

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

RTI Implementation Plan

I. Introduction

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying student response data to important educational decisions. RTI can be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by student outcome data. Optimal learning outcomes occur when students' skills and abilities closely match the curriculum and instruction within the classroom. When a mismatch occurs, student outcomes and learning suffer. Quality classroom instruction usually provides a good match for most students. For other students, success is not easy. The hypothesis is that, with RTI, these struggling students can be identified early and provided with appropriate instruction, thus increasing the likelihood that they can be successful.

RTI is comprised of 5 major characteristics:

- 1) Data-Based Decision-Making** - Important educational decisions regarding supplemental and intensive interventions are based on data representing learning rate and level. Data are critical to making decisions about individual student response to instruction across multiple tiers of interventions, including eligibility for supplemental or intensive services, as well as exit from supplemental or intensive services.
- 2) Universal Screening** - Screening is a type of low-cost and easily administered assessment, testing age and grade-level critical skills or behaviors. It identifies high and low performing students who are at-risk of not meeting predetermined benchmarks.
- 3) Tiered Service Delivery** - An RTI approach incorporates a multi-tiered approach of educational service delivery. Each tier represents increasingly intense services that are associated with increasing levels of learner needs. The various tier interventions are designed to provide a set of curricular/instructional processes aimed at improving student response to instruction and student outcomes. A tiered approach consists of three broad tiers although some models may include more. The first tier is considered universal and is comprised of the core curriculum and includes all students. The second tier is referred to as supplemental. When a student is not making expected progress at the universal level, the student might receive supplemental instruction, in addition to the universal instruction. Intervention at this level is generally provided in small groups and can be a standard intervention for any student or can be individualized for a few students. The third tier is often referred to as the intensive level. Students who do not make expected progress with supplemental instruction can move into this level

where they receive individualized and more intensive intervention. Such interventions are tailored to the individual needs of the student and might involve modification of the curriculum or additional time with delivery of the intervention in very small or one-to-one settings.

- 4) **Progress Monitoring** - Progress monitoring is the scientifically and/or evidence based practice of assessing students' academic and behavioral performance on a regular basis. Progress monitoring serves two purposes:
 - a. To determine whether students are making appropriate progress from the core instructional program and
 - b. To build more effective programs for the students who are not making appropriate progress.

- 5) **Fidelity of Implementation** - Fidelity of implementation is the delivery of instruction in the way in which it was designed to be delivered. Fidelity must also address the integrity with which screening and progress-monitoring procedures are completed and the way an explicit decision making model is followed. In an RTI model, fidelity is important at both the school level (e.g., implementation of the process) and teacher level (e.g., implementation of scientifically based core curriculum and progress monitoring).

II. Purpose

Many schools have already begun to put in place some of the critical components as part of the Reading First initiative or in anticipation of the changes in IDEA 2004.

NDDPI is committed to supporting schools in the implementation and enhancement of response to intervention practices by providing extensive training to schools interested in expanding and enhancing their efforts to implement RTI. The purpose of the training is to ensure that school staffs have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement RTI with fidelity and that LEAs can develop LD identification procedures using RTI data that meet the criteria outlined in state guidance.

III. Desired Outcomes

RTI is a process that has the promise of an array of school improvement benefits and over time NDDPI expects to see improved data as RTI is expanded across the state.

The outcomes expected from this project include:

- School sites implementing effective RTI practices with fidelity as a result of increased skills and knowledge.
- Students experiencing increased academic success through provision of appropriate and timely instructional services.
- Students identified and receiving services according to their need at earlier points, thus reducing the rate of failure and resulting in fewer students referred for special education.

IV. Plan of Action

NDDPI will:

- a) Invite and select implementation sites.
- b) Provide an external trainer with experience implementing RTI (Dr. Kimberly Gibbons).
- c) Provide ongoing technical assistance to schools as requested.
- d) Evaluate the effects of RTI.
- e) Disseminate outcomes and information across North Dakota through conferences, workshops, web-based resources and newsletters.

Participating districts will:

- a) Identify district leadership to coordinate implementation efforts, including coordination of resources and school improvement efforts.
- b) Identify one or two schools as the implementation sites. These sites will participate in initial training and be part of the district effort to potentially spread the practices district wide.
- c) Participate in team training and support teams training others within the district.
- d) Work with schools to identify or develop effective data management systems and support efforts to ensure efficient, timely evaluation data collection.

Participating schools will:

- a) Identify a school team to provide leadership and support for the implementation of RTI at the school level.
- b) Complete a self-assessment of existing RTI core elements.
- c) Commit to participate in and complete intensive RTI training.
- d) Commit to implement components from one training session and bringing data to the following training session as designated by the trainers.
- e) Collect and report student and school outcome measures.
- f) Coordinate resources with Reading First, PBS, and other similar school improvement efforts.
- g) Participate in possible district-wide efforts to provide training and support to other schools in the district as RTI is implemented district wide.
- h) Present findings at ND sponsored conferences or meetings.

School teams will:

- a) Participate in on-going RTI professional development to ensure the ability to implement interventions effectively for all students in their school.
- b) Meet regularly to review educational data, intervention strategies, and the effectiveness of the current school-wide plan.
- c) Provide training to other school staff members and identify additional training needs of all school staff and parents.
- d) Establish a data management system that allows the team to track progress and effect.
- e) Provide leadership in the development and implementation of interventions for students with intensive needs in collaboration with other community

agencies to ensure that needs that extend beyond the school setting are addressed.

- f) Collect RTI data at the individual building level to be submitted as part of the evaluation plan.

The **School Team membership** could include:

- principal or other administrator
- Title 1 staff
- general education teachers
- special education teacher representative
- school psychologist or speech language pathologist

Criteria for the selection of **Coaches/coordinators** should include:

- evidence of highly effective classroom or school experience;
- familiarity with various research based curricula and interventions;
- demonstrated organizational skills;
- experience conducting small group training;
- ability/availability to attend training sessions with the districts to which they are assigned;
- willingness to participate in additional coaches training sessions to assist in working with additional districts;
- team and small group facilitation skills; and
- ability to use data for making instructional decisions.

Training Plan

This plan is designed to quickly build State capacity in RTI Implementation by assisting districts to learn, implement and retrain others in the core RTI principles within their district.

- Year 1 – Four full-day training sessions will be offered during the school year for teams from selected buildings. All training for the 2007-2008 are planned to be in Bismarck from 8:30-4:00. The training will focus on the use of data to make decisions within a Problem Solving Model. This training program is sequential. Therefore, in order to participate, teams must commit to attending all sessions and completing assigned activities on time.

October 5, 2007 - Session 1: Overview & Problem Identification

Teams will be provided with an overview of Response to Intervention (RTI), the problem solving process, and in-depth training on the Problem Identification step. Skills include instruction on the use of general outcome measures and how they fit into the process, and training in specific procedures to gather Problem Identification information. Teams will be given planning time to process newly learned information and will be asked to select at least one student from their school, and collect Problem Identification data prior to session 2.

November 2, 2007 - Session 2: Problem Analysis and Plan Development

Teams will learn advanced theory of Problem Analysis and specific techniques for Curriculum-Based Evaluation in order to determine why identified problems are occurring. In addition, teams will learn how to set appropriate goals for students and necessary components for developing intervention plans. Teams will be given planning time to process newly learned information and will be asked to collect any additional data needed to develop a data-based hypothesis for why their selected student's problem is occurring prior to session 3.

December 3, 2007 - Session 3: Plan Development and Plan Implementation

Using Problem Identification and Problem Analysis data from their own cases as well as sample cases, teams will learn and practice skills in Plan Development including writing goals, designing intervention plans, creating progress-monitoring plans, and ensuring implementation integrity. Training will be provided on selected scientifically, research-based interventions in the area of reading. Teams will be given planning time to process newly learned information and will be asked to design and begin implementation of a plan for their selected student prior to session 4.

February 29, 2008 - Session 4: Plan Evaluation

Teams will review the data for their cases and will learn to apply decision-making rules in order to evaluate plan effectiveness. Teams will learn a framework for systematically evaluating data, and altering intervention plans as needed to increase student achievement. Finally, teams will be given planning time to develop a school building action plan for next steps in implementation.

- Year 2 – Follow-up training will be designed and provided based on the input and needs identified by participants at the end of year 1.

V. Funding

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) will assist schools to implement RTI with the intent of successfully educating and preparing students for life's opportunities. The NDDPI will support those schools by providing the trainer, training facilities, and training materials.

Participating schools will be responsible for travel expenses for individual team members that attend the project-related meetings and trainings, as well as substitute teacher pay that may be necessary. Districts are encouraged to plan for the possible use of the following funding streams to support school efforts to receive training and implement the critical RTI components.

These funding streams may include:

1. **Use Your Federal Title Funds**

- Title I – Title I funds, under certain circumstances, can be used to help support the RTI process. The cost of professional development can be cost shared among several federal programs. Title I paid staff can assist in

working with identified students to provide intervening services. Resources and materials can be shared among programs.

- Title II A – Title II A funds designated for professional development could be used to support professional development in the RTI process.
 - Title V – These funds are very flexible and can be used to support a variety of innovative educational activities, including RTI.
2. REAP (Rural Education Achievement Program Initiative) - These funds target small rural districts. Eligible school districts are allowed to combine the funding under several Titles and can use these funds for any authorized activity. If your school is eligible, these funds can be combined into Title II A or Title V to support RTI.
 3. IDEA (preschool and part B)
 4. Program Improvement Funds - Schools and districts in program improvement may receive additional funds to help them make Adequate Yearly Progress. Using these additional program improvement dollars to support RTI would be an allowable use of these funds.
 5. Transferability - These funds target larger urban districts. Eligible school districts are allowed to combine some of the federal funding under several Titles and use these funds for any authorized activity. If your school is eligible, these funds can be combined into Title II A or Title V and used to support RTI.
 6. Small Rural Schools Achievement Program Funds through REAP - Eligible schools can apply for these additional funds through the U.S. Department of Education. These funds can be used for authorized activities under the Title programs and can support any of the supplemental activities under the federal programs, including RTI.
 7. General Funds - Another avenue for funding RTI is your district's general funds. If your school staff really believes the RTI process will make a difference, you should consider collecting the data and showing how it will improve student achievement, approach your school board, and request funds to sustain it.
 8. Pool Your Resources - In North Dakota, it is becoming quite common for districts to cooperate and share services. Federal regulations allow school districts to pool their resources to share services among several schools. One district would simply agree to be the fiscal agent and the funds would flow through that district to pay for the shared activities. A District could pool their funds to support professional development on RTI. Another viable option would be to share resources through your local Regional Educational Association (REA).

9. Reallocated Title I Funds are available to school districts that would like to add to their Title I program, but need additional funds to accomplish their plan. The funds must supplement your current local and Title I budget. These funds are made available in September and could be used to support any additional activity that will enhance services for Title I students.

VI. Evaluation

The evaluation has been designed to use existing data to the maximum degree possible, however, schools may be asked to submit additional data if it is not available in existing data collection efforts. Specifically the evaluation has been designed to answer the following questions:

1. To what degree did the training lead to an increase in knowledge and skills?
 - RTI/Problem Solving fidelity evaluation tool
2. Did training and implementation of RTI lead to more appropriate and timely instructional services to students?
 - This would be done through review of a written description of the problem solving process that the team develops
 - This would also be done through a written description of forms and procedures related to the problem solving process
3. Did implementation of RTI lead to increased timeliness and accuracy of the special education identification process?
 - This would be done through collection of special education referral data

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