may be at risk of dropping out of high school and to monitor these students' responses to tiered support ([Early Warning Systems Tool](#)).

Adapted from:

Monrad, M. & Kennelly, L. (2007). Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions. Report commissioned by the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research.

http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_ApproachesToDropoutPrevention.pdf

Rationale for Secondary Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII)

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) is a comprehensive, general education service delivery model that may be implemented within elementary, middle, and high schools. Implementation of an RtII framework includes the establishment of an efficient and effective continuum of supports that is used to address a wide range of academic and social needs. High quality instruction, data-based decision making and instructional matching are cornerstones that often serve to differentiate instructional and intervention intensity through multiple tiers of support.

When schools adopt an RtII framework, they are in a position to systematically identify students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes, frequently monitor student progress, implement

evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of instruction based upon student response (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2008). Nationally, the RtII model has been implemented primarily at the elementary level. However, an increasing number of secondary schools are adopting RtII because it holds such promise as a comprehensive school improvement strategy.

Research related to the implementation of the RtII framework within middle and high schools continues to be limited at this time and is in part attributable to challenges that are unique at this level (Mellard & Layland with Parsons, 2008). Uniform access to high-quality instruction, scheduling and credits, grading practices, common core competencies, and developmental needs are just some of the variables that impact upon student achievement.

Guidelines for Secondary RtII implementation were developed based upon principles of effective instruction, content literacy across subject domains, and positive behavioral support (e.g., Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Deshler, 2005; Sprick, 2006; Wiliam, 2007; Marzano, 2003; Ellis, 1994). This document is intended to provide guidance for designing, implementing, and sustaining implementation of an RtII framework at the secondary level.

PA Standards Aligned System (SAS) and the Secondary RtII Framework

The Pennsylvania SAS is a collaborative product of research and good practice that identifies six distinct elements which, if utilized together, will provide schools and districts with a common framework for continuous school and district enhancement or improvement. The six common elements are as follows: Clear Standards, Fair Assessments, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, Materials and Resources, and Interventions.



SAS 6 Circles - Explained	
<u>Clear Standards</u>	Clear, high standards that establish what all students need to know and be able to accomplish.
<u>Fair Assessments</u>	Fair assessments aligned to the standards.
<u>Curriculum Framework</u>	A framework specifying Big Ideas, Concepts, and Competencies in each subject area/at each grade level.
<u>Instruction</u>	Aligned instruction-aligning instruction with standards involves identifying strategies that are best suited to help students achieve the expected performance.

Materials and Resources	Materials that address the standards.
Interventions	A safety net/intervention system that insures all students meet standards.

These six elements in the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System are integrated throughout the RtII model (www.pdesas.org).






RtII is endorsed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) as the assessment and instructional framework to organize and implement Pennsylvania’s Standards Aligned System (SAS) to improve student achievement. It is a comprehensive, multi-tiered system designed to enable early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk, and is an alternative to the discrepancy model for the identification of students with learning disabilities. RtII allows educators to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties prior to student failure. The goal of RtII is to improve student achievement using research-based interventions matched to Pennsylvania’s Standards Aligned System (SAS).






Components of Pennsylvania’s Secondary Schools RtII model


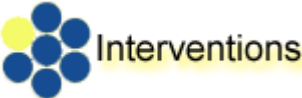
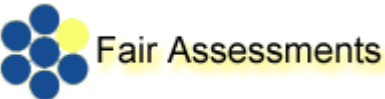
A review of the literature indicates that RtII models look differently across states. Some states have adopted a problem-solving versus standard protocol model and include a range of three to five tiers of support. Pennsylvania’s Secondary RtII framework contains the following core components:

- 1) Universal access to high-quality, standards-aligned core instruction
- 2) Relational support (in-school, family, community) systems that provide students with social/emotional and behavioral supports necessary for higher levels of engagement in the learning process and for completion of their elected course of study.
- 3) Scientific or evidence-based instruction and intervention that includes instructional methodologies, strategies and application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs for identified at-risk students.
- 4) Tiered instruction and intervention that provides students with increasingly intensive support (i.e., time, smaller group size, instructional/intervention match, etc.).
- 5) Data-Based Decision-Making that informs the design of instruction and is based upon screening, formative, diagnostic and summative assessment.
- 6) Differentiated, context-embedded and intensive professional development for all staff.


Components of a Secondary RtII Framework

RtII and SAS Components	Guidelines/Suggestions
<p>1. High-quality classroom instruction/Standards-aligned core curriculum</p>  Clear Standards  Instruction  Curriculum Framework	<p>All students receive instruction within an integrated system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. A prioritized written curriculum, aligned with the taught and assessed curriculum, provides the foundation across all content areas. The curriculum has rigor and relevance and makes direct and explicit connections to the PA Academic Standards.</p> <p>“Core instruction” at the secondary level includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy/communication arts program that continues to provide reading instruction to enhance and/or remediate reading difficulties. 2. Common evidence-based instructional practices that represent “core” practices across all content areas (ex: SIM, Marzano’s <i>Classroom Instruction That Works</i>, Teaching Matters, Wiliam’s <i>Changing Classroom Practice</i> Anita Archer’s adolescent literacy strategies). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high-quality content instruction, following evidence-based practices (students learn critical content required in core curriculum regardless of literacy levels • specific embedded strategies selected at each grade level that represent the “core” to achieve proficiency with the content <p>For more information regarding core instruction, please refer to the Secondary RTII Toolkit: http://www.pattan.net/files/RTI/Sec-RtII-Tier1-CI.pdf</p>
<p>2. Relational Support</p>  Clear Standards  Instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A structured system is in place to provide students with the appropriate level and intensity of support needed to engage in academic learning and remain in school in order to complete course requirements successfully. Attendance, discipline, behavior, and student performance data are used and monitored to design and implement a tiered system of academic and relational support. 2. The system includes the elements of Pennsylvania’s Resiliency/Wellness systemic approach*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Expectations • Meaningful Student Engagement • Connectivity and Bonding • Skills for Life

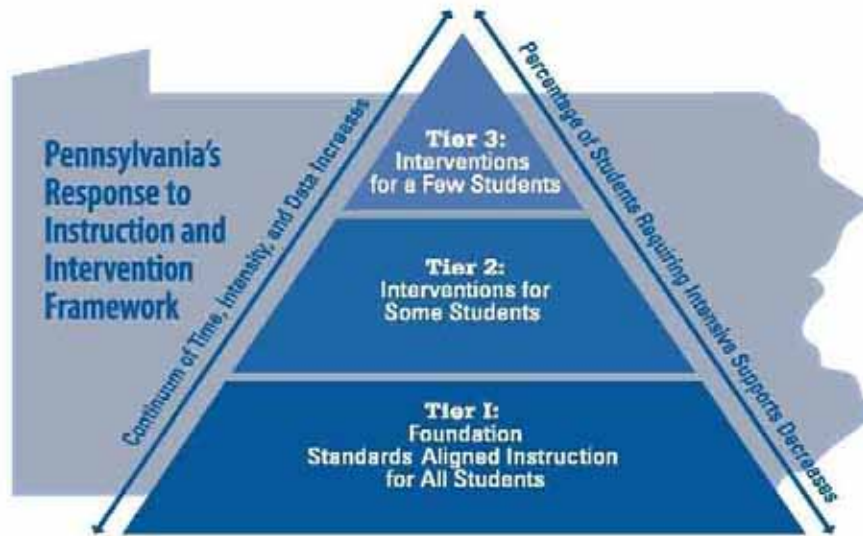
RTII and SAS Components	Guidelines/Suggestions
 Curriculum Framework  Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and Consistent Boundaries • Unconditional Support <p>3. Adoption and implementation of an early warning system that includes indicators for at-risk status.</p> <p>4. Implementation of a school-wide positive behavioral support model.</p> <p>*Adapted from Henderson, N. & Milstein, M. <i>Resiliency in Schools: Making it Happen for Students and Educators</i> (Corwin Press, 2003).</p>
<p>3. Scientifically/evidence based interventions, instructional methodologies and strategies</p>  Interventions  Instruction  Curriculum Framework	<p>Well-designed instruction and intervention is characterized by:</p> <p>1. A match between student need and high quality instruction (Batsche, 2006).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions and instructional methodologies that have proven effectiveness matched to specific demands in course content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marzano’s 9 categories of instructional interventions (http://www.mcrel.org/product/19) ○ Ellis’ 10 Effective Teaching Principles (http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED386853&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED386853) ○ Strategic Instruction Model and Content Enhancement Routines (http://www.ku-crl.org) ○ Anita Archer, Strategic Approach to Literacy Trainings • explicit and systematic instruction of strategies (direct explanation, modeling, and group practice) • intensive writing across the curriculum; using writing to master content • intensive basic skill instruction to develop missing foundational skills (Communication Arts courses) <p>2. Frequent monitoring of student progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formative assessment, including progress monitoring • fidelity checks <p>3. Use of student response data for instructional decision making.</p> <p>For more information regarding instructional strategies, please refer to the Secondary RTII Toolkit:</p>

RtII and SAS Components	Guidelines/Suggestions
	<p>http://www.pattan.net/files/RTI/Sec-RtII-Tier1-CI.pdf</p> <p>For more information on an inventory of assessments in the area of literacy, please check out the Secondary RtII Toolkit: http://www.pattan.net/files/RTI/Sec-RtII-Tier1-CI.pdf</p>
<p>4. Tiered Instruction and Intervention</p>  	<p>Students are provided with increasing levels of support matched to their needs. Frequency and intensity are adjusted based on progress monitoring data and integrity checks are conducted on a routine basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1: High quality instruction in core subject areas (English or English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science). • Tier 2: Targeted and/or extended core instruction and behavioral/relational support in addition to the core. • Tier 3: Intensive instruction and relational support in addition to the core. <p>For more information on interventions that provide literacy support for secondary students, please refer to the Secondary RtII Toolkit: http://www.pattan.net/files/RTI/Sec-RtII-Tier2&3.pdf</p>
<p>5. Data-based decision-making</p> 	<p>A structured data teaming process collects, analyzes and uses student data to adjust instruction, interventions and related supports.</p> <p>1. Examples of Universal Screening at the Secondary Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief and efficient screening measures • All students' literacy performance is profiled; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of what might be profiled include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSSA reading and writing proficiency levels ○ ACCESS for ELLs ○ PVAAS projections (student and cohort level) ○ Performance on Classroom Diagnostic Tool ○ 4Sight ○ Standardized Achievement Tests ○ Grades

RtII and SAS Components	Guidelines/Suggestions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Behavioral Indicators (see triangle) <p>2. Guiding Principles for Data-based Decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data trends may have school-wide implications. • Assessments fall along a continuum (e.g., summative, formative, diagnostic, and benchmark) • Teams are interdisciplinary and are characterized by complementary skill sets • A structure for teaming and problem-solving is utilized • Culture and practices shift from a deficiency model to one of providing instruction that meets the needs of all students. The staff recognizes the complexities of student achievement. There is system-wide focus on literacy and math success as foundational priorities • Alignment of curriculum, assessment, and instruction with PA and common core standards • The professional staff interprets student achievement and growth data and uses it to identify and implement interventions that support accelerated student progress in a multi-tiered system • Multiple measures and data points are used to make decisions about students • Exit criteria are established for Tier 2 and 3 services <p>3. Formative (formal and informal), benchmark, diagnostic and summative assessment practices are in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal screening, (e.g., PVAAS projections, PVAAS growth, PSSA, 4Sight Benchmark, Maze, and record reviews including behavioral indices such as attendance, grades, infractions, etc.) • Progress monitoring (e.g., Content area classroom based measures, CBM, classroom diagnostic tool) • Diagnostic measures (e.g., Assessment of text comprehension; GRADE, evaluation of language fundamentals, CELF-4, World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Aptitude Placement Test {W-APT}) • Benchmark assessments (e.g., district writing assessments, 4Sight) • Summative assessments (PSSA, Keystone Exams) <p>4. Required decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who conducts the assessments? • Who collects the data? • What system will be used to warehouse the data? • What formats or protocols will be most useful for facilitating data-teaming?

RtII and SAS Components	Guidelines/Suggestions
	<p>For an inventory of assessments for secondary students regarding literacy, please refer to the Secondary RTII Toolkit: http://www.pattan.net/files/RTI/Sec-RtII-Assess-Tools.pdf</p>
<p>6. Professional Development</p>  <p>Fair Assessments</p> <p>Instruction</p> <p>Materials and Resources</p>	<p>Professional development is designed based on data analysis, staff needs and context-embedded. Topics may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment strategies and tools • Evaluation of data: data analysis/root cause analysis • Reading and writing strategies (across the content) • Selection and implementation of robust, evidence-based Tier 2/3 interventions • High-quality core instruction • Differentiated Instruction • SAS

Secondary RtII Framework Component 4: Tiered Instruction & Intervention



Tier 1: Standards Aligned Core Instruction for All Students (100%):

- High-quality and well-defined instruction provided to all students. The “core” is typically provided in a whole class structure and includes instruction provided to small groups using differentiated instruction methods (Stupski). The “core curriculum” at the secondary level consists of the prioritized content specified in the district curriculum, with specific core strategies (SIM; Marzano, Ellis, Archer) implemented at each grade level.
- School wide effective behavior support is in place and includes defined policy and procedures, consistent implementation by administrators and staff, clearly articulated expectations for all students, a defined system to recognize positive behavior including incentives, structured advisories, explicit teaching of desired behaviors, rules, and routines, and a physical environment conducive to learning.
- The elements of Pennsylvania’s Resiliency/Wellness Systemic Approach, which include: high expectations; meaningful student engagement; connectivity and bonding; skills for life; clear and consistent boundaries; and unconditional supports are embedded within instructional and behavioral RtII designs.
- English/Language Arts courses are based on adolescent literacy needs and principles.
- Clear expectations are established for daily attendance with a planned response to every absence and programs to reinforce good attendance.
- A grading system is in place that rewards what has been learned rather than the process of learning.

Tier 2: Targeted Group Instruction for Some Students (15-20%):

- Strategic instruction is in addition to core instruction for all students at Tier 1 and provides extended core instruction and/or targeted instruction that is explicit in nature and provides guided practice for students who show evidence of inadequate response to the high quality instruction provided in Tier 1. Support is provided in a smaller group

either inside the classroom or outside the classroom through a specific reading or math class or through supplemental/extended day program (ex: reading comprehension lab, vocabulary lab, math skills and application). Specific evidence-based instructional strategies and/or interventions are utilized and progress monitoring is conducted at least monthly.

- Additional behavioral interventions are in place to support students and may include the use of increased cues and prompts, mentoring, peer support programs, a system to reward positive behavior (incentives and structured advisories).
- Attendance is monitored and reported daily. Routine collaboration with parents and community agencies occurs.

Tier 3: Intensive Instruction for a Few Students (5-10%):

- At Tier 3, instruction provided to students who are significantly below proficiency levels and have inadequate response to instruction and intervention provided at Tiers 1 and 2. Highly targeted intervention is provided to develop foundational literacy or math skills and may be implemented using an intervention program that is specifically designed to address one or more critical areas of reading or math while at the same time accelerating growth toward grade-level proficiency. This additional support may include specific skill instruction in even smaller groups. Progress monitoring occurs weekly.
- Behavioral assessment and individualized plans are developed for the few students who require intensive intervention and may include the use of individual contracts with students and families, integrated school/community supports, daily reporting to families, and involvement with the student assistance programs.

Examples of Relevant Data

Current/Projected Academic Performance Data:

- *PVAAS Projections
- *Performance: PA Keystone exams
- *ACCESS for ELLs Data
- *Performance: Classroom Diagnostic Tools
- *4Sight
- *Common Summative Assessments
- *STAR
- *Formal instruments or informal observations used to inform instruction and enhance student learning outcomes.
- *Individually and/or group administered diagnostic measures

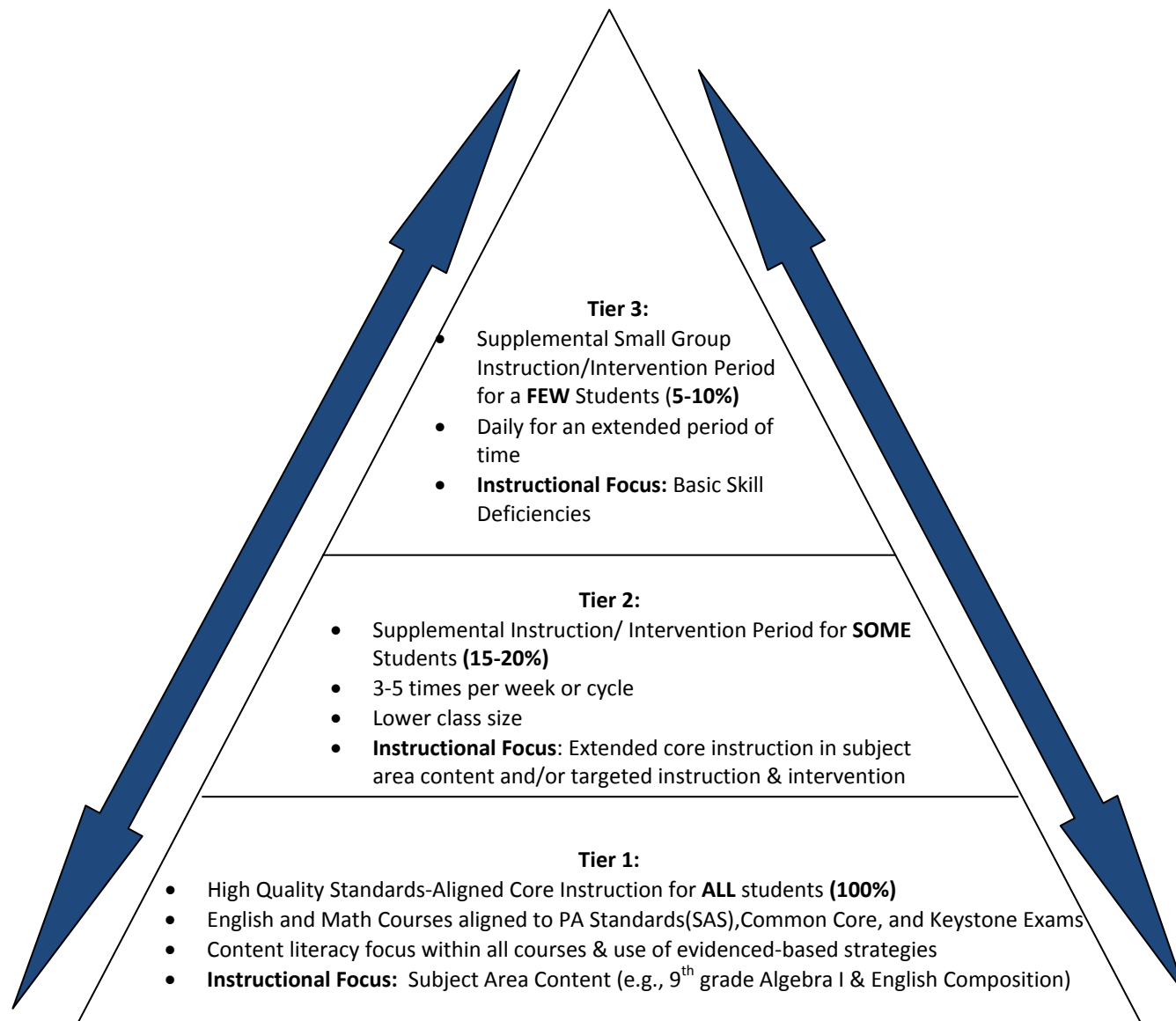
Existing Data (Use to establish career and college risk and readiness)

- *PSSA
- * End of Year (EOY) Failing Grades in core subjects as early as 4th grade
- *Failing Grades in beginning and end of 9th grade fall semester courses
- *Earning Fewer than 2 credits; lack of promotion to 10th grade
- * <70-80% Attendance (5 weeks or more of missed school)(>10 days in first month of 9th grade)
- *Mobility between 8th and 10th grade
- *Retention in elementary or middle grades
- *Intervention history
- *Poor final grades in behavior/disengagement
- *Abuse/neglect

Progress-Monitoring Tools:

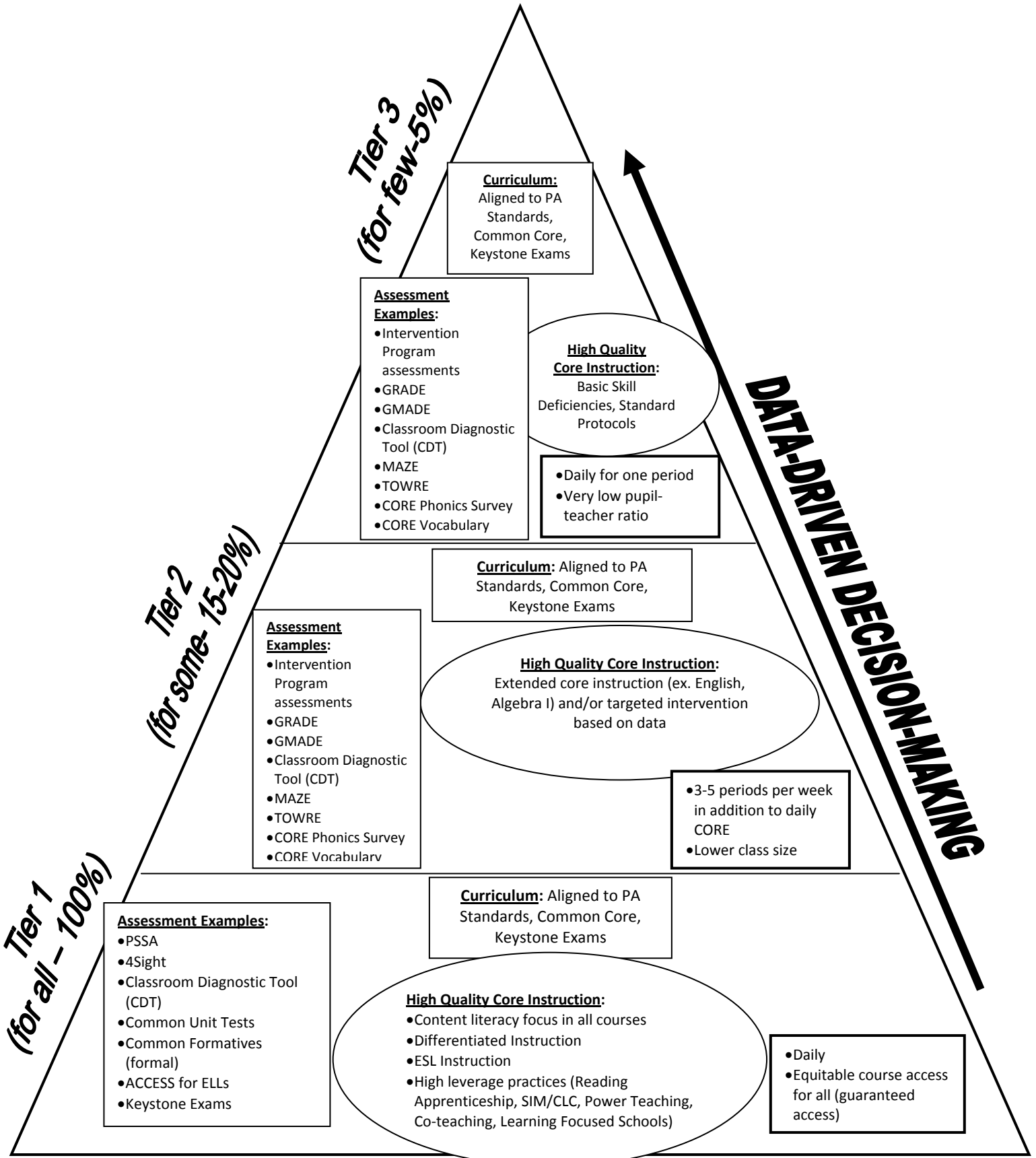
Maze passages, written expression prompts, vocabulary matching, ORF, Test of Silent Contextual Word Reading Fluency (TOSCWRF); Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE); CORE Phonics Survey. CORE Phoneme Segmentation Test

Pennsylvania's Secondary RtII Framework



Secondary RtII Example

(Traditional Schedule) 8 Period Day



Secondary RtII Example: Content Literacy Continuum (CLC)

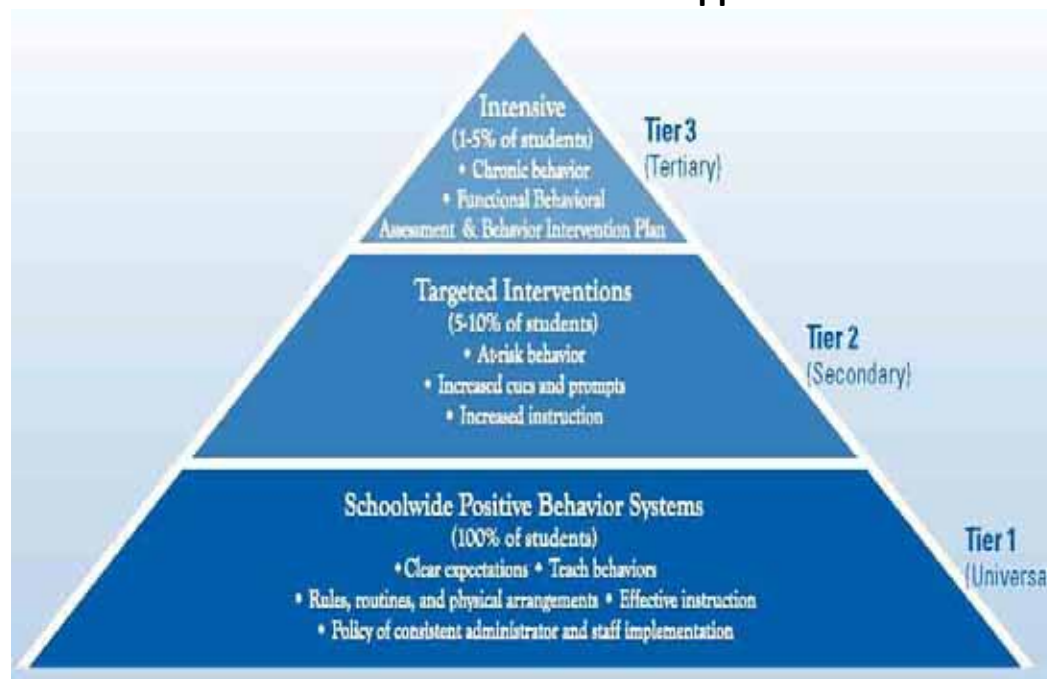
<p>Level I: Enhanced content instruction – instructional approaches that build proficiency in critical content for all students, regardless of literacy levels, that equip them with competitive, high-end skills that ensure successful post-graduate options. TIER 1</p>
<p>Level II: Embedded strategy instruction – instructional strategies within and across classes for all students using large group instructional methods that allow optimal access to rigorous college-ready curriculum. TIER 1</p>
<p>Level III: Intensive strategy instruction – instructional approaches that build mastery of specific strategies for students needing short-term, strategic instruction on strategies embedded throughout classroom instruction. TIERS 2 and 3</p>
<p>Level IV: Intensive basic skill instruction - instructional approaches that build mastery of entry-level literacy skills for students needing intensive, accelerated literacy intervention. TIER 3</p>
<p>Level V: Therapeutic intervention – instructional approaches that build mastery of language underpinnings related to the curriculum content and learning strategies occurring throughout classroom instruction for language-disabled students. TIER 3 and/or SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION</p>

Lenz, B. K., Ehren, B. J., Deshler, D. D. (2005). The content literacy continuum: A school reform framework for improving adolescent literacy for all students. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37(6), 60-63.

Instructional Improvements	Infrastructure Improvements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction 2. Effective instructional principles embedded within content instruction 3. Motivation and self-directed learning 4. Text-based collaborative learning 5. Strategic tutoring 6. Diverse texts 7. Intensive writing 8. A technology component 9. Use of formative assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extended time for skill development 2. Professional development in evidence-based practices 3. Allocated time for teacher teams to collaborate 4. Instructional leadership 5. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program <p style="text-align: center;">Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C. E. (2004). <i>Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York</i>. New York: Carnegie Corporation.</p>

(Elements associated with improved adolescent literacy achievement in middle and high schools)

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Model



Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and RtII:

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is the application of the RtII framework for the prevention and treatment of behavioral difficulties. PBIS requires the use of continuous monitoring, data-based decision making, and a continuum of intervention (Horner, 2009). Effective implementation of PBIS is correlated with significant positive behavioral outcomes for the majority of students, resulting in a much smaller percentage of students who will require more intensive intervention.

Many schools that implement a service delivery framework for the prevention of both academic and behavioral difficulties create a positive learning environment. Expectations for behavior are clear, visible and explicitly taught to all students. In Tier I, schools focus on 3-5 critical school wide rules that are reviewed and reinforced regularly. Office referrals are often used as part of the screening process to identify students who may benefit from more intensive assistance. As students exhibit behavioral improvement (as measured by overall number of referrals and by grades), they are often rewarded. For more information on PBIS, visit the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Web site: www.pbis.org.

Considerations for Applying the RtII Framework to the High School Level

High schools are complex systems that vary greatly across a number of contextual factors such as focus, instructional organization, culture, etc. Therefore, scaling RtII implementation from the elementary and middle to the high school level requires the understanding that the actual strategies for RtII implementation may look differently (Duffy, 2007). For these reasons, many high schools are choosing to focus their tiered intervention frameworks on 9th and/or 10th grades and in the content areas of English and/or mathematics. Several schools also provide explicit interventions for English language learners (ELLs) and implement PBIS frameworks. It should also be noted that the process of fully implementing an RtII model in secondary schools may occur over a span of 5-8 years (Mellard & Layland with Parsons, 2008).

Current Practices among High Schools

- For: English/language arts (LA) & Mathematics
- During: Separate class periods in lieu of electives for an entire semester; if mastery was attained prior to the end of the semester, the remaining time was used to teach directly at the student's skill level
- Exiting Tiered Support: At semester breaks
- Other Options for Providing Tiered Support: Mechanisms already built into the master schedule, such as co-lab classes, seminars, or other academic supports available during day
- Tier 2: Large group instruction or smaller groups within a larger intervention classroom; instructional focus is on vocabulary, comprehension and study skills instruction in English/LA
- Tier 3: Small groups or individual students; instructional focus is on acquisition of basic skills like phonics or decoding often using a published intervention program
- Other: analysis of progress-monitoring data to differentiate instruction within the intervention period. Algebra intervention class containing 30 at-risk students are divided into smaller fluid and flexible groups based on mastery of the curriculum. One group moves to new chapter while another group reviews a previously taught skill, while another group receives CBM to check for mastery of skills.

Adapted with Permission:

National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, and Center on Instruction. (2010). *Tiered interventions in high schools: Using preliminary "lessons learned" to guide ongoing discussion*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/HSTII_LessonsLearned.pdf

Stages of RtII Implementation

This section is designed to assist schools with implementing a successful RtII framework. Three stages of implementation (readiness, operational and evaluation) are described with a set of questions for consideration and use at the district, building and classroom level. It is recommended that central and building level administrators review these stages and questions as a first step in the needs assessment/readiness process. In addition, please refer to the *Response to Intervention Readiness and Implementation: Self Assessment Tool* @ www.pattan.net. The tool may also be found in PA's Secondary RtII Toolkit.

1. Readiness Stage

Focus and culture. The readiness stage informs and prepares districts to begin the implementation of an RtII approach at the secondary level. The design and implementation of all the essential components are dependent on a school's focus for tiered interventions. At the secondary level this may not always include all students or all content areas. Each school needs to determine its purpose and scope of tiered interventions, keeping in mind that no standard application of the framework exists at the high school level.

Schools may already have in place some initiatives that support tiered intervention implementation.

School culture also plays an integral role in the adoption and implementation of any new initiative. A school's culture provides implicit (and sometimes explicit) guidance about beliefs, behaviors, and what is acceptable within the organization. Adopting a tiered framework in a secondary school may require a significant shift in a school's culture. For example, staff members may need to collaborate in new ways, examine data together regularly and think about implications for instructional practice, and agree that the success of all students is the responsibility of all staff members.

Please note: It is recommended that ***central and building level administrators*** review the following stages and questions as a first step in the needs assessment/readiness process prior to moving forward with interdisciplinary team formation at the building level.

A. Questions for Assessing Focus and Culture:

1. What will be the purpose and scope of tiered interventions in your school?
2. How will existing initiatives fit into the tiered interventions framework?
3. How will you align current special education and instructional support practices with tiered interventions?
4. Do you have additional initiatives at the middle or high school that may hinder the implementation of tiered interventions?

5. If your school is structured using academies, how do the academies affect the focus of the tiered interventions framework?
6. In what ways will current practices, beliefs, and behaviors align with the goals and purposes of a tiered intervention framework?
7. Where did the motivation for adopting the framework originate, and how might that impact the buy-in of staff?
8. How will current prevention efforts map onto a tiered framework?
9. What changes might be required for staff to collaborate, examine student data, and act on what they learn from those data?

Scheduling. Organizing instruction and scheduling in high schools can create challenges and require flexibility in the scheduling and delivery of interventions for students and collaborative time for teachers. Single-period and block (extended or double period) schedules enable different strategies for delivering tiered interventions within a classroom or in concurrent classrooms. The master schedule, as well as the school calendar, should be addressed when implementing tiered interventions.

B. Questions for Assessing Instructional Organization/Scheduling

1. How does the staff create and/or adapt a master schedule that supports the needs of your school, including:
 1. student access to tiered supports
 2. time for teachers to collaborate
 3. time for teachers to discuss data
 4. movement between tiers for students
2. How do single class periods, block scheduling, or a combination of the two best support our focus and the delivery of tiered interventions?
3. Will any obstacles arise, given your current infrastructure?
4. Will we provide additional instructional interventions through extended days, Saturdays, and summer programs?
5. How will we support teachers in designating time to work collaboratively to make data-based decisions?

Staff Roles. Determining which staff member is best qualified to deliver the additional interventions and how to train teachers to deliver high-quality instruction in Tiers I, II, and III depends on a school's available staff and its purpose for implementing tiered interventions. High school teachers often view themselves as teachers of content and not necessarily equipped to teach struggling students, students with disabilities, and/or English language learners (ELLs). Small schools may have less access to instructional specialists.

C. Questions for Assessing Staff Roles

1. Who will provide the additional interventions?
2. How will we support this new role?
3. How will special education, ELL, and behavioral specialists support the implementation of

tiered interventions?

4. If tiered interventions are implemented in more than one content area, how will we support content teachers in becoming more than “teachers of content”?
5. What supports, if any, will teachers need to deliver Tier I, II, or III instruction?

Student Involvement: With assistance, secondary students could help select appropriate interventions and monitor their progress, resulting in students who feel more involved and invested in their educational experience.

D. Questions for Assessing Student Involvement

1. How will students be involved in the implementation of tiered interventions?
2. How will students be involved in the monitoring of their progress?
3. What role will students play in determining movement between tiers?
4. How will students be informed about the tiered interventions framework?

Instruction and Assessment Resources: A paucity of research on the efficacy of core, supplemental, and intensive instruction with struggling learners in grades 6–12 exists. Similarly, few measures appropriate for screening or progress monitoring purposes have been validated for use with secondary students.

E. Questions for Assessing Resources

1. What evidence will inform the selection of data sources for screening and progress monitoring?
2. How will we determine whether selected measures are reliable and valid?
3. How will educational technology be used in assessment or interventions?
4. How will school leaders and teachers measure the quality of Tier I instruction?
5. How will school leaders select interventions?
6. What data will support the use of particular interventions in the high school?

Graduation Requirements: A goal of high schools is for students to graduate and successfully pursue postsecondary education and career opportunities. How interventions are credited on transcripts is a unique concern at the high school level.

F. Questions for Assessing Graduation Requirements

1. What impact will additional tiered interventions have on graduation requirements?
2. What credit will students receive for intervention classes?
3. Will a tiered intervention framework support college and career readiness?

Stakeholder Engagement: High schools frequently engage a variety of external stakeholders, including parents and family members, community and business partners, tutors, and volunteers, in supporting instructional and extracurricular activities. Some students also receive

“wraparound” services from social service agencies. These various stakeholders can provide valuable support for a school’s tiered interventions framework.

G. Questions for Assessing Stakeholder Engagement

1. How will we involve stakeholders in the design and implementation of RTI?
2. How will we ensure that appropriate stakeholders are engaged early enough to insure buy- for the RtII framework?
3. Are in-school and wraparound services for at-risk students and students with disabilities aligned and coordinated?
4. What types of training and support are needed to engage and prepare stakeholders?

Implementation and Alignment. With the numerous other initiatives and activities being implemented simultaneously in many secondary schools, it is critical to align efforts that can support and accelerate the implementation of tiered interventions. A detailed scaling-up plan may be useful for incrementally expanding the focus and scope of the framework.

H. Questions for Assessing Alignment

1. What current or planned instructional and student support initiatives could be integrated to support the focus of tiered interventions?
2. How could these efforts be aligned with the tiered interventions, especially in Tiers II and III?
3. What options will exist for scaling up the implementation of tiered interventions over time to broaden the number of students, content areas, and/or interventions?
4. How can existing human and fiscal resources be leveraged to facilitate the implementation and scaling up of tiered interventions?
5. How can district departments (Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, Title I, etc.) be involved in the implementation of tiered interventions at the school level?

Adapted from:

[High School Level Readiness Planning Tool](#)

http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/HSTII_LessonsLearned.pdf

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/default.asp>

<http://centeroninstruction.org/>

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

Additional Resource: Response to Intervention Readiness and Implementation: Self Assessment Tool

[Response to Intervention Readiness and Implementation: Self-Assessment Tool](#)

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/default.asp>

<http://centeroninstruction.org/>

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

2. Operational Stage

During the operational stage, districts must identify high school appropriate intervention models that will work across subjects, determine universal instruction and assessment practices across subjects, and plan for professional development.

A. Training and Implementation (1-3 years)

1. Provide initial awareness training for all staff.
2. Follow-up with job-embedded training to build deep understanding of the process.
3. Examine existing system (structures, schedules, staffing, and resources) for barriers to implementation and make changes based upon implementing an RtII model with fidelity.

B. Implementation Tools and Procedures (1 year)

1. Identify the domains to be screened at the secondary level (e.g. reading comprehension, math computation, writing fluency).
2. Identify the universal screening tools, aligned to PA standards/district benchmarks, to be used with all students.
3. Train staff in their use and data analysis protocols.
4. Develop Tier Model.
 - a. Tier 1: Administer the identified universal screening tools 3-4 times per year to all students (e.g. 4-Sight). Assemble data packets with assessment results for data teams. Provide opportunities for team analysis of results using an established data team protocol.
 - b. Tier 2: Students identified for Tier 2 receive standard protocol interventions to include, but not be limited to: differentiated instruction, additional time, supplemental materials, short term interventions, and progress monitoring (a minimum of 1 time per month).
 - i. Consider the intensity of an intervention (amount of time for intervention, the size of the instructional group, means of service delivery, and the nature of the selected intervention).

- ii. Consider how to deliver additional services.
 - iii. Determine how progress monitoring will be administered and by whom.
 - iv. Establish exit and entrance criteria for Tiers 2 and 3.
 - c. Tier 3: Students identified for Tier 3 require more intensive interventions and progress monitoring (a minimum of 1 time per week).
5. Determine efficient use of time.
- a. Flexible scheduling
 - b. Staffing considerations
 - c. Before school and after school programs
 - d. Summer school
 - e. Differentiate among “homework help,” tutoring, and remediation
- C. Develop policy and procedures (6 months – 1 year).
- D. Select screening and diagnostic assessments.
- a. Tier 1 – 4-Sight
 - b. Tier 2 – Curriculum-based assessments for reading fluency, math computation, and writing fluency (e.g. Aimsweb)
 - c. Tier 3 – Evidence-based supplemental materials assessments
- A key outcome of evidence-based education is for scientifically proven interventions to be adopted and successfully implemented at the classroom level (from *Identifying Research-based Practices for RtI: Scientifically-based Reading Instruction*, p. 21).
- E. Develop screening cut points/scores.
- F. Establish a data analysis/problem-solving protocol.
- a. Select and refine interventions
 - b. Ensure fidelity of implementation
 - c. Develop a protocol or means of movement through the tiers
 - d. Develop a timeline and sequence of procedures (meeting times, meeting agenda, RtII script (Data Analysis Team Process, Kovaleski, 2004), Screening and Intervention Record Form (Kovaleski & Marco, 2005).

3. Evaluation Stage

- A. Evaluate staff development at the end of year one. The Secondary RtII Readiness and Implementation Self Assessment Tool may be found at www.pattan.net – Response to Instruction and Intervention – PA Secondary RtII Tool Kit.
- B. Consider conducting the survey in May to compare the two sets of data to determine the degree of adoption and what, if anything needs further development.

- C. Review overall data with regard to how many students were assisted in each tier; how long each student stayed in each tier; individual student progress as noted through various benchmarks and assessments.
- D. Analyze each tier and make recommendations/changes with regard to staffing, scheduling, and how/when and by whom progress is monitored.
- E. Refine movement through each tier with regard to timelines and interventions being implemented.

RtII Glossary

Assessment – This term refers to the broad process of obtaining information used for decision-making about a student, group of students, curricula, educational programs, and school programs as well as educational policy (Nitko & Brookhart, 2007).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – This term, integral to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, refers to the annual minimum growth rate needed to meet the requirements of NCLB within the timeframe specified (www.studentprogress.org).

Assessment Modifications (assessments): Changes in the test or assessment conditions that fundamentally alter the test score interpretation and comparability.

Baseline – Salvia, Ysseldyke, and Bolt (2007) refer to this term as the “initial measures of performance against which future measures will be compared” (p. 658).

Benchmark assessment – Designed to provide feedback to both the teacher and the student about how the student is progressing towards demonstrating proficiency on grade level standards. Well-designed benchmark assessments and standards-based assessments measure the degree to which a student has mastered a given concept; measure concepts, skills, and/or applications; are reported by referencing the standards, not other students’ performance; serve as a test to which teachers want to teach; and measure performance regularly, not only at a single moment in time.

Benchmarks – Content or development standards that describe sequences of growth that allow for the monitoring of progress over time (McMillan, 2007).

Collaborative team: A group of two or more people who meet on a scheduled or as-needed basis and fill a specific function or purpose. Collaborative teams can be formed both at the district and school levels. School-based teams are developed and sustained as determined by need and are accessible to any administrator or teacher concerned with the educational needs of students.

Core Curriculum: The planned instruction in a content area, which is central and usually mandatory for all students of a school (e.g. reading/language arts, math, science, etc.).

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) – A formative measure, CBA is a criterion-referenced test that is typically teacher constructed and is based on the curriculum. It is intended for teacher use to measure how students are doing within the curriculum (Idol, Nevin, Paolucci–Whitcomb, 1996).

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) – CBM is a set of methods or procedures used to assess academic skills in reading, spelling, mathematics, and writing. Scores typically represent

changes in accuracy as well as fluency. CBM is a set of methods that allow for the indexing of student academic competence and student progress (Deno, Fuchs, Marston, & Shin, 2001).

Data Informed Decision-Making – A more pervasive term in the educational literature since the passage of the NCLB Act of 2001, it is defined by Salvia, Yssledyke, and Bolt (2007) as being synonymous with progress monitoring because both terms require both the collection and use of data. The term implies that instruction is adjusted based on the frequent monitoring of student progress by comparing expected and actual rates of learning.

The process of interpreting evidence that has been gathered to make the information meaningful. According to McMillan, “teachers’ professional judgments play a large role in evaluation” (2007, p.10).

Diagnostic Assessment – Ascertains, prior to instruction, each student’s strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills. Establishing these permits the instructor to remediate students and adjust the curriculum to meet pupils’ unique needs.

Explicit instruction: Instruction that is clear, overt, and visible.

Fidelity: A teacher demonstrates that instructional programs, strategies, and materials are implemented with intensity and accuracy, and consistently delivered as they have been designed and validated, as elaborated in teacher’s guides available from publishers.

Five “Big Ideas” of Reading: (Phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension); critical areas of reading for all Tiers.

Flexible Grouping: The ability to assign and adjust groups of learners based on their mastery of content and skills.

Formative assessment – Formative assessment is used by teachers and students during instruction to provide feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes. It consists of collecting student performance data on a continuous basis in order to make program changes while instruction is taking place, rather than waiting until the end of the year, or the end of a course to evaluate progress (Graney & Shinn, 2005). Formative assessment is a broad category of assessment that not only encompasses progress monitoring, but also includes tests, quizzes, observations, checklists, etc., if used for the purpose of monitoring progress to adjust instruction.

Implicit instruction: An instructional ideology that assumes that students are naturally active learners who construct new personalized knowledge through linking prior knowledge and new knowledge. In implicit instruction, the teacher guides students only as much as is necessary for them to build their own understanding. Scaffolding, or teacher support through questioning and explaining, is provided only as needed.

Instructional intervention: Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teachers tailored to meet the identified needs of struggling students. This instruction is delivered in small groups.

Intense intervention: Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teacher specialists. This instruction is targeted and tailored to meet the needs of struggling students in small groups with increased opportunities for practice and teacher feedback.

Measurement – Differing from assessment, this term refers to the procedure of assigning scores or numbers to describe the degree to which a student has acquired a certain skill or attribute (Nitko & Brookhart, 2007).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) – President Bush signed this legislation into law in 2001; it is also known as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Under this legislation, all children must reach proficiency by 2014, as defined by each state’s proficiency measures. The federal law requires annual testing in grades 3-8 and 11, in reading and mathematics, and also requires disaggregated reporting of scores on an annual basis to the federal government (Public Law Number 107-110, 2002).

Parental Engagement: The deliberate effort to include parents in all aspects of their child’s schooling. The meaningful and active involvement of parents and family members in the educational process.

Pennsylvania Academic Standards: The skills and competencies students should know and be able to do as a result of their participation in an effective educational system.

Reading Specialist: Reading specialists provide expert classroom instruction and assessment particularly for struggling students. They may also provide literacy leadership within the school in addressing the needs of all readers.

Scaffolding: Support given to assist students in learning a skill through explicit instruction, modeling, questioning, feedback, etc., to ensure student performance. Scaffolding should gradually be withdrawn as students become more independent of teacher support.

Scientifically-Based Interventions: Refers to empirical research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.

Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR): Refers to empirical research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge. This research:

- employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment.
- has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

- involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn.
- relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations.
- can be generalized.

Skill: Something a student knows how to do expertly and automatically.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education. The term includes speech-language pathology services and may include other related services, travel training, and applied technology education, if they meet the definition of special education.

Standards-Aligned Instruction: The process of matching classroom curriculum, instruction, materials and assessment practices to the PA Academic Standards (what students are required to know and be able to do) and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

Strategy: The intentional use of a specific method.

Summative Assessment: Seeks to make an overall judgment of progress made at the end of a defined period of instruction. They occur at the end of a school level, grade, or course, or are administered at certain grades for purposes of state or local accountability. These are considered high-stakes assessments and the results are often used in conjunction with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). They are designed to produce clear data on the student's accomplishments at key points in his or her academic career. Scores on these assessments usually become part of the student's permanent record and are statements as to whether or not the student has fallen short of, met, or exceeded the expected standards.

Supplemental Intervention: An addition to Tier 1 classroom instruction targeted to meet specific needs of students.

Supplemental Materials: Additional materials that are aligned with and support the core instructional program.

Systematic instruction: A carefully planned sequence for targeted instruction.

Targeted: Focused instruction on an identified skill.

Universal Screening (School-Wide Screening): A quick check of all students' current level of performance in a content or skill area. This is typically administered 3-4 times per year.

Resources

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- SEDL (<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/reading16/11.html>), a private, nonprofit education research, development, and dissemination (RD&D) corporation based in Austin, Texas.
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Additional Electronic Resources

21st Century Skills -- <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/>

Alliance for Excellent Education -- <http://www.all4ed.org/>

Alliance for Excellence in Education (literacy) -- http://www.all4ed.org/adolescent_literacy/

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation -- <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx>

Center on Instruction -- <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/>

Classroom Modeling with Anita Archer -- <http://www.scoe.org/pub/htdocs/archer-videos.html>

Dylan Wiliam and Formative Assessment -- <http://www.dylanwiliam.net/>

The Education Alliance at Brown University—The Knowledge Loom --
<http://knowledgeloom.org/adlit/index.jsp>

The Education Trust -- <http://www2.edtrust.org>

Integrating Technology in the Classroom based Marzano's Instructional Strategies --
http://www.tltguide.ccsd.k12.co.us/instructional_tools/Strategies/Strategies.html#similar

International Reading Association--<http://www.reading.org>

International Reading Association's Focus on Adolescent Literacy: IRA Programs and Resources
http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/focus_adolescent.html

International Reading Association's Position on Young Adolescent (Middle School) Literacy --
http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/positions_young_adolescents.html

International Reading Association's position statement on adolescent literacy --
http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/positions_adolescent.html

Learning First Alliance--<http://www.learningfirst.org/>

Literacy Matters--<http://www.literacymatters.org>

National Center on RTI -- <http://www.rti4success.org/>

National Staff Development Center -- <http://www.nsdcenter.org/>

NCTE Adolescent Literacy--www.ncte.org

NGA: National Governor's Association: Reading to Achieve
<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0510GOVGUIDELITERACY.PDF>

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development -- <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/>

PA Standards Aligned System – <http://www.pdesas.org/>

The Partnership for Reading -- <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/>

Reading Next -- www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext

Research Informing Practice: A Series of Workshops:
<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/adolescent/>

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

Scholastic Adolescent Literacy Resource Center --
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/read180/literacyresources.asp>

SEDL: Building Reading Proficiency at the Secondary Level --
<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/reading16/>

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
This is a summary of the different types of assessment that can be used for measuring
development in reading.
<http://www.sedl.org/reading/framework/assessment.html>