

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
about
Response to Intervention (RtI)**

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General Information

What is RtI?

“RtI” stands for Response to Intervention. RtI is a process for achieving higher levels of academic and behavioral success for all students through high quality instruction, continuous review of student progress, and collaboration. Principles for the successful implementation of RtI in Wisconsin can be found on the DPI web page (see links below).

Why are schools and districts interested in RtI?

Schools and districts are interested in higher levels of student success in academics and behavior, areas in which RtI shows a great deal of promise. RtI results in improved outcomes, in part, because it is focused on setting goals and measuring progress toward those goals.

What is DPI’s framework for RtI in Wisconsin?

DPI’s framework is built around the three essential elements mentioned above: high quality instruction, continuous review of student progress, and collaboration, along with the seven principles for successful implementation. The framework allows for diverse and individual approaches at the local level. In designing their specific RtI systems, districts will need to make numerous important decisions, including choices about effective core instructional programs and practices, additional student supports, data-collection tools, composition of leadership teams, priorities for implementation, and much more. For more information on Wisconsin’s vision for RtI see Wisconsin Response to Intervention: A Guiding Document at <http://dpi.state.wi.us/rti/pdf/rti-guiding-doc.pdf>.

How will DPI support districts implementing RtI?

DPI has created web-based tools to help districts build and implement their RtI systems. In addition, DPI has partnered with the twelve CESAs to create a statewide RtI Center to coordinate statewide efforts between the 12 CESAs and professional organizations, and to support schools and districts implementing RtI. See www.wisconsinrticenter.org.

What resources are available to help districts?

DPI’s website includes a number of resources specific to RtI in Wisconsin. Typing “RtI” in the search box on the DPI web site will lead to those resources. DPI has partnered with the twelve CESAs to create a statewide RtI Center to support schools and districts implementing RtI. The specific links below are useful. Finally, many professional associations have RtI websites, as well as journals publishing scientific research on RtI systems.

RtI <http://dpi.wi.gov/rti/index.html>; www.wisconsinrticenter.org
PBIS <http://dpi.wi.gov/RTI/pbis.html>; www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org
Balanced Assessment <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/pdf/bas.pdf>; <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/balanced.html>

Is the implementation of RtI mandatory in Wisconsin schools?

No. A comprehensive/school-wide RtI system is not required in Wisconsin.

Assessment

What is DPI's policy on assessment tools used as part of an RtI system?

In a RtI system, DPI is not advocating for any specific assessment, nor does the department have a policy that would specify certain assessment tools that a district must use in a RtI process. These are local decisions to be discussed with local education stakeholders.

Within an overall RtI process, DPI encourages educators to use a balanced assessment system. This balanced assessment system would include: benchmark, formative, and summative assessments. For more information on balanced assessment, click here (<http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/balanced.html>).

Where do “running records” belong within a balanced assessment system? Are they a formative or benchmark assessment?

Running records are an important tool; and as with all assessments, must be balanced with insights from other instruments. Locating the appropriate place for running records within a balanced assessment system is a local decision, and DPI does not have a policy that specifies how certain assessments must be used. LEAs must examine their own local systems to ensure a balance of formative, benchmark and summative assessments are used to monitor student learning.

Special Education and RtI

How do students with IEPs “fit into” an RtI system?

IEP teams determine what services, supports, and placements are most appropriate to meet students' needs. In making these decisions, the team must consider the least restrictive environment (LRE). Pursuant to §300.114 (a)(2)(i-ii), each public agency must ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Therefore, to the extent appropriate, students with IEPs should participate in any system of support available within the scope of general education, as any student would, with the addition of the accommodations outlined in their IEPs. In an RtI system, supports available to any student may include screening, progress monitoring, and systematic interventions or additional challenges. IEP teams determine any specially designed instruction necessary to meet the student's needs.

What role can special education teachers play in the implementation of RtI?

One benefit of school-wide RtI is that increased supports are systematically provided to students within the scope of general education. Special educators may provide consultation on effective techniques, but may not provide ongoing, individualized supports to non-disabled students. Proper referral, evaluation and placement procedures must be followed prior to academic or behavioral instruction or intervention by a special education teacher that reaches beyond the limits of incidental benefit.

Special education teachers may serve on problem-solving teams in a consultative role, offering suggestions for data collection and analysis, matching interventions to student need, adjusting those interventions, etc. They can also provide professional development to general educators who are implementing interventions and progress monitoring. Their role should not cross over into pre-referral activities such as observation, providing interventions, and individual student data collection and analysis.

For more information, see <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/sb-gen-ed-pers.pdf>.

What role can speech and language pathologists play in the implementation of RtI?

One benefit of school-wide RtI is that increased supports are systematically provided to students within the scope of general education. Speech and language pathologists may provide consultation on effective techniques, but may not provide ongoing, individualized supports to non-disabled students. Proper referral, evaluation and placement procedures must be followed prior to any intervention by a speech and language pathologist that reaches beyond the limits of incidental benefit.

Speech and language pathologists may not be assigned as regular problem solving team members and may not attend meetings to discuss individual students. However a speech and language pathologist may serve on a problem-solving team in a consultative role when the team is looking for information at the universal level. They can also provide professional development to general educators who are implementing interventions and progress monitoring. Their role should not cross over into pre-referral activities or providing interventions to general education students. For more information, see <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/sb-gen-ed-pers.pdf>.

What role can special education paraprofessionals play in the implementation of RtI?

Paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher whose responsibilities include, but are not limited to, supporting the lesson plan of a properly licensed teacher, providing technical assistance to the teacher, and helping with classroom management (PI 34.01(4)). Paraprofessionals hired as special education paraprofessionals are specifically assigned to support students with disabilities under the direct supervision of a licensed special education teacher. This includes students with disabilities' participation in the school's RtI system. Special education paraprofessionals should not provide interventions to general education students. For more information on special education paraprofessionals, see Bulletin 10.05, "Frequently Asked Questions about Special Education Paraprofessionals".

Will all districts have to implement a comprehensive RtI system in order to apply the new specific learning disabilities (SLD) eligibility criteria?

No. One aspect of the new specific learning disability eligibility criteria is a student's response to intensive scientific, research-based or evidence-based intensive interventions with accompanying appropriate data. The specific data needs created by the SLD rule will certainly be easier to fulfill for those districts that have fully implemented RtI systems. However, the implementation of RtI, as defined by the Department, is neither a prerequisite nor requirement for IEP team application of Wisconsin's SLD rule. In fact, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has made it clear that a district's failure to provide interventions as part of an RtI system cannot be used to deny or delay special education referrals (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/index.html>). For more information on the SLD criteria and its relation to a comprehensive RtI system see <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sped/ld.html>.

Can a district wait to act on a special education referral until staff have had a chance to implement interventions?

No. A district may not delay acting on a referral until the student has received interventions. The IEP team should convene and determine if there is enough data to determine if the student is eligible for special education. For specific learning disabilities (SLD) referrals, parents and IEP team members may agree in writing to extend the evaluation timeline at that time. For more information, see OSEP memo 11-07, January 21, 2011, "A Response to Intervention (RTI) Process Cannot Be Used to Delay-Deny an Evaluation for Eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)" (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/index.html>).

Can IEP teams consider RtI data when evaluating students for impairments other than SLD?

IEP teams use data to determine if a student has an impairment in one of the eleven areas outlined in IDEA *and* whether or not a student needs special education services (§300.305). Each area of impairment has specific determination criteria. However, IEP teams should consider all available relevant data when evaluating students for special education eligibility, including RtI data.

Targeted Assistance Title I Programs

Please note: With Title I programs and funding, there are basic tenets upon which the allowability of activities and purchases are determined. However, these basic tenets rely upon the specific Title I program model in a specific school, in the program models of other Title I schools in the district and the funding of activities in schools (Title and non-Title) across the district as a whole. In sum, it is hard to determine if something is an allowable Title I program or expense without knowing the larger context in which the program is taking place. Having said this, the following FAQ attempts to address some of the more general questions regarding the coordination and integration of a school's RtI and Title I programs.

In a targeted assistance school, can the Title I teacher participate in RtI?

Yes. Title I services are one piece of the continuum of services available to students. Title I teachers should still be providing supplemental educational support to a select group of

students determined as Title I-eligible by a review of multiple measures of academic progress. The school should have explicit criteria for when students enter the Title I program and explicit criteria for when students exit the Title I program. Title I teachers collaborate with regular classroom teachers in identifying Title I students. Title I teachers may consult with regular classroom teachers to design classroom interventions that the teacher would implement before a student is identified as Title I eligible. However, the Title I teacher should not be delivering those interventions as they are designed for non-Title I students. Title I teachers should never be used to deliver the core instruction provided to all students even if that instruction is differentiated. Title I teachers deliver education services over and above the core instruction. Title I services should never reduce a student's access to the core instruction.

What role can Title I instructional paraprofessionals play in the implementation of RtI in a targeted assistance school?

Paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher whose responsibilities include, but are not limited to, supporting the lesson plan of a properly licensed teacher, providing technical assistance to the teacher, and helping with classroom management. Paraprofessionals hired with Title I funds are specifically assigned to support students receiving Title I services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. This could include supporting a Title I student's participation in the school's RtI system. Title I paraprofessionals should not provide interventions to general education students. For more information on Title I paraprofessionals, see Bulletin 03.02 [ESEA Update: Paraprofessionals-Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Can Title I funds be used to purchase instructional materials to support the RtI system in a targeted assistance school?

If the district is purchasing particular materials for all schools in the district, those materials must be purchased with state or local funds in both Title I and non-Title I schools. In a targeted assistance school, Title I funds may only be used to purchase instructional materials for Title I students in the Title I program. Title I funds may never be used to purchase instructional materials in non-Title I schools.

How do multi-level systems of support work within the Title I targeted assistance programming? What parameters do we need to be aware of as we implement RtI?

When implementing RtI in a targeted assistance school, staff must ensure that the students served by Title I teachers and the services those teachers provide are consistent with Title I law. In a targeted assistance school, Title I teachers work only with Title I-eligible students and the services they provide are above and beyond what non-title students are receiving and supplemental to the core instructional program. This must be foremost in consideration when determining which level Title I services would best be placed.

In a targeted assistance program, what role can Title I teachers play in the new Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) rule?

In a targeted assistance program, Title I teachers should continue to serve Title I identified students and provide the necessary supplemental interventions to these students. These documented interventions with the Title I teacher **may** meet the standards of an intensive

intervention required as part of a SLD eligibility decision. For more information on the SLD criteria and its definition of "intensive interventions," see [Programs for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities](#).

Schoolwide Title I Programs

How may Title I funds be used to support RtI in a schoolwide school?

Schoolwide programs, allowable in buildings with at least 40% poverty upon submitting their schoolwide application, are designed to serve the educational needs of all students within the school. In order for any activity to be allowable in a schoolwide, the activity must be reflected both in the school's comprehensive needs assessment and schoolwide plan. As is the case with all actions and strategies on schoolwide plans, if it is being funded with Title I funds, its effectiveness on increasing student achievement will need to be evaluated annually. For more about schoolwide programming, see [Title I Schoolwide Programs](#).

Title I funds combined with other resources may be used to fund any aspect of RtI in a schoolwide school. In a schoolwide program, the district must take appropriate measures to ensure that they are not supplanting state and local funds with federal Title I funding.

In addition, districts may set aside a portion of their IDEA Part B funds to be used within Title I schoolwide schools to support any part of their schoolwide plan. For more information on this option, see [IDEA - Title I Schoolwide Set-Aside](#).

The U.S. Department of Education has an informative power point on this topic titled, [Implementing RTI Using Title I, Title III, and CEIS Funds](#).

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