



Response to Intervention
Procedural Manual - Fall 2008

Chapter 1



Background & Overview

CBM/RTI Background

Curriculum based measurement of reading, early literacy and early numeracy began in 2 Franklin County elementary schools in the 2005-2006 school year using the AIMSWEB progress monitoring system. Since then, however, we have been slow to expand the use of CBM and RTI in general. Since the State of Tennessee enacted guidelines effective December 2007, we can no longer wait as a system to fully implement this mandate. Although our county continues to use the IQ/achievement discrepancy for eligibility purposes, all nine elements expressed in state guidelines will be necessary in order to begin the prereferral process. However, it is extremely important that we view this process as more than simply a prereferral process. **Prereferral indicates that a group or person is simply going through the motions and by default, ends in a special education referral. The goal of RTI is much broader in that it attempts to integrate general and special education with the goal of enhancing student achievement and thus making the actual referral unnecessary.**

The Response to Intervention (RTI) Model is a process of monitoring (typically using CBM) a student's response to changes in instruction. RTI is a new process but its foundations have been established in various locations, such as Iowa, Minnesota and Pennsylvania. Other resources are currently being developed through the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs.

Daryl Mellard of the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (a collaboration of Vanderbilt University and the University of Kansas funded by U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs) describes the RTI Model as having:

- Two goals: prevent academic problems and identify students with LD.
- Two or more tiers of increasingly intense interventions.
- Use of a problem solving model or standardized treatment protocol for intervention tiers.
- Implementation of a differentiated curriculum with different instructional methods.
- Varied duration, frequency, and time of interventions, and
- Explicit decision rules for judging learners' progress.

In the implementation of an RTI Model (again from the NRCLD):

- Students receive high quality, research-based instruction by qualified staff in their general education setting.
- General education instructors and staff assume an active role in students' assessment in that curriculum.
- School staffs conduct universal screening of (a) academics and (b) behavior.
- School staffs implement specific, research-based interventions to address the student's difficulties.
- Continuous progress monitoring of student performance occurs (weekly or biweekly).
- School staffs use progress-monitoring data and decision rules to determine interventions' effectiveness and needed modifications.
- Systematic assessment of the fidelity or integrity with which instruction and interventions are implemented.

No researchers have contributed to the area of CBM more than Dr. Doug Fuchs and Dr. Lynn Fuchs from Vanderbilt University. Fuchs and Fuchs (1998) have argued that special education not be considered until a student's academic performance shows a dual discrepancy in which performance is below the level of classroom peers and the student's learning rate is substantially below that of classroom peers. Their research (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986) has also indicated that the progress monitoring of students is in itself a treatment that leads to positive results.

Other leaders in the field, Gresham, VanDerHeyden, and Witt have developed a definition of a learning disability which fits well in the RTI conceptualization.

- A learning disability is conceptualized as: (a) low level of performance in a relevant domain in relation to peers, (b) slow growth rates compared to peers despite high quality, evidence-based interventions delivered with integrity, (c) documented need for special education, and (e) exit criteria defining goals for the special education program

Franklin County has developed an RTI Model that incorporates the best information available. It has then attempted to integrate this information with the policy and procedures of the district. This is, no doubt, a work in progress but the ultimate goal is for regular and special education to work together in a coordinated way to obtain better outcomes for all children.

Franklin County Response to Intervention Program Overview

Definition

Response to Intervention (RTI) refers to a process that monitors how well students respond to changes in instruction. This process is a new way of providing assistance to students before they fail. The goal is to quickly identify those in need of help, provide interventions that have been shown to be effective with other students, and then monitoring their progress to determine if the interventions are working. If an intervention is not working, then a different intervention needs to be used and monitored for effectiveness.

Background

All parents and teachers want their children to do well in school. Children who have the most difficulty are often referred for an evaluation to determine if they need and qualify for special education services. The term “learning disability” has been used for many years to document a difference between a student’s ability to learn and their actual performance in learning basic skills like reading. Large enough differences needed to qualify a student as “learning disabled” are typically not found until second or third grade. As a result, children do not receive the remedial help at an early age when it is the most effective.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 has provided school districts with alternative ways of identifying students with “learning disabilities.” Response to Intervention is the most promising of these techniques. Response to Intervention is a process of providing research-based interventions early in a student’s program based on measures of academic performance and then using those same measures to assess progress over time to make educational decisions. Struggling students receive additional and increasingly more intense interventions before they have fallen significantly behind. The term “intervention” refers to the specific strategies, techniques, and/or programs used, in addition to the regular classroom instruction, to improve the student’s performance.

A learning disability is not suspected until the student shows a lack of response to the interventions attempted. Reading experts have stated that approximately 80 percent of the students identified with a learning disability could have been remediated before labeling if intensive early intervention had occurred.

Thus, the primary purpose of a Response to Intervention program is to provide an appropriate intervention before any consideration of a disability. In addition, there is a requirement to use scientific, research-based interventions, which simply means we need credible evidence to indicate that the intervention has been effective. Data is gathered frequently to determine if an intervention is working for each student in the RTI process. If an intervention is shown to be ineffective, a new intervention is initiated.

Core Components of the RTI Process

- *School-Wide Screening*
All students are assessed with reliable, valid, time-efficient measures of academic skills to identify those who are “at-risk.”
- *Early Intervention*
Early interventions are the most efficient and effective.
- *Research-Based Interventions*
School staffs implement specific, research-based interventions to address the student’s difficulties.
- *Frequent Review of Student Progress*
Student progress is assessed frequently so that progress can be examined and changes made if necessary
- *Interventions Increase in Intensity*
Skills are monitored and if desired progress is not obtained, interventions increase in intensity.
- *Decisions Based on Data*
A student’s performance is assessed with the data obtained during the interventions and decisions are made based on that data.

Benefits of the RTI Process

- Provides a picture of a student’s performance compared to others in the Franklin County School System
- Calls immediate attention to students who are having difficulty
- Initiates research-based interventions early in a student’s program when that help is most beneficial
- Frequently monitors student progress and uses that information to make decisions regarding program changes

State of Tennessee Pre-referral Criteria

The State of Tennessee has listed multiple standards which, effective December 2007, must be met in order for eligibility for special education to be considered. These standards are as follows:

- (1) Evidence that underachievement in a child was not due to a lack of appropriate (the child’s State approved grade level standards) scientifically validated instruction (instruction that has been researched using rigorous, well designed, objective, systematic, and peer reviewed studies) in reading and math;
- (2) Evidence that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in general education settings;
- (3) Evidence that instruction was delivered by appropriately trained personnel;
- (4) Data based documentation of repeated formal assessment of student progress during instruction (progress monitoring data) that has been collected and recorded frequently (a minimum of one data point per week in each area of academic concern);
- (5) Evidence that progress monitoring data was provided to the child’s parents at a minimum of once every four and one half (4.5) weeks;
- (6) Evidence that, when provided scientifically validated instruction and appropriate interventions and learning experiences, the child did not achieve at a proficiency level or rate consistent with State approved grade level standards or with the child’s age, in one or more of the following areas:
 - (a) oral expression,
 - (b) listening comprehension,
 - (c) written expression,
 - (d) basic reading skills,
 - (e) reading fluency skills,
 - (f) reading comprehension,

- (g) mathematics calculation, and
- (h) mathematics problem solving;

(7) Evidence that the child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to State approved grade level standards, the child's age, or intellectual development that is determined to be relevant to the identification of a Specific Learning Disability (as defined in the definition of Specific Learning Disabilities); and

(8) Evidence that the child's learning problems are not primarily due to Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment; Mental Retardation; Emotional Disturbance; limited English proficiency; environmental or cultural factors; motivational factors; or situational trauma (i.e., temporary, sudden, or recent change in the child's life);

b. A child whose characteristics meet the definition of a child having a Specific Learning Disability may be identified as a child eligible for Special Education services if:

- (1) all the requirements of standards 2.a.(1) – 2.a. (8) have been met;
- (2) the evidence and documentation is evaluated and results verify that the characteristics exhibited by the child meet the definition of a Specific Learning Disability; and
- (3) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Specific Learning Disabilities adversely impacts the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment.

Franklin County RTI Tiers

Tier I

Tier I is the regular education program and is designed to meet the needs of a majority of the school population. There are three critical elements in Tier I: a) an effective core academic program, b) testing of students at least three times a year to help determine their instructional needs, and c) the development of interventions by the classroom teacher to address any learning difficulties. Students are assessed through such things as chapter tests, unit tests, Star Literacy, etc.

Tier II

Tier II is for students who are falling behind on basic academic skills and need additional support to meet grade-level expectations. If using AIMSWEB, this would be the students listed in red and yellow on the student printout. Students in Tier II receive at least 20 minutes per day for a minimum of two sessions per week of additional instruction in the area of difficulty in addition to the core academic instruction. This instruction could come from a number of persons including but not limited to specialty teachers, extended contract personnel, educational assistants, guidance counselors, adult tutors from the community, etc. The most important aspect is that the person who is working with the given students must be trained to administer the intervention. Students are tested twice per month via some progress monitoring instrument in order to monitor the improvement of skills. After the initial period of intervention, the team (e.g. principal, teacher, school psychologist, etc.) may meet again in order to gauge progress. If little or no progress is being made, another intervention should be implemented with progress monitoring of this intervention as well twice per month. All interventions should be implemented with integrity and fidelity. If progress is being made, there is no reason to progress to Tier III. However, if there is a suspected disability following this intervention, Tier III should be initiated.

Tier III

Tier III (following progression through Tiers I and II) should be initiated if the teacher continues to believe that a referral for special education services is imminent. At this point, an additional 30 minutes of a different intervention should be initiated for a minimum of two sessions per week. This will be a total of 100 minutes per week of additional instruction during the school day or with use of an extended contract before or after school. Progress monitoring should occur weekly in order to fulfill the requirements for special education prereferral documentation.

LD Consideration

Students who fail to respond to Tier I, II, and III interventions are suspected to have a learning disability and are then evaluated in order to provide additional information needed for special education placement and eligibility.

Tier IV – Special Education in Franklin County

Tier IV is designed for students who still have considerable difficulty in mastering necessary academic skills, even after Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III interventions. Tier IV occurs if a student is evaluated and deemed eligible for special education services.

Parent Involvement

Parents are informed of their child's participation and progress in the various tiers through the use of monthly reports. A rule of thumb might be to send parental information home regarding their response to interventions when progress reports are generally sent home to the parent. Parent permission is always obtained for evaluation before formal consideration for special education services.

Chapter 2



Tiers further explained

RTI Team Procedures and Tier-By-Tier Guidelines for RTI Model

Tier I – Classroom and Instructional Modification by the Teacher

The classroom teacher will gather data, identify areas of strength and weakness, and attempt additional instructional and/or behavioral strategies/modifications with students. Information will be gathered from CBM benchmark data, parents, previous teachers, guidance counselor, etc. During this period, the teacher may consult informally with other school staff to seek possible strategies for use with the student. During this tier, students have access to the core curriculum with accommodations and modifications to assist the student in becoming successful.

Students are referred to the RTI Team if academic concerns persist and the student does not demonstrate progress in the classroom (consideration also given to class rank and TCAP performance).

Tier II/III

When the teacher is unable to resolve an academic or behavioral problem in consultation with parent and colleagues, a more structured approach needs to be implemented. Using the documentation gathered in Tier I, the teacher will request that an RTI Meeting be scheduled to discuss the needs of this child. The teacher and administrator will together schedule a meeting to discuss these issues.

The mandated members of the RTI Team are:

- **Principal or Assistant Principal**
- **Referring Teacher**
- Any additional staff designated by the principal:

School Psychologist *

Speech/Language Personnel

Intervention Mentor

OT/PT

School Nurse

School Social Worker

Other Assessment Specialists

Special Education Teacher

Behavior Consultant

School Counselor

Curriculum Facilitator

Literacy/Instructional Coach

Hearing Personnel

Vision Personnel

*particularly for assistance in the RTI process

The RTI Team will meet to review the information prepared by the teacher such as grades, achievement, work samples, and additional documentation of strategies/interventions/modifications that have been implemented with the student and measured results. The RTI Team will utilize the data to further define the problem, and then recommend one of the following options:

- A. Requires more information
- B. Initiate additional instructional strategies/interventions in regular program
- C. Section 504 referral
- D. Terminate process

If “initiate additional instructional strategies/interventions” is selected, the RTI Team will help the referring teacher to select appropriate interventions in hopes of meeting the students’ needs and complete the RTI Intervention Plan Form and Tier II/III Plan of Instruction.

RTI Guidelines

- **Intervention:** involves modifications to the core curriculum and interventions which are in addition to regular instructional practices already in place. Schools should use available scientific, research-based interventions.
- **Benchmark:** All students are tested three times per year to gather data
- **Progress Monitoring:** Depends on the Tier; Tier II requires twice per month and Tier III 1 time/week - administered by classroom teacher or other trained personnel
- **Intensity:** Depends on the Tier; Tier II requires at least 20 minute sessions and Tier III 30 minutes per session
- **Frequency:** Minimum of 2 sessions/week
- **Duration:** Tier II interventions are suggested for approximately 6 weeks prior to review; if no progress is being made, an additional intervention is suggested; if it felt that the child is making no progress and a referral to special education appears imminent, Tier III should be initiated
- **Progress Reporting to Parent(s):** 1 time/month
- **Rule outs:** The RTI Team should discuss any potential exclusionary factors and there must be evidence that none of these factors are the primary cause of the academic deficits before considering special education services.

At the time determined by the RTI Team, the team will evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and the results of each strategy implemented. At this time, one of the following decisions will be made:

- A. Discontinue intervention
- B. RTI Team should review implementation of intervention
- C. RTI Team should review student motivation
- D. Redesign or modify intervention

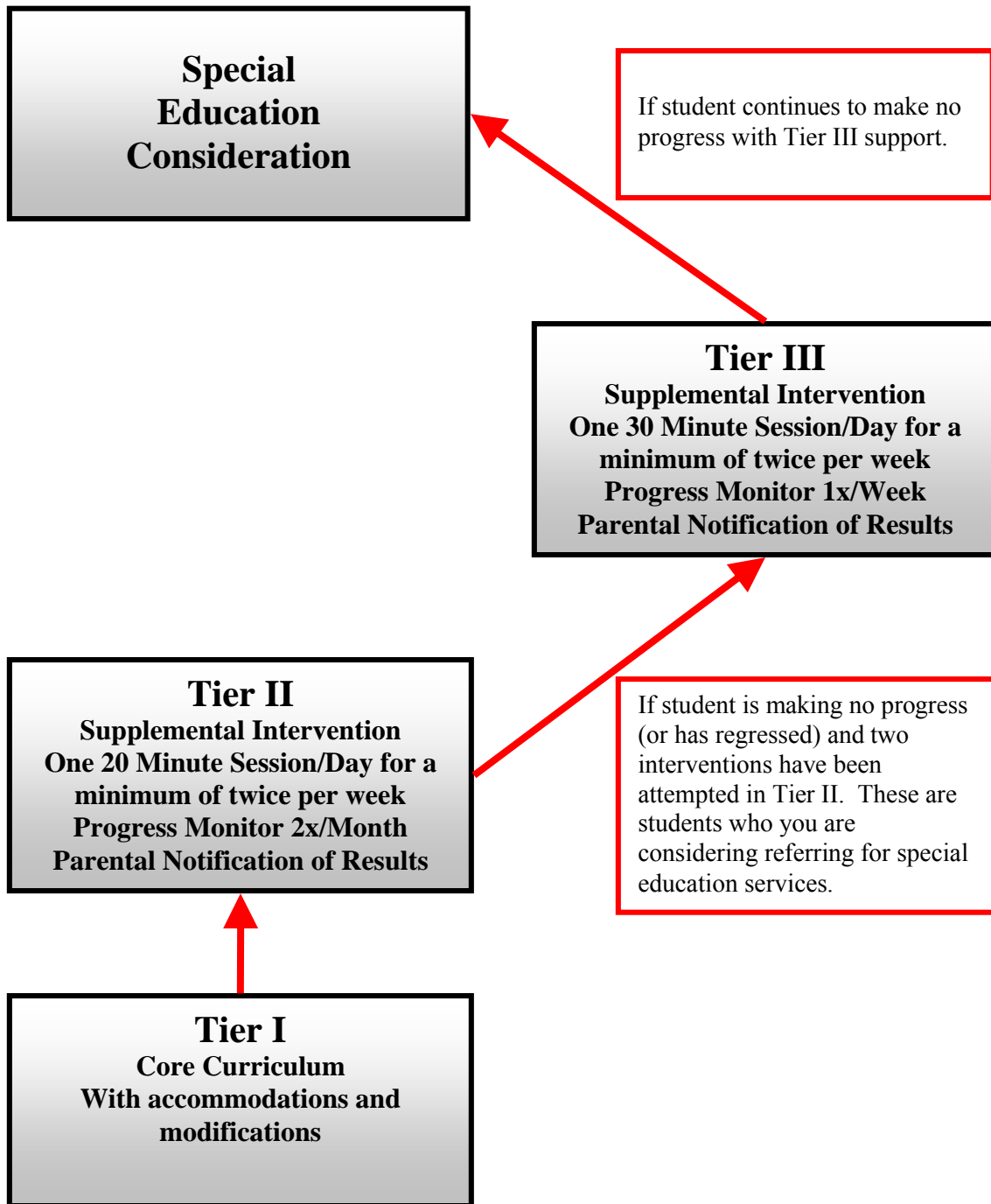
Formal Referral

Guidelines

- **Prereferral Meeting:** Following the completion of the interventions, the Prereferral Team will meet to discuss the need for an evaluation. If the student is making progress given the identified interventions, a referral for special education would be unnecessary. In this case, needs are being met by general education without special education assistance. If a formal referral is made, obtain parent permission for evaluation and follow established criteria for a special education referral.

Note: When making decisions about student programs and eligibility, multiple sources of data must be used. Particularly for students who are undergoing an evaluation to consider special education eligibility, the decision to establish eligibility and begin services needs to be an IEP Team decision based on all available data (including but not limited to grades, attendance, motivation, social/emotional functioning, and classroom behavior). If, for example, a student has progressed through the RTI process (and therefore has poor CBM scores), but other data/information **does not** support the need for eligibility, then the team could decide that eligibility is not appropriate. In addition, if the Assessment Team determines that additional formal testing is required, then the results of that testing should be considered by the IEP Team when making any educational decisions.

RTI Flowchart



Chapter 3



Approved Interventions

Interventions categorized by skill

****Note: The intervention must be in the area of the suspected disability!!

For remediation of Reading skills:

Computer Software

Destination Reading
Headsprout
Interactive Phonics
Lexia Early Reading
Orchard
Plato Web-Based Learning
Read Naturally
Simon SIO
Fast Forward
Education City
Study Island

Small Group/Direct Instruction

Language!
Plato Focus Reading
Read 180
Read Well
Scott-Foresman Sidewalks**
Voyager
6 Minute Solutions
Wilson Reading Program
S.P.I.R.E.
Tucker Signing Strategies for Reading**
Story Form Literature Connections **
PALS Kindergarten Reading Intervention **
Florida Intervention Strategies **

For remediation of Math skills:

Computer Software

Destination Math
Orchard
Plato Web-Based Learning

Small Group/Direct Instruction

Moving With Math
Harcourt Math Intervention Workbook**
Mr. Base 10 Mathematics **

For remediation of Written Expression skills:

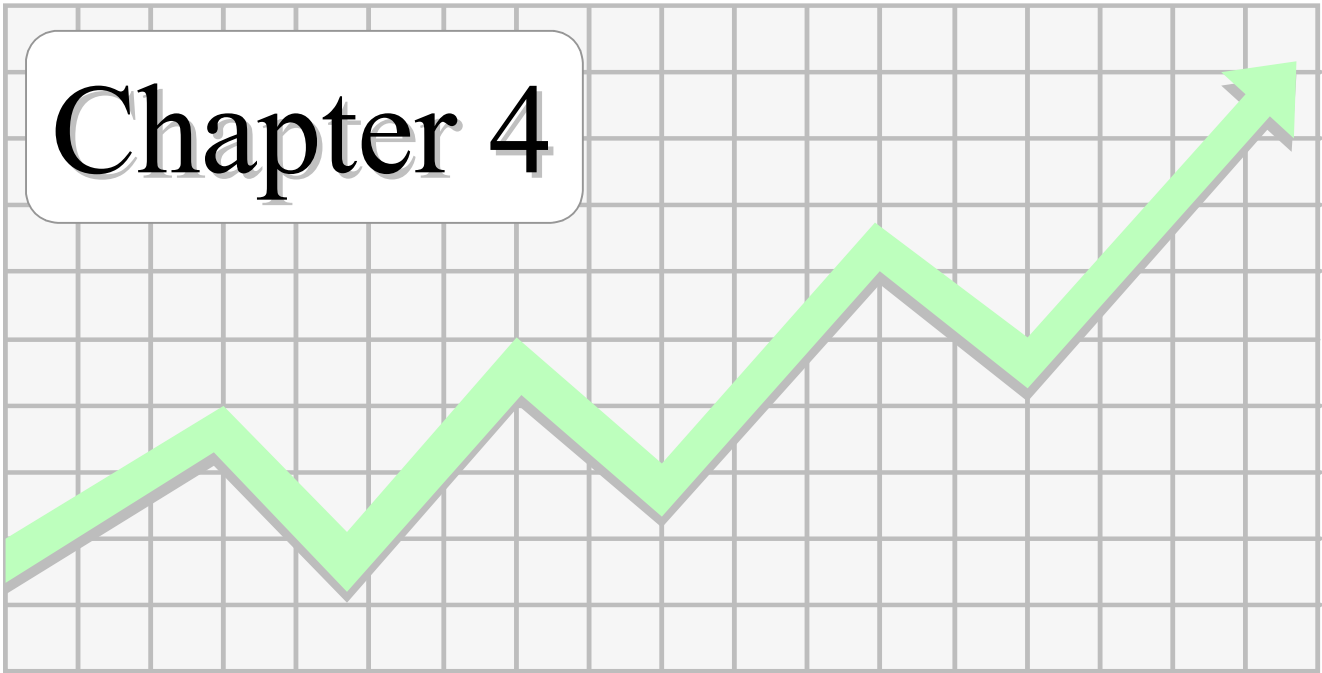
Small Group/Direct Instruction

Framing Your Thoughts**

*Not all programs are available in every school; Consult with your local school principal / facilitating teacher for further information regarding available interventions.

**Known to be available at all schools.

Chapter 4



Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about RTI implementation

Questions	Answers
1. Must an RTI Team be held prior to implementing Tier I interventions?	No, Tier I interventions are considered just best practice for regular classroom instruction.
2. What is “inadequate progress” in the RTI process?	To be determined by the RTI team. Refer to the attached chart regarding rules of thumb for rate of increase/progress.
3. After Tier III has been completed, does progress monitoring continue for the student?	No, after the student has been referred for formal special education eligibility consideration, progress monitoring can stop. The decision to continue the intervention is an RTI Team decision.
4. What if a parent requests testing?	The RTI process is the method for addressing academic concerns for students and allows the school to begin interventions quickly. A student’s response to the interventions will determine if we suspect an educational disability and if any additional testing will be required. Assure parent that their input is important and that they will be involved as we implement interventions to help their child. RTI is necessary to make informed decisions about the need for special education services. If parents insist, we will comply; however, <u>the student will be found not eligible even if they meet the discrepancy if State of Tennessee procedures are not followed.</u>
5. What should be done if a student is performing well during the RTI process? Can the intervention stop after 4 weeks?	In order to avoid a premature decision, it is best practice to complete a tier once it has started. However, this is left to the discretion of the teacher / RTI Team.
6. What should be done for a student who is in ELL services?	Consideration for special education cannot occur until ELL issues are not considered the primary reason for the student’s academic difficulties. If the student continues to qualify for ELL services, it is likely that language issues continue to be a primary concern.
7. Can we monitor using MAZE if there are reading comprehension concerns?	Yes, MAZE can be used for progress monitoring if fluency is not a concern.
8. What should be done if a parent requests testing for their child who is enrolled in a private/home school?	The LD guidelines in IDEIA state that we must have “data that demonstrates ... the child was provided appropriate instruction” AND “data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction.” Therefore, our recommendation would be that prior to consideration for special education, the private/home school must document intervention attempts and provide progress monitoring data. Franklin County Schools can implement interventions and monitor progress if the student is enrolled in the public school system.
9. What interventions are available for written expression?	Plato
10. What interventions are available for math reasoning?	Plato, Orchard, Destination Math
11. What tools are available to progress monitor written expression?	AIMSweb has written expression probes that can be used for progress monitoring. The probes are scored using either "Total Words Written" or "Correct Writing Sequences," both of which are described in the WE-CBM manual available online. The system has other prompts which can be used to determine

	<p>similar scores.</p> <p>Another potential method of progress monitoring written expression is to have a student's teacher use a rubric to score a passage the student writes each week.</p>
12. If we use a rubric to progress monitor written expression, does this information need to be recorded on AIMSweb?	No, this information does not need to be recorded on AIMSweb. The RTI Team, however, should develop some method to record the scores of the rubric so the team can evaluate the student's progress.
13. What tools are available to progress monitor math reasoning?	At this time, we have no CBM probes to progress monitor math reasoning. It is recommended that the RTI Team use weekly classroom data (tests and/or assignments) to evaluate the student's progress. The RTI Team should ensure this information is documented prior to a formal referral.
14. Can any student in the schools use any intervention?	Yes, as long as it is used to meet that student's needs and is appropriate for the suspected disability.
15. Can special education teachers provide interventions in the resource room for general education students?	No. Since Franklin County special education staff are paid for out of federal funds, this would be considered a misuse of federal monies.
16. Can computer-based interventions be started in Tier I?	If available, Tier I interventions can include computer-based interventions. However, teacher generated interventions through core curriculum modifications are also appropriate.
17. What should be done for a student who may not have enough time to complete an RTI tier before the end of the school year?	<p>It is recommended that RTI Teams avoid placing students in a new RTI tier unless there is enough time in the school year for the student to complete the tier. However, the decision remains that of the RTI Team. The RTI Team can place a student on the next tier if there are at least 25 school days left in the year. Progress will be monitored on the appropriate grade level. Another assessment would be completed at the beginning of the next school year to determine the monitoring level for the new year.</p> <p>The student's progress during the new year would be evaluated by the RTI Team after as least 25 school days have elapsed. If the student made inadequate progress during both of the intervention periods (end of one year and beginning of the following year), the RTI Team could place the student in the next tier. If the student made adequate progress during either of the intervention periods, then the student would need to complete all the required intervention sessions for that tier during the new school year.</p>

Questions about student scenarios

Questions	Answers
18. A 1 st grade student scores within the average range for letter sound fluency, but reading fluency skills are unable to be tested (due to poor reading performance). What test should be administered to estimate reading skills?	Word Identification Fluency could be used for normative comparisons and progress monitoring.
19. A 1 st grade student scores within the average range for oral counting, but math CBM skills are unable to be tested (due to poor calculation skills). What test should be administered to	Number Identification could be used for normative comparisons and progress monitoring.

estimate math skills?	
20. What should be done for students who qualify for services in an RTI area, but also need support in math reasoning and/or written expression (and are not certified specifically in either of these areas)?	If a student has progressed through the RTI process and is determined eligible for services, it is the decision of the IEP Team to write goals in areas not addressed through RTI (math reasoning and written expression). If, however, a student is only eligible for services in math reasoning and/or written expression, it is recommended that the student receive general education interventions through the RTI process before consideration is given to writing special education goals in the areas addressed through RTI (reading fluency, reading comprehension, and math calculation).
21. A student with only speech certification now has academic problems. Do they have to go through the RTI process?	Yes. Any initial academic concerns would be addressed through the RTI process.

Appendix



Reading Intervention Progress Report

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child is participating in our Intervention Program to improve his/her performance in reading. The intervention(s) used include _____. We are monitoring his/her progress weekly to measure his/her response to the intervention(s).

You will continue to receive periodic progress reports while your child is in the intervention process. Should you have any questions regarding your child's intervention or progress, please contact your child's classroom teacher.

Classroom Teacher

Math Intervention Progress Report

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child is participating in our Intervention Program to improve his/her performance in math. The intervention(s) used include _____. We are monitoring his/her progress weekly to measure his/her response to the intervention(s).

You will continue to receive periodic progress reports while your child is in the intervention process. Should you have any questions regarding your child's intervention or progress, please contact your child's classroom teacher.

Classroom Teacher

Resources for Intervention Information/Research

Florida Center for Reading Research

The Florida Center for Reading Research provides extensive information on the science of reading and reviews of curriculum materials.

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

IRIS Center

The IRIS Center is a national center provides free, online, interactive training about the RTI process as well as the education of students with disabilities.

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/index.html>

Oregon Reading First

Oregon Reading First provides extensive information on reading instruction and reviews of curriculum materials.

<http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/>

The Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts

The Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (University of Texas) provides information on improving reading instruction for all students, but especially struggling readers, English language learners, and special education students.

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

What Works Clearinghouse

The What Works Clearinghouse was established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>