

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

### **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](http://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. 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](http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org)  
PBIS <http://dpi.wi.gov/RTI/pbis.html>; [www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org](http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org)  
Balanced Assessment <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/pdf/bas.pdf>; <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/balanced.html>

### **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.

### **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".

### **Is the implementation of RtI mandatory in Wisconsin schools?**

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

### **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.

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