



Department of Curriculum and Instruction

RTI² Handbook

2019-2020

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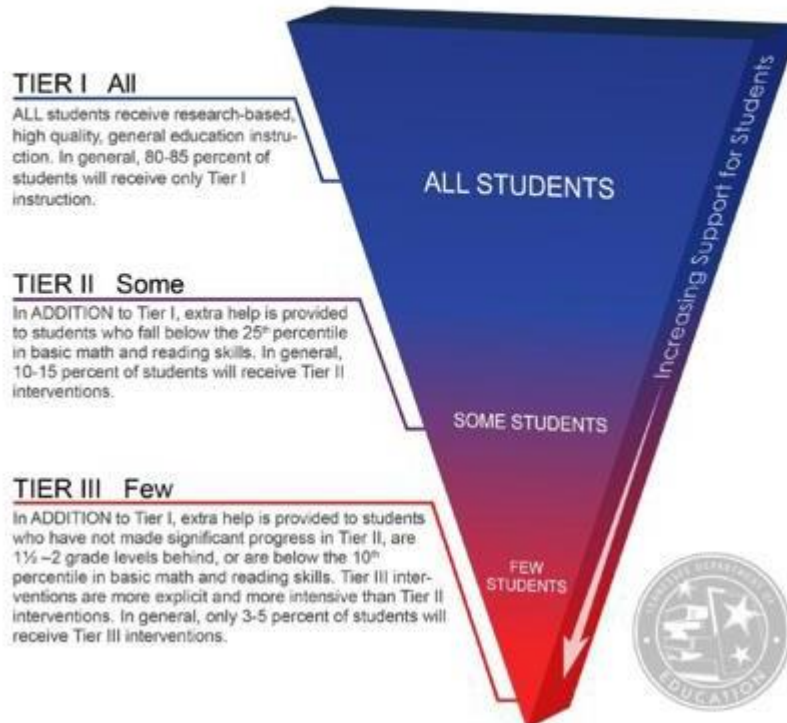
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Tennessee RTI² Model

Response to Instruction and Intervention

RTI²

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: ➤ Leadership ➤ Culture of Collaboration ➤ Prevention & Early Intervention



Placement of students in tiers is the RTI² school team's decision based on each student's individual needs.

If a school has a large number of students falling below national norms, the school team may use relative norms instead of national norms to guide the selection of intervention groups. Relative norms compare a student's performance to other students in his/her school. If a school has a high population of struggling students, relative norms allow a school staff to determine which students have the greatest need for intervention. **However, best practice is to use the Walk to Learn model and modify a block of intervention time to meet the needs of all students.**

Skills-Based vs. Standards-Based Benchmark Assessments

The universal screening tool is skills-based. *Screening* is conducted to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes due to deficits in basic skills. AimswebPlus is our district **skills-based benchmark assessment tool (a.k.a. universal screener)**.

Performance Matters is our district **standards-based benchmark assessment tool**. The purpose of a standards-based benchmark is to assess student mastery of the state content standards to inform instruction.

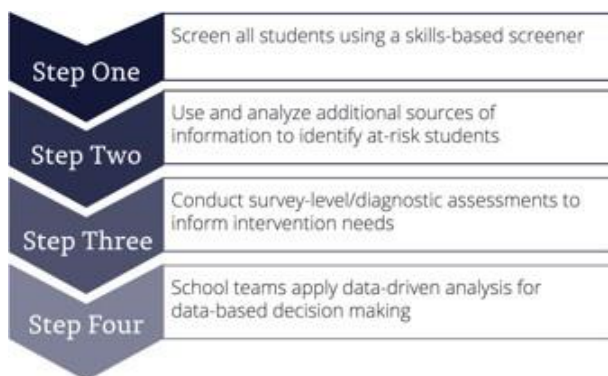
Universal Screening Procedures

RTI² is a process focused on prevention and early intervention that uses multiple sources of data for instruction, differentiation, intervention, and transition between tiers. Ongoing assessments are a major component of the RTI² Framework. Data derived from ongoing assessments, including the universal screening process, informs data-based decision-making.

The universal screening process also plays an important role in fulfilling the requirements of Tennessee's dyslexia legislation (Public Chapter 1058 of the Acts of 2016). This law requires that districts implement a screening process for identifying characteristics of dyslexia.

Students are always screened on grade level.

The universal screening process involves four steps:



STEP 1:

All students in grades K-8 will be screened using AimswebPlus, a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener. Universal screeners are brief, informative tools used to measure academic skills in six general areas: Basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, and written expression.

For grades 9-12, schools collect multiple sources of data that are incorporated into an early warning system (EWS). This should include students' Aimsweb data from middle school.

STEP 2:

School teams analyze the results and compare to other sources of data (including but not limited to: classroom- and standards-based assessments, grades, teacher observations, historical screening and progress monitoring data). This information should be used to confirm or challenge performance on the skills-based universal screener.

STEP 3:

Students identified as “at risk” based on multiple sources of data should be administered survey level and/or diagnostic assessments to determine each student’s specific intervention needs. Diagnostic assessments may include placement tests that are a component of a specific intervention program.

STEP 4:

School level teams should apply data-driven analysis for data-based decision making. Data-based decision making is the use of appropriate data gathered through ongoing assessment to inform and drive instructional decisions in Tier I as well as to determine the need for skills-specific interventions, remediation, re-teaching, and enrichment.

Frequency by Grade Band and 2019-2020 Screening Windows

Universal Screening Frequency by Grade Band		
Grades K-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12
Aimsweb; 3 times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring)	Aimsweb; Fall screening: Optional but recommended Winter screening: Optional Spring screening: Required	Early Warning System (EWS) reviewed annually to identify at-risk students; Aimsweb available for benchmarking students in Tier II, III, SPED

2019-20 Universal Screening Windows
Fall: August 19, 2019 - August 30, 2019
Winter: January 6, 2020 - January 16, 2020
Spring: April 27, 2020 - May 8, 2020

Students must be screened within the given windows. Do not test before the window opens or after the window closes except in the case of students who are absent throughout the entire screening window. Those students may be tested within one week of the regular window closing. After that, students should only be tested using the survey level assessment process.

Universal Screening Schedule: Reading and Written Expression

Early Literacy/Reading/Writing			
	Fall 8/19/19-8/30/19	Winter 1/6/20-1/16/20	Spring 4/27/20-5/8/20
Kindergarten (Early Literacy)	Print Concepts*, Initial Sounds, Letter Naming Fluency, Letter Word Sounds Fluency	Initial Sounds, Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation, Nonsense Word Fluency, Letter Word Sounds Fluency	Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation, Nonsense Word Fluency, Word Reading Fluency, Letter Word Sounds Fluency
Grade 1 (Early Literacy)	Phoneme Segmentation, Nonsense Word Fluency, Word Reading Fluency, Letter Word Sounds Fluency, Oral Reading Fluency	Nonsense Word Fluency, Oral Reading Fluency	Nonsense Word Fluency, Oral Reading Fluency
Grades 2 and 3 (Reading)	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Written Expression (Classic measure)	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Written Expression (Classic measure)	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Written Expression (Classic measure)
Grades 4, 5, and 6 (Reading)	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Silent Reading Fluency, Written Expression (Classic measure)	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Silent Reading Fluency, Written Expression (Classic measure)	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Silent Reading Fluency, Written Expression (Classic measure)
Grades 7 and 8 (Reading)	optional but recommended	optional	Oral Reading Fluency, Vocabulary*, Reading Comprehension*, Silent Reading Fluency, Written Expression (Classic measure)

** Screening measure only*

This schedule supersedes all other guidance.

All students in grades 4-8 should be administered the Oral Reading Fluency measure, not just those who don't get a score on Silent Reading Fluency.

Universal Screening Schedule: Math

Early Numeracy/Math			
	Fall 8/19/19-8/30/19	Winter 1/6/20-1/16/20	Spring 4/27/20-5/8/20
Kindergarten (Early Numeracy)	Number Naming Fluency, Quantity Total Fluency, Concepts & Applications*	Number Naming Fluency, Quantity Total Fluency, Quantity Difference Fluency, Concepts & Applications*	Number Naming Fluency, Quantity Total Fluency, Quantity Difference Fluency, Concepts & Applications*
Grade 1 (Early Numeracy)	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Pairs, Math Facts Fluency - One Digit	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Pairs, Math Facts Fluency - One Digit, Math Facts Fluency - Tens	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Pairs, Math Facts Fluency - One Digit, Math Facts Fluency - Tens
Grades 2 through 6 (Math)	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Triads, Mental Computation Fluency, Number Sense Fluency	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Triads, Mental Computation Fluency, Number Sense Fluency	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Triads, Mental Computation Fluency, Number Sense Fluency
Grades 7 and 8 (Math)	optional but recommended	optional	Concepts & Applications*, Number Comparison Fluency - Triads, Mental Computation Fluency, Number Sense Fluency

* Screening measure only

Survey Level Assessments

For any student identified as “at risk” based on multiple sources of data, survey level assessments are required to further gather specific information regarding each student’s area(s) of need. The universal screener will indicate whether or not there’s a problem; the survey level assessment identifies what the problem is. In addition to determining specific skill deficits, this process also reveals which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is necessary to set appropriate goals for a student, develop an individualized plan for intervention, and determine the instructional level for progress monitoring.

Recommended Survey Level Assessments for Reading

Phonological and phonemic awareness

- Aimsweb: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) (off grade level)
- Phonological Awareness Skills Screener (PASS)*
- Phonological Awareness Test-2nd Edition (PAT-2)**
- DIBELS: First Sound Fluency (FSF) (off grade level)
- DIBELS: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) (off grade level).

Sound-symbol recognition

- Aimsweb: Letter Sound Fluency (LSF) (off grade level)
- Phonics and Word Reading Survey (PWRS)*
- Phonological Awareness Test-2nd Edition (PAT-2)**
- DIBELS: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (off grade level).

Alphabetic knowledge

- Aimsweb: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (off grade level)
- Phonological Awareness Test-2nd Edition (PAT-2)**
- DIBELS: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (off grade level).

Decoding skills

- Aimsweb: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (off grade level)
- Aimsweb: Reading Curriculum Based Measure (RCBM) (off grade level, with error analysis)
- DIBELS: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) (off grade level)
- DIBELS: Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) (off grade level, with error analysis)
- Phonics and Word Reading Survey (PWRS)*
- Phonological Awareness Test-2nd Edition (PAT-2)**.

Encoding skills

- Words Their Way Spelling Inventory*

Rapid Naming

- The Arkansas Rapid Automatized Naming Screener (AR-RAN)*

* Contact Sarah Cates, Tony Dalton, Amy Mitchell for information on how to access these survey-level assessments

** Every K-8 special education department has a PAT-2 kit for use with students with disabilities

Recommended Survey Level Assessments for Math:

- Aimsweb Early Numeracy/Math Measures (off grade level)
- Institute for Learning Intervention Surveys (see district RTI web page)
- Math Trajectory of Learning

Accommodations on Universal Screening Assessments

When deciding whether it is appropriate to use accommodations on a test, it is important to consider the purpose of the test. The purpose of universal screening is to determine which students might be at risk for poor outcomes in a specific academic area and determine the extent and nature of the student's difficulties so that appropriate interventions can be provided. Therefore, providing accommodations such as extended time or reading the items would invalidate the screening results and make it difficult to accurately identify students in need of additional support. However, accommodations that allow physical access to the test (e.g. large print versions for students with visual impairments) would be appropriate.

For universal screening purposes, the following accommodations are allowable:

- Enlarging the test form or using a magnification device
- Modifying the environment (i.e. special lighting or furniture)
- Repeating the spoken directions when introducing a probe
- Group-administered probes may also be administered in small groups or individually

The following accommodations are not allowable for any student on the universal screening assessments:

- Use of calculators
- Extending the administration time
- Providing practice administrations
- Letting students preview or review measures
- Providing feedback beyond what is specified in the standardized directions
- Allowing scratch paper for mental computation measures

"Say Dyslexia" Law Overview and Procedures

The "Say Dyslexia" law requires school districts to screen all students for characteristics of dyslexia through their existing RTI² screening process. School teams will use all available data to determine the need for a student to receive a dyslexia-specific intervention. The law can be found at:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/dys/pc1058_dyslexia_bill.pdf

The Dyslexia Resource Guide assists districts in their implementation of the requirements established by the legislation:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/dys/dyslexia_resource_guide.pdf

Requirements of the "Say Dyslexia" Law

- Implement a universal screening process for characteristics of dyslexia through the existing RTI² framework.
- Determine which students are demonstrating characteristics and need dyslexia-specific interventions.
- Notify the parent if the screening for characteristics of dyslexia indicates that a student needs dyslexia-specific intervention; provide parents with information and resources.
- Provide appropriate tiered dyslexia-specific interventions through the existing RTI² framework.
- Monitor students' progress at least every other week using a tool designed to measure the effectiveness of the intervention; change interventions as needed.
- Send home progress updates every 4.5-5 weeks.
- Reporting requirements:

School level

- 1) Report students receiving dyslexia-specific interventions to attendance personnel.
- 2) Attendance personnel select appropriate code in SIS/EIS.
- 3) Code remains throughout the school year.

District level

- 1) Enter school-reported title/description of dyslexia-specific interventions into ePlan.

Hamblen County Dyslexia Screening Procedures

1) All students in grades K-8 are screened with AimswebPlus per the district universal screening schedule. High schools also have access to Aimsweb for students who are identified as "at risk" based on multiple sources of data.

2) The school-level RTI² team is responsible for considering the results of the universal screenings against all other available data to determine which students demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia.

Off grade level measures in Aimsweb in addition to PASS, PWRS, and Words Their Way Spelling Inventories should be used as survey level assessments to identify characteristics of dyslexia when:

- A student scores below the 25th percentile in word reading fluency, oral reading fluency, and/or written expression.
- A student scores above the 25th percentile, but experiences marked difficulties in the classroom with spelling, reading, and/or writing skills.

The screening process must include assessment of the following characteristics of dyslexia:	
Difficulties	General Definition
Phonological awareness	When a child listens, the ability to recognize and identify sounds and words in spoken language when no print is involved (e.g., recognize and identify individual words within sentences, sounds and syllables within words, blending and changing sounds to create new words, and rhyming)
Phonemic awareness	The awareness of individual sounds within the spoken word and the ability to manipulate those sounds when no print is involved (i.e., a subcomponent of phonological awareness)
Alphabet knowledge	Ability to name letters of the alphabet
Sound/symbol recognition	Ability to identify the sounds that letters and letter combinations make
Decoding skills	Ability to sound out words and read words using phonics (linking letters and sounds)
Encoding skills	Ability to spell words
Rapid naming	Ability to quickly and accurately name familiar things (e.g., letters, objects, shapes, colors, etc.)

3) The school team will provide a letter to the parents of any student who is identified as needing Tier II or Tier III interventions in any of the areas listed above. The letter should be attached to the Dyslexia Overview for Parents and sent home or provided in person to parents no later than three weeks after the close of the fall universal screening window.

4) The school team will submit a list of students receiving dyslexia-specific interventions to the PowerSchool secretary. The Dyslexia-Specific Intervention code should be entered promptly in PowerSchool for each of these students and will remain all school year. The code can be found in PowerSchool as follows:

After selecting a student, click on State/Province – TN → Student Classification → Click here to Create/Edit this student's non-lunch related classification → New → Classification Type (dropdown menu) – choose DYS01 Dyslexia-Specific Intervention → Submit

5) Students who are identified as demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia must receive appropriate interventions. A dyslexia-specific intervention is evidence-based and:

- Explicit - skills explained, directly taught, and modeled by teacher
- Systematic and cumulative - introduces concepts in a definite, logical sequence
- Multisensory - links listening, speaking, reading, and writing together; involves movement and hands-on learning
- Language-based - addresses all levels of language, include sounds (phonemes), symbols (graphemes), meaningful word parts (morphemes), word and phrase meanings (semantics), and sentence formation (syntax)
- Aligned to individual student need - should address the skill deficit(s) identified through the survey level assessment process

Dyslexia-specific interventions used in Hamblen County include S.P.I.R.E., West VA Phonics, and Lexia.

6) School teams should also consider the need for accommodations and evaluations.

Continuum of Programming		
General Education	Section 504	Special Education
Universal screening process for instructional planning as part of RTI ²	Evaluate for disability and substantial impact on life activity	Evaluation for disability and its adverse impact on education
Team determines interventions	Team (parent involvement encouraged) determines eligibility for 504	Team, including parents, determines eligibility for special education services
Team considers accessibility features allowable for all students	If eligible, student-specific 504 accommodations plan is developed	If eligible, team writes an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Timeframe Guidance for Instruction and Intervention

ELA Instruction and Reading Intervention			
	Tier I daily minimum	Tier II Reading daily minimum	Tier III Reading daily minimum
Kindergarten ELA	150 minutes	30 minutes	45 minutes
Grade 1 ELA	150 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes
Grade 2 ELA	150 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes
3-5 ELA	120-150 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes
6-8 ELA	55 minutes	30 minutes	45-55 minutes
9-12 ELA	90 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes

Mathematics Instruction and Intervention			
	Tier I daily minimum	Tier II Math daily minimum	Tier III Math daily minimum
K-1 Mathematics	60 minutes	30 minutes	45 minutes
Grade 2 Mathematics	75 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes
3-5 Mathematics	90 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes
6-8 Mathematics	55 minutes	30 minutes	45-55 minutes
9-12 Mathematics	90 minutes	30 minutes	45-60 minutes

Special education intervention times are determined by each student's IEP team. Special education intervention should be more intensive than Tier III. At the very least, interventions should vary in intensity by group size and duration of intervention lessons. Intensity can also be increased based on the strength of the intervention itself, how comprehensive and explicit the instruction is, and how aligned the intervention is to the student's specific skill deficits.

Interventions

Tier II, Tier III, and special education interventions should be systematic, explicit, research-based, and target the student's identified area of deficit (basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving or written expression). Interventions should also be implemented by highly-trained personnel, carried out with fidelity, and progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met.

Scientific research-based interventions are those that have been proven to produce reliable and valid results. When these interventions are used properly, adequate gains should be expected. Interventions should be developed based on the unique needs of students. Interventions that have been researched to have the greatest chance of addressing the area of need should be selected. There will be evidence that interventions are focused on specific **skills** rather than the standards focus of Tier I.

Systematic instruction refers to a carefully planned sequence for instruction, similar to a builder's blueprint for a house. A blueprint is carefully thought out and designed before building materials are gathered and construction begins. The plan for systematic instruction is carefully thought out, strategic, and designed before activities and lessons are developed. For systematic instruction, lessons build on previously taught information, from simple to complex, with clear, concise student objectives that are driven by ongoing assessment. Students are provided appropriate practice opportunities, which directly reflect intervention.

There is evidence of scaffolding instruction. Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn the task, and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. In this manner, a teacher enables students to accomplish as much of a task as possible without assistance. This is known as the gradual release model of instruction.

Explicit instruction involves direct face-to-face teaching that is highly structured, focused on specific learning outcomes, and based on a high level of student and teacher interaction. It involves explanation, demonstration, and practice with topics being taught in a logical order. Another characteristic of explicit teaching is modeling skills, thinking, and behaviors. This also involves the teacher thinking out loud when working through problems and demonstrating processes for students. RTI is not the time for exploratory or discovery learning.

The majority (over 50 percent) of the session should be direct intervention provided by the interventionist; however, computer-based and/or technology assisted interventions might be used as supplemental materials.

Tier I

Tier I provides access to essential grade-level Tennessee academic standards for all students. In Tier I, all students receive high quality, scientifically based instruction, **differentiated** to meet their needs. Strong Tier I instruction is the foundation of RTI². In general, 80-85 percent of students should have their needs met in Tier I. Whole group instruction, small group instruction, and students' independent work should focus on advancing student learning; educators should avoid one-size-fits-all assignments or giving students tasks they've already mastered.

Daily minimum times for Tier I ELA allow for:

- Deep, meaningful, standards-based instruction
- Adequate time for interactive read-alouds and shared reading experiences (K-5) and to both read and respond to text, including time for peer-to-peer discussion and writing (6-12)
- K-5: Approximately 60 minutes of small group instruction where teachers meet with 3-4 small groups daily for 15-20 minutes each; opportunities for multiple daily writing lessons, including on-demand writing in response to text as well as extended student-directed composition of narrative, opinion, and information pieces
- 6-12: 30 minutes of whole-group instruction, which may include practices such as shared reading, close reading, mini-lessons, and student discussion; regular opportunities for small group instruction where teachers monitor and interact with students during reading, speaking, and writing activities

- Daily independent reading and reading conferences (K-5)
- Systematic and explicit instruction of foundational skills and frequent application of foundational skill to connected texts (K-5)

Daily minimum times for Tier I Math allow for:

- Deep, meaningful, standards-based instruction
- Students to learn mathematical vocabulary, understand models for different representations of mathematical concepts, and develop an understanding of multiple problem-solving strategies
- Development of both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency
- Opportunities for students to participate in small groups on a regular basis to discuss and share mathematical ideas and reasoning, revise their thinking, and work collaboratively to solve problems
- Participation in meaningful problem solving investigations as well as activities structured so that students can explore, explain, extend, and evaluate their progress

Tier I instruction should address all students' instructional needs and prevent difficulties from developing. It should focus on building both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies and should align with grade level standards for ELA, mathematics, and the content areas. Educators should proactively identify student needs through multiple sources of data and use this information to plan for differentiation.

Differentiation should be the primary response to supporting students during Tier I instruction.

Tier II

Tier II				
Grade	Ratio	Minimum Time	Progress Monitor	Fidelity Monitoring
K-5	1:5	30 min. daily	Weekly or every other week (on instructional level)	2 Direct/ 1 Indirect every 9 weeks
6-8	1:6	30 min. daily	Weekly or every other week (on instructional level)	2 Direct/ 1 Indirect every 9 weeks
9-12	1:12	30 min. daily	Weekly or every other week (on instructional level)	2 Direct/ 1 Indirect every 9 weeks

Tier II is in addition to the minimum instructional times provided in Tier I. Students who score below the 25th percentile in any area on the universal screener may need additional support in Tier II. As a guideline, students scoring below the 25th percentile are considered "at risk." When school-level support teams are making placement decisions for Tier II intervention, multiple sources of data (including survey level assessments) should be considered.

Tier II requires high-quality intervention matched to students' needs and provided by highly trained personnel.

Tier III

Tier III				
Grade	Ratio	Minimum Time	Progress Monitor	Fidelity Monitoring
K-5	1:3	45 min. daily	Weekly or every other week (on instructional level)	3 Direct/ 2 Indirect every 9 weeks
6-8	1:6	45 min. daily	Weekly or every other week (on instructional level)	3 Direct/ 2 Indirect every 9 weeks
9-12	1:12	45 min. daily	Weekly or every other week (on instructional level)	3 Direct/ 2 Indirect every 9 weeks

Tier III is in addition to the minimum instructional times provided in Tier I. Students who have not made adequate progress with Tier II interventions will receive more intense intervention in Tier III. As a guideline, students below the 10th percentile and/or 1.5 to 2 years behind would be considered the most at risk and in possible need of Tier III intervention. When teachers and school-level support teams are making placement decisions for Tier III interventions, multiple sources of data should be considered.

Students in Tier III should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual intervention targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more intense than interventions received in Tier II. At the very least, interventions should vary in intensity by group size and duration of intervention lessons. Intervention in Tier III should also be more explicit and targeted to the student's area of need.

Other Tier II and III Considerations

If a student needs intervention in more than one area (for example, both reading and mathematics), the team may choose to provide intervention five days/week in the area of greatest need. Strategies should be used to provide as much individualized support as possible in Tier I in the area not being addressed through intervention.

A student who is receiving special education services should not be excluded from tiered interventions if their data indicates a need. For example, a student with Other Health Impairment (OHI) may receive special education services for his/her disability; however, he/she may also receive Tier II or III interventions in reading, math, or written expression. In this case, both special education services and tiered interventions would be provided.

Procedures for English Language Learners

English as a Second Language (ESL) Services and Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) go hand in hand to bring success to a population of at-risk students.

At the beginning level, ESL students may either:

- Have English language arts (ELA) in their regular classroom with the general education teacher of their peers,
- or, have ELA in the alternative program: English as a Second Language with an ESL teacher

ESL services for beginners and intermediate English Learners (ELs) are viewed as a right of the Non-English Language Background (NELB) student by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education. Lau v. Nichols (1974) established that NELB students have a right to access the curriculum fully. In English only schools, this is not easily accomplished if the student is not fluent in English. Therefore, to access academic work, ELs often need an alternative core instruction program. If the ESL teacher delivers the core instruction, the student generally benefits from tier 2 and tier 3 language acquisition interventions with language acquisition interventionists. ESL for these students is viewed as their English language arts class. This is the core language instruction for ELs whether it is in the general education classroom, or in the ESL classroom, or a combination of the two.

The choices made related to pull out ESL services, push-in ESL services and placement in the regular classroom for literacy are district decisions. However, the decisions should be made based on what will likely work best for this student. ELs acquire English at different speeds and in different ways during the process. The success of these students requires that progress-monitoring data be kept and analyzed not only for the academic growth, but also for growth as they are acquiring English.

Is it preferable for the EL to be in the regular classroom where the teacher may have had specific training in teaching reading, or it is better to have the student in the ESL classroom where the teacher has specific training on second language acquisition? There is considerable discussion about which is better, but there is no simple answer to the situation. There are valid reasons for both types of service.

RTI² focuses on instruction and intervention. First and foremost, the instruction for each EL must be meaningful and dynamic. The best instruction uses the teacher as the facilitator while the student explores subject matter and makes the needed connections. For ELs, the gap may be so wide that the teacher gradually moves from being a more traditional teacher into the facilitator mode as the student grows in the skills needed to navigate the educational system. For an EL, English is more than just a means of communication. It is the tool needed to open the curriculum to him/her. The district needs to be sure that the instruction in each classroom which has ELs is productive to the student's goals for achievement. These students often begin with huge gaps and these may be closed surprisingly quickly with the proper balance of instruction and intervention. Keep in mind that most of the EL's day is spent in the regular classroom, so it is necessary that these general education teachers have EL strategies and knowledge to make their instruction meaningful to this subgroup.

All students are provided high quality core instruction regardless of who is delivering the core instruction. For this instruction to be meaningful, the ESL teacher must tie his/her ESL standards to content concepts at the minimum and to content standards ideally. All instruction in the classroom needs to be academic and relate to core subjects and ideas. Vocabulary needs to be learned and practiced in context. Teachers must make sure that the ESL class has the same balance of non-fiction and fiction reading materials that are used in the age/grade level appropriate classroom of the EL student. The focus must be communicative discourse both speaking and writing. Re-teaching standards and ideas is part of the core instruction and not a Tier II or Tier III service.

- Intervention is in addition to core instruction. When a teacher notices that an EL is not performing on grade level, s/he intervenes. This can be a formal Tier II or Tier III intervention or language

acquisition, or a combination of an intervention and language acquisition, but it can also be as simple as a couple of minutes spent individually with the student. All students, including ELs, benefit from interventions around a variety of educational issues. ELs have the right to complete academic access to service in RTI² as they do for all programs within the school. These interventions are determined by the language acquisition data gathered through progress monitoring.

So is ESL a Tier II intervention? Tier III? Do we choose ESL class or Tier I services? Actually, however the EL gets his/her ELA instruction is Tier I. That can be accomplished through the ESL classroom, through the regular classroom, through a Title I supported reading teacher, or through a combination of settings. The two issues that require focus are

1. Beginning and intermediate ELs are required to have a minimum of one hour each day, 5 days per week of direct ESL instruction, and 2. RTI² outlines times dedicated to ELA instruction each day.

Both of these requirements are to be met. As professionals in your districts, the Tennessee Department of Education believes that you have the unique position of knowing both the students and their collected data to make the best decisions about service. First language acquisition scores let us know where students are in language development; the second progress monitoring helps determine if the student needs Tier II or Tier III interventions.

Keep in mind that ELs might need Tier II intervention in mathematics rather than ELA and they have the right to the interventions needed. ESL services are core instruction in ELA or language acquisition academic instruction. Often it is referred to as an alternative program core program for ELA. If an advanced or even exited EL had difficulty in language issues that an ESL intervention would help, you might consider offering that help during a Tier II or Tier III block of time. ELs have the same right to interventions as any other students.

Using this RTI² process will aid in more reliably knowing when to assess an EL for Special Education services. This process will allow the student to have the needed interventions as the determination is being made regarding whether to proceed with special education testing. These decisions will be based on reliable progress monitoring data.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is used to assess student responsiveness to intervention and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring will be done in the area of deficit using an instrument that is sensitive to change. AimswebPlus is the progress monitoring tool for Tier II, Tier III, and special education in grades K-12 in Hamblen County. Grades 9-12 will use 8th grade measures; however, there are separate norms for grades 9-12.

Frequency of Progress Monitoring	
Tier I	Three times per year (universal screening)
Tier II	At least every other week
Tier III	At least every other week
Special Education	At least every other week

While the universal screening tools measure student performance on grade level, progress monitoring must be conducted with measures that are at the students' skill/instructional level. The skill/instructional level at which a student will be progress monitored can be determined through survey-level assessments.

For students being considered for a special education referral or reevaluation, periodic grade level measures should also be administered in order to complete a gap analysis. Interventionists and school psychologists should work together to determine a plan for data collection when a student is suspected of having a specific learning disability.

Data-Based Decision Making

Progress monitoring data will be used to set goals for each child. A goal should be set as part of the Monitoring Schedule in AimswebPlus. Teachers should show knowledge and evidence of how students are progressing toward these goals using a rate of improvement (ROI). Teachers must use progress monitoring data to make instructional decisions and make changes to the intervention if needed.

An at risk student's rate of improvement must be greater than the rate of improvement of a typical student in order to "close the gap" and return to grade level functioning, which is always the goal of RTI.

School RTI² teams will meet to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions, and check student progress toward goals. If students are not making adequate progress, the intervention may need to be changed. Students should have at least four data points during Tier II or III interventions before a change is considered. Only one or two variables should be changed at a time to measure effectiveness of the change. A change in intervention will be considered within each tier before moving to the next tier of intervention. Changes may include:

- increasing frequency of intervention sessions
- changing interventions
- changing intervention provider
- changing time of day intervention is delivered

In order to change tiers, a minimum of 8-10 data points (if progress monitoring every other week) or 10-15 data points (if progress monitoring weekly) are required. Changes to the intervention should be considered before changing tiers.

RTI² Teams

Leadership and a culture of collaboration are essential to the success of the RTI² framework. This is not a process led by special education. It is a joint effort led by general education. In order to have a strong RTI² program and to support a culture of collaboration, a Local Educational Agency (LEA) must have a district RTI² leadership team and school-level RTI² support teams.

School-Level Teams

LEAs will have a written description of the members of the school level RTI² support teams and their roles and responsibilities. These teams meet regularly to ensure the fidelity of the instruction and interventions, as well as make data-based decisions regarding appropriate student placement in interventions. School teams will ensure that progress is reported to parents. When placing students in interventions, it will require reviewing and discussing student data and student attendance. Interventions must be matched to specific area(s) of deficit for each student.



School teams may include the principal or his/her designee, classroom teachers, literacy/numeracy coaches, school psychologists, school counselors, ESL teachers, special education teachers, and other staff as necessary. Procedures should be in place for managing paperwork including intervention

The school level RTI² team will meet at least every 4.5 weeks to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions, and check student progress toward goals. Parent communication will take place after each school team meeting.

Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity is the accuracy or extent to which intervention materials and other curricula are used as intended by the author/publisher. Fidelity monitoring is the systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (e.g. principal or instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models as originally developed. The goal of fidelity monitoring is to ensure that the intervention is being implemented with integrity. Ongoing fidelity documentation should include interventions used, student attendance, review of student intervention plans, progress monitoring data, and any other information that might account for the student's progress or lack thereof.

If the intervention is effective and students are making progress (as determined by student ROI), the fidelity checks do not need to be as thorough. For example, the fidelity check might be a walk through or a short observation. If the students are not making progress, then fidelity checks need to be more thorough. For example, a thorough fidelity check might be a 30-minute direct observation.

LEAs must have a process for monitoring fidelity. This process must include a description of who is responsible for fidelity monitoring and how often. The school team should review fidelity checks when determining the effectiveness of an intervention.

Fidelity monitoring should continue within special education interventions and follow the same fidelity monitoring schedule as Tier III.

Considerations for Special Education

A referral for a special education evaluation should be considered when a student does not make sufficient progress in Tier III. Information obtained from any assessments completed during the intervention process may be used as part of the eligibility determination.

The RTI² process cannot be used to delay or deny a request for an evaluation. School teams may not predetermine eligibility.

Parent Communication

Parent contact is an essential component of RTI² and reinforces the culture of collaboration.

Parents will be notified with a letter:

- Following the fall universal screening when the school RTI² team determines that a student needs to begin/continue receiving intervention. The notification should include specific areas of deficit associated with the characteristics of dyslexia as well as the Dyslexia Overview for Parents for those students who have deficits in basic reading skills.
- At any time throughout the school year when initiating or discontinuing tiered interventions.
- Every 4.5-5 weeks, following each school RTI² team meeting, to communicate progress.

These letters are only one of many ways to ensure parents have a full understanding of their child's academic programming and progress. RTI² information can also be included in the school handbook, school website, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, and/or open houses. The school team may consider contacting the parent by telephone or request a conference prior to sending a letter home.

Forms and Documentation

Required student data folders:

- Yellow – Tier II
- Red – Tier III
- Special Education

Student Data Folder Contents		
Form	Person(s) Responsible	Frequency
Student Intervention Plan	School RTI ² team	At the initial meeting when a student is placed in tiered intervention; revised whenever needed
Intervention Plan Evaluation	Designated school RTI ² team member	Every 4.5 weeks
Intervention Log	Interventionist	Daily
Rate of Improvement Worksheet	Interventionist	Every 4 data points
Gap Analysis Worksheet	Interventionist/school psychologist	Any time you are considering a change in tier or a referral to special education (requires periodic progress monitoring on grade level)
Parent Letters	Designated school RTI ² team member	After fall universal screening, any time when initiating or discontinuing tiered interventions, and every 4.5-5 weeks following the school RTI ² team meeting
Direct and Indirect Fidelity Checklists	School principal and/or his or her designee.	Tier II requires 1 indirect and 2 direct fidelity checks every 9 weeks; Tier III requires 2 indirect and 3 direct fidelity checks every 9 weeks.
Other information as deemed appropriate: Vision and hearing screenings, grades, attendance reports, etc.	Interventionist/school RTI ² team	Ongoing

When a student transfers from one school to another school within the district, the student RTI data folder will also be transferred. The interventionist and school PowerSchool secretary should collaborate to ensure the RTI folder is transferred along with the student's permanent record/special education files. Once the student has been transferred in PowerSchool, the student will also be transferred to the new school in AimswebPlus. If a student was receiving tiered interventions at the previous school, interventions should continue at the new school. It is essential for the interventionist to communicate to the school of transfer, including the alternative school, information about the student's intervention status and programming. If a student transfers out of district, the student's data folder should be kept as an inactive file. Data folders should follow students from one grade level to the next and from one school to the next when they are promoted to middle or high school. Each school should have a plan in place for transferring RTI folders to the next school at the end of the school year.

District Contact Information

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District RTI² forms and resources can be found on our web page: www.hcboe.net -

-> Teachers --> RTI Resources