

Licensure Requirements for Providing Students with Interventions and Additional Challenges

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One consideration when implementing a multi-level system of supports (Response to Intervention/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) is to determine which staff members will instruct students who need additional support in the form of interventions for students who are not meeting benchmarks and/or additional challenges for students exceeding benchmarks (RTI and PBIS). When making these determinations, it is important to remember that teaching students in interventions and/or additional challenges is considered instructional, therefore licensure requirements for student instruction apply. In general, the instructor must hold a Wisconsin license for the *grade level* and *subject area* he or she is teaching. For more information on structuring a continuum of instructional supports please see <http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/educators/rti-in-action/continuum-of-supports.html>.

Some questions to consider when determining the most appropriate staff members to provide instruction in your multi-level system of support include:

- Are the students with the greatest struggles being instructed by the most highly qualified staff in the content area of need?
- Do staff who provide interventions and additional challenges have in-depth pedagogical, content-area, and social-emotional expertise for the unique needs of the students receiving the instruction?

This document provides guidelines on required educator qualifications for providing interventions and/or additional challenges in the content areas of reading, mathematics, and behavior. Guidelines in this document apply at all levels/tiers of support, including requirements under Wis. Stat. 121.02(1)(c) (Standard C), as well as PI 11.02 (Wisconsin's administrative rule for specific learning disabilities eligibility determinations criteria).

This guidance focuses specifically on a school's general education system of support. Additional guidance on permissible roles for special educators can be found at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/sped-incidental-benefit.pdf>.

Instruction vs. Support

Teachers provide instruction, while paraprofessionals provide support to the student for that instruction. An appropriately licensed teacher or reading specialist designs the lessons, implements the lessons, and evaluates student learning. Teachers licensed in other subject areas and paraprofessionals may provide reinforcement for learning activities but not the actual instruction itself.

“Teacher” is defined in PI 34 and under Wis. Stat. 40.02(55) as a school employee who demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions outlined in PI 34.02 (the Wisconsin Educator Standards) to improve pupil learning through the exercise of any educational function, including instructing pupils or administering, directing, or supervising any educational activity. “Teaching” is defined in PI 34.01(59) as improving pupil learning by planning instruction, diagnosing learning needs, prescribing content delivery through classroom activities, assessing student learning, reporting outcomes to administrators and parents, and evaluating the effects of instruction. Interventions and additional challenges are considered instruction. All of these activities must be provided by an appropriately licensed teacher or reading specialist.

Support is the reinforcement of instruction, reinforcement for an intervention, or reinforcement for an additional challenge that has already been provided by the appropriately licensed teacher or reading specialist. Examples of support include:

- assisting individual or groups of students with independent practice work assigned by the teacher.
- assisting classroom teachers during guided reading with monitoring/assisting students with independent reading assignments, while the teacher works with small group guided reading instruction
- taping (oral/video) oral reading selections for later analysis by the Title I or classroom teacher (taped running records)

Reading:

- A reading teacher license (316/1316) is required to teach reading outside of a teacher’s self-contained classroom for multiple periods per day. It is permissible for a teacher to provide one period of instruction beyond universal/core instruction, as long as the teacher holds a Regular Education (777/1777) at the Early Childhood-Middle Childhood or Middle Childhood-Early Adolescence level (generally PK-3 or grades 1-8) or an Elementary/Middle Level license (088/1088) at the appropriate grade level(s). Teachers with a special education license at the appropriate developmental or grade level may provide reading instruction to students with disabilities when reading is listed as a special education service in the IEP.
- Teachers licensed only with a content-specific (e.g., Math, Broadfield Social Studies) license are allowed to teach reading within the context of their discipline. For example, a math teacher could teach strategies for reading a math textbook or academic vocabulary related to math. Content-specific teachers may not provide reading instruction, interventions, or additional challenges for reading (e.g., pullout group for reading instruction). Middle grades content-specific teachers without a Regular Education, Elementary/Middle Level, or special education license may not provide the reading instruction outside of their content areas.

- Reading instruction within a Title I funded program must be provided by an educator who is properly licensed for the assignment.
- It is permissible for any licensed teacher and for paraprofessionals to support reading interventions or additional challenges under the direct supervision of an appropriately licensed reading teacher for multiple periods in a day.

Mathematics:

- Mathematics instruction must be provided by teachers who hold a Mathematics (400/1400), Regular Education (777/1777), or Elementary/Middle Level (088/1088) license at the appropriate developmental or grade levels of their students. This includes providing interventions and additional challenges for math. Teachers with a special education license at the appropriate developmental or grade levels may provide interventions and additional challenges for students with disabilities when math is listed as a special education service in the IEP.
- It is permissible for any licensed teacher and for paraprofessionals to support math interventions or additional challenges under the direct supervision of an appropriately licensed math teacher for multiple periods in a day.

Behavior:

- It is permissible for licensed teachers, pupil services professionals, and administrators to provide behavioral interventions to students at the developmental or grade levels of their licenses.
- It is permissible for paraprofessionals to support behavioral interventions if the interventions were selected/designed, implemented, and evaluated by a licensed teacher, pupil services professional, or administrator.