

TNCore

The Common Core State Standards



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Glossary*

United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSEP), Memo 11-07

References

*Glossary terms appear in **bold** print throughout the manual.

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Foreword from Commissioner Huffman



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KEVIN HUFFMAN
COMMISSIONER

Dear Educators,

Our goal in Tennessee is to become the fastest improving state in the nation in student achievement results by 2015. Changing practices in serving students who struggle academically plays a significant role in making that goal a reality.

It is my fundamental belief that all students are able to reach higher levels of academic achievement and that it is our collective responsibility as educators to advance all students. Within this material, you will have the opportunity to learn about resources available for developing Response to Intervention programs in your schools and of best practices in closing gaps for students who struggle.

At the state level, it is our intention to bring a transformation of results through a transformation of departmental practices. The State Department of Education, through deliberate cross-teaming of our Curriculum and Instruction Division with our Special Populations Division, is providing support to districts in best-practice intervention and instructional practices to serve the needs of all students.

A significant part of that support involves providing critical regional assistance to districts for data analysis, reading and math instructional practices, and intervention guidelines, through assigned consultants in our CORE offices. Providing the necessary resources to assist districts in achievement of their accountability goals is a primary consideration in the move to a coordinated Response to Intervention state plan.

I am excited about the work ahead. Response to Intervention provides an opportunity to better support students who struggle academically. I know that together, we can do better for all students in Tennessee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Huffman".

Kevin Huffman

Intent of this Framework

Response to Intervention is a framework for teaching and learning. Helping students succeed is the fundamental mission of our work and Response to Intervention is a significant priority towards that end. This work is about empowering districts to give every student the opportunity to meet high expectations and the support to reach them. The work described in these pages matters to every academic division in the department.

The Tennessee State Board of Education has approved Special Education Guidelines and Standards regarding Evaluations for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). This change in current standards from use of a discrepancy model of identification to a Response to Intervention (RTI) model becomes effective July 1, 2014. This change will require all districts and schools to use RTI to determine eligibility of students to receive Special Education services in the category of Specific Learning Disability. RTI is a path to providing instructional opportunity to any student struggling to succeed and should not be viewed as a path to special education eligibility.

The Tennessee Department of Education is committed to offering support to districts throughout the transition to RTI. Professional development for district leaders, school psychologists, and teachers in the RTI model will be available. Our intent is to create a statewide RTI plan that is clear, consistent, and easy to follow along with the necessary supports to create a smooth transition.

Ultimately we believe that this model will have a significant impact on all student learners by building the infrastructure and empowering teachers across the state. Students in an RTI model will have the opportunity to experience prevention of instructional gaps and early intensive intervention as a best practice, prior to failure, and prior to identification. We believe that all students should have every opportunity to be successful and RTI provides for those circumstances to be realized.



Kathleen M. Airhart, Ed.D.
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Introduction

The role of the public education system is to prepare ALL students for success after high school. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) believes that the framework surrounding positive outcomes for ALL students in Tennessee is the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) model. This framework integrates Tennessee State Standards, assessment, early intervention, and accountability for at risk students in the belief that ALL students can learn.

What is RTI²?

The RTI² framework is aligned with the department's beliefs and allows for an integrated, seamless problem-solving model that addresses individual student needs. This framework relies on the premise of high-quality instruction and interventions tailored to student need where core instructional and intervention decisions are guided by student outcome data. In Tennessee, the education system will be built around a tiered intervention model that spans from general education to special education. Tiered interventions in the areas of reading, math, and/or writing occur in general education depending on the needs of the student. If a student fails to respond to intensive interventions and is suspected of having a Specific Learning Disability, then the student may require special education interventions (i.e. the most intensive interventions and services). As always, parents reserve the right to request an evaluation at any time (See component 5-OSEP memo 11/07).

Historically, the primary option available to students who were not successful in the general education classroom was a placement in special education. Often, these students did not demonstrate significant discrepancies between their achievement and intellectual ability until the third grade; therefore, leaving use of the discrepancy model coined the "wait to fail model." In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized to reflect an important change in the way schools meet individual student need(s). An emphasis was placed on early intervention services for children who are at risk for academic or behavioral problems. Schools can no longer wait for students to fail before providing intervention. Instead, they should employ a problem-solving model to identify and remediate areas of academic concern. It is important to the Tennessee Department of Education that the RTI² framework represents a continuum of intervention services in which general education and special populations work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students. This includes shared knowledge and commitment to the RTI² framework, its function as a process of improving educational outcomes for ALL students, and its importance to the department to meet requirements related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Timeline:

Subsequent to the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, Tennessee amended its criteria for determining the eligibility of a student with a Specific Learning Disability to allow local

education agencies to use either a discrepancy method or a method based on Response to Intervention (RTI). At that time, however, a consistent RTI model was not adopted throughout the state. Since that time, the following events have led to the current policy change:

- In the spring of 2012, the Common Core Leadership Council (CCLC) had a discussion surrounding best instructional practice in reading and math. This discussion led to the need for a statewide RTI model to promote consistency and improved instruction.
- In the fall of 2012, these guidelines were released to districts and presented at Tennessee Educational Leadership Conference (LEAD) in 2012. Feedback was gathered from districts and the conversation around RTI in Tennessee continued throughout the fall of 2012. At this time, the TDOE searched for a partner organization with a strong research background to help with the development of reading and math training relative to Tennessee State Standards and tiered, supplemental intervention.
- On January 9, 2013, an RTI Task-force with members from various leadership roles in Tennessee education was convened to discuss the possibility of a statewide RTI model. The group voted to proceed with a statewide plan and provided recommendations.
- Around this same time, a call for educators to serve on a Reading/RTI Leadership Team went out to districts across the state. After a lengthy application and interview process, the team was selected on January 23, 2013. The Reading/RTI Leadership Team met on February 1, 2013 to start researching and writing the Response to Instruction and Intervention Framework termed RTI².
- In February 2013, a school psychologist RTI² task force was assembled to help develop and review content related to interventions and eligibility standards for students suspected of having a Specific Learning Disability.

Policy Change

On January 14, 2013, the proposal for identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability using an RTI² problem-solving model was presented to and passed by the Students with Disabilities Advisory Council. The proposal was then presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) during a work session on January 31, 2012. A public hearing was held on March 19, 2013. The SBE passed the proposal on first reading on April 19, 2013 and was made final upon second reading on June 21, 2013. As of July 1, 2014, RTI² will be the criteria by which a student may be identified as having a Specific Learning Disability in the state of Tennessee.

On January 31, 2014, the state board adopted a provision which allowed local education agencies to apply to the Tennessee Department of Education to extend the effective date for implementation of a research based instruction method. Approved local education agencies may continue to use a discrepancy method when determining whether a child in grades 6-8 has a specific learning disability until July 1, 2015, and until July 1, 2016 for grades 9-12 at which time a research based instruction method is mandatory for such grades.

Ensuring the Success of ALL Students

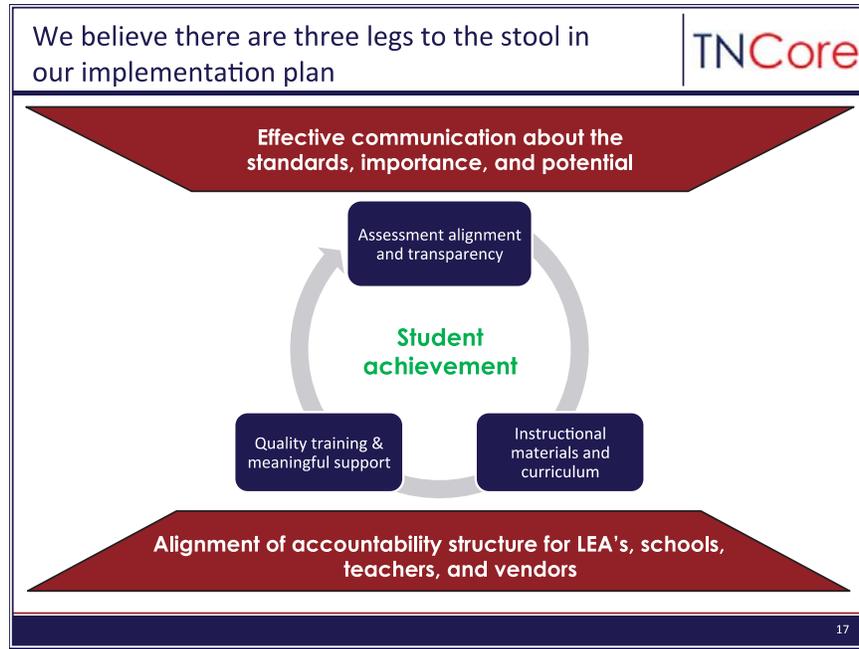
A state manual and implementation guide was made available to all local education agencies in August 2013. The *Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual* marks a significant point in our state's development, reflecting our state-level, collective intent to engage in large-scale systems change. The purpose of the RTI² Implementation Guide is to assist LEAs with school wide problem solving and to equip them with the practical decision-making tools that maintain the integrity of the RTI² framework.

As stated in the Tennessee RTI² Manual (Revised January 2015), all schools in Tennessee will utilize evidence-based practices, instructionally relevant assessments, data-based decision making, and effective professional development in order to ensure the success of ALL students.

The Tennessee Department of Education provided high-quality professional development for Tier I instruction during the summer of 2013 for grades K-12 across the state. A yearlong professional development course on K-3 reading will be provided during the 2013-14 school year through regional CORE centers across the states.

The Tennessee Department of Education provided high-quality professional development in regional format for districts and schools throughout the 2014-2015 school year.

The Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) Framework is a component of TNCORE. The TNCORE implementation plan has three legs with student achievement at the center:



The following are Guiding Principles for the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) Framework.

We believe...

- Leadership at the state, district, and building level is essential for ensuring the success of ALL students throughout the RTI² Framework.
- A culture of collaboration that is focused on student achievement, for both struggling and advancing students, should include educators, families and communities.
- RTI² is a process focused on **prevention** and **early intervention** that uses assessment data for instruction, intervention and transitions between Tiers.

All three of these guiding principles provide the foundation for the RTI² Framework. They are integrated into every piece of the framework.

“It is my fundamental belief that all students are able to reach higher levels of academic achievement and that it is our collective responsibility as educators to advance all students. “
Kevin Huffman

Component 1: General Procedures

1.1 General RTI² Procedures

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as reauthorized in 2004, states that a process that determines whether the child responds to scientific, **research-based** interventions may be used to determine if a child has a **specific learning disability**. IDEA also requires that an evaluation include a variety of assessment tools and strategies and cannot rely on any single procedure as the sole criterion for determining eligibility.

A Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) method will now be used to determine whether a child has a **specific learning disability (SLD)** in **basic reading skills, reading comprehension, reading fluency, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression** for students in grades K-12. Other areas of SLD including listening comprehension and oral language, in addition to behavioral concerns, may be added in the future.

The RTI² Framework is a model that promotes recommended practices for an integrated system connecting general and special education by the use of high-quality, scientifically **research-based** instruction and intervention.

The RTI² framework is a 3-Tier model that provides an ongoing process of instruction and interventions that allow students to make progress at all levels, particularly those students who are struggling or advancing.

The Tennessee RTI² Model (on the following page) is a picture of a well-run RTI² system. It represents the goal of what an RTI model will look like. When Tier I instruction is functioning well, it should meet the needs of 80-85% of the student population. Only 10-15% of the student population should need Tier II interventions and only 3-5% should need Tier III interventions. The Tennessee Department of Education recognizes that most school systems in Tennessee are continuing to work toward this goal.

Response to Instruction and Intervention

RTI²

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Leadership Culture of Collaboration Prevention & Early Intervention

TIER I All

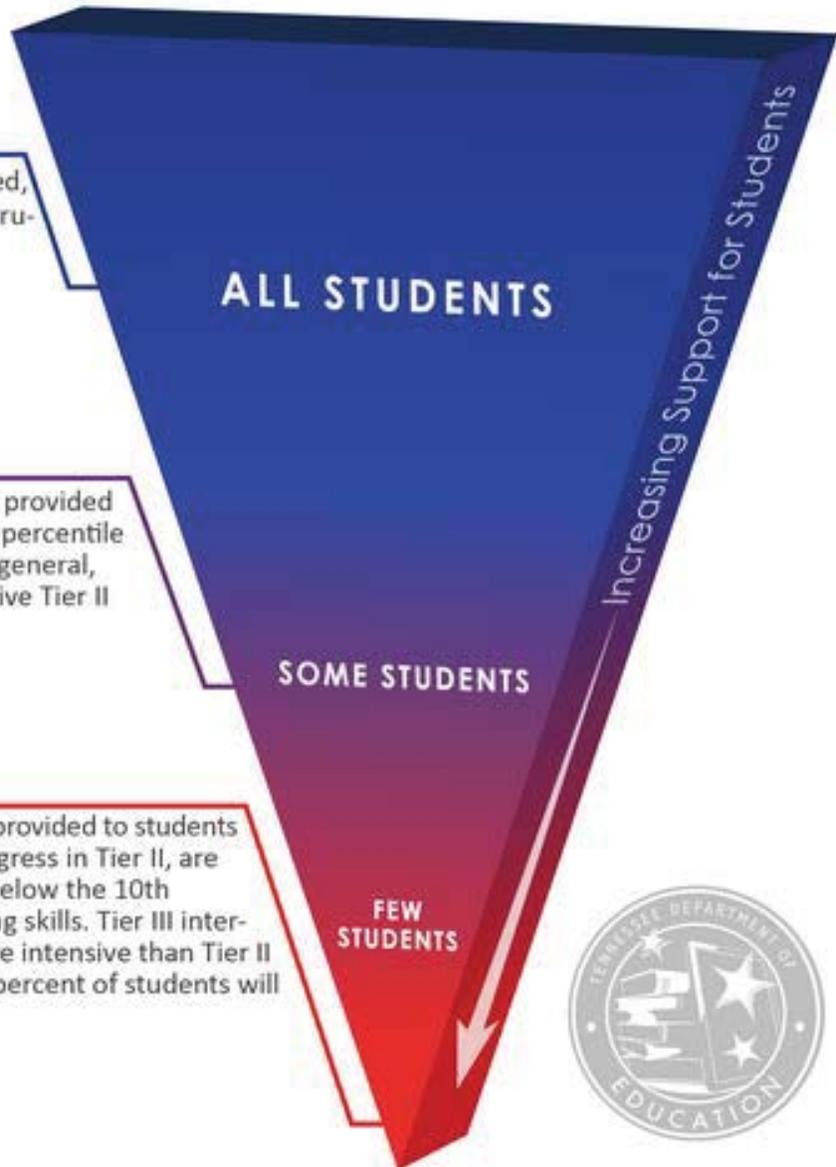
ALL students receive research-based, high quality, general education instruction. In general, 80-85 percent of students will receive only Tier I instruction.

TIER II Some

In **ADDITION to Tier I**, extra help is provided to students who fall below the 25th percentile in basic math and reading skills. In general, 10-15 percent of students will receive Tier II interventions.

TIER III Few

In **ADDITION to Tier I**, extra help is provided to students who have not made significant progress in Tier II, are 1½ –2 grade levels behind, or are below the 10th percentile in basic math and reading skills. Tier III interventions are more explicit and more intensive than Tier II interventions. In general, only 3-5 percent of students will receive Tier III interventions.



1.2 District/School Team

As stated in the Guiding Principles, 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**.

A **Local Education Agency** (LEA) must have a District RTI² Leadership Team and school level RTI² support teams.

LEAs will have a description of the members of the District RTI² Leadership Team and their roles. This team meets regularly to ensure the fidelity of the RTI² process. Typically, this involves looking at district data to ensure that Tier I instruction is meeting the needs of 80-85% of students and that Tier II and Tier III interventions are meeting the needs of 15-20% of students.

The District RTI² Leadership Team includes a designated chair or facilitator and is comprised of a diverse and representative group of people, which may include: administrators, educational staff (including teachers, specialists, **school psychologists**, etc.), and possibly parents. This team works to organize **professional development**, set and monitor timelines for implementation, and guide the implementation of RTI².

LEAs will have a description of the members of the school level RTI² support teams and their roles. 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. Schools teams will ensure that interventions are implemented with integrity. When placing students in interventions, it will require reviewing and discussing student data and student attendance in interventions. Interventions must be matched to specific area(s) of deficit for each student.

School teams can 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.

The District RTI² Leadership Team will indicate the frequency of district RTI² support meetings. The school level RTI² team will meet at least every 4.5- 5 weeks.

1.3 Universal Screening Procedures

As stated in the Guiding Principles, RTI² is a process focused on **prevention** and **early intervention** that uses assessment data for instruction, intervention, and transitions between tiers. Assessment is a major component of the RTI² Framework. Data derived from assessment informs the **data-based decision making** process.

An LEA must administer a **nationally normed**, skills-based **universal screener**. A universal screener is a brief screening assessment of academic skills (i.e. basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression) administered to ALL students to determine whether students demonstrate the skills necessary to achieve grade-level standards. Universal screening reveals which students are performing at or above the level considered necessary for achieving long-term success (general outcome measures). This data can also serve as a benchmark for measuring the improvement of a group, class, grade, school, or district. The LEA and district RTI2 team will select a universal screener that is appropriate for effective data-based decision making. The universal screening process should be used to identify the six general skill areas for student intervention. Next, a survey level assessment may be needed to determine more specific skill area(s) of focus before beginning an intervention.

In grades K-5, it is recommended that the **universal screener** be administered three times a year: at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The same process is recommended for sixth grade students as well. Using a universal screener tool is a different process in grades 7-8; these students are screened at the end of each school year. The same or parallel screeners are used at each administration, and the screening measures should assess students' at their current grade level. In grades K-8, a record review may also provide important information such as grades, attendance, and behavioral concerns that may provide early warning signs for intervention. **LEAs** will establish criteria for identifying students who are at-risk using such data.

In grades 9-12, there are multiple sources of data, such as: EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT; Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) which includes Writing (TCAP-WA), End of Course (EOC), 3-8 Achievement, TVAAS and universal screeners. These data tools along with should be collected, combined for a records review and incorporated into an early warning system(EWS). In grades 9-12, a record review may also provide important information such as grades, attendance, and behavioral concerns that may provide early warning signs for intervention. LEAs will establish criteria for identifying students who are at-risk.

LEAs will give consideration to how the **universal screening** tool will be administered and who will administer it. For example, schools may want to administer the **universal screening tool** on the same day to all students or stagger the administration. Furthermore, **LEAs** should consider the appropriateness of having the teacher of record administer the universal screening tool. Fidelity of implementation of the universal screening must be ensured so that student skills are accurately measured. Personnel should be appropriately trained in how to administer the **universal screener** before it is given.

In August 2014, the Tennessee Department of Education utilized a state-wide RFP process to identify universal screening and progress monitoring tools that met all the criteria outlined in the RTI² Framework.

At the time of the 2014 RFP process, the vendors below met the minimum technical score required and were identified as meeting state criteria for universal screening and progress monitoring.

Vendors meeting state criteria and who entered into cost negotiation with the state .

Area Assessed	Universal Screening	Progress Monitoring
Reading	AIMSWEB	AIMSWEB
	NCS Pearson, Inc.	NCS Pearson, Inc.
	EasyCBM	EasyCBM
	The Riverside Publishing Company	The Riverside Publishing Company
Math	AIMSWEB	AIMSWEB
	NCS Pearson, Inc.	NCS Pearson, Inc.
	EasyCBM	EasyCBM
	The Riverside Publishing Company	The Riverside Publishing Company

Vendors meeting state criteria, but not entering into cost negotiation with the state*

Area Assessed	Universal Screening	Progress Monitoring
Reading	Dibels Amplify Education, Inc., Dynamic Measurement Group, Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc.	Dibels, Amplify Education, Inc., Dynamic Measurement Group, Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc.

* The state is unable to enter into a contract with Amplify Education, Inc., Dynamic Measurement Group, and Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc. due to the state’s procurement process. However, Dibels – the product submitted for review - does meet the state technical score requirement and is identified as a product that meets state criteria for universal screening and progress monitoring. As with all vendors, LEAs may reach out to these vendors directly for provision of a universal screener and/or progress monitoring tool.

The goal of the RFP process is to provide guidance for LEAs. LEAs are in not obligated to select a vendor or product from this list.

1.4 Data-based Decision Making Procedures

As stated in the Guiding Principles, RTI² is a process focused on **prevention** and **early intervention** that uses assessment data for instruction, intervention, and transitions between tiers. Assessment is a major component of the RTI² Framework. Data derived from assessment informs the **data-based decision making** process.

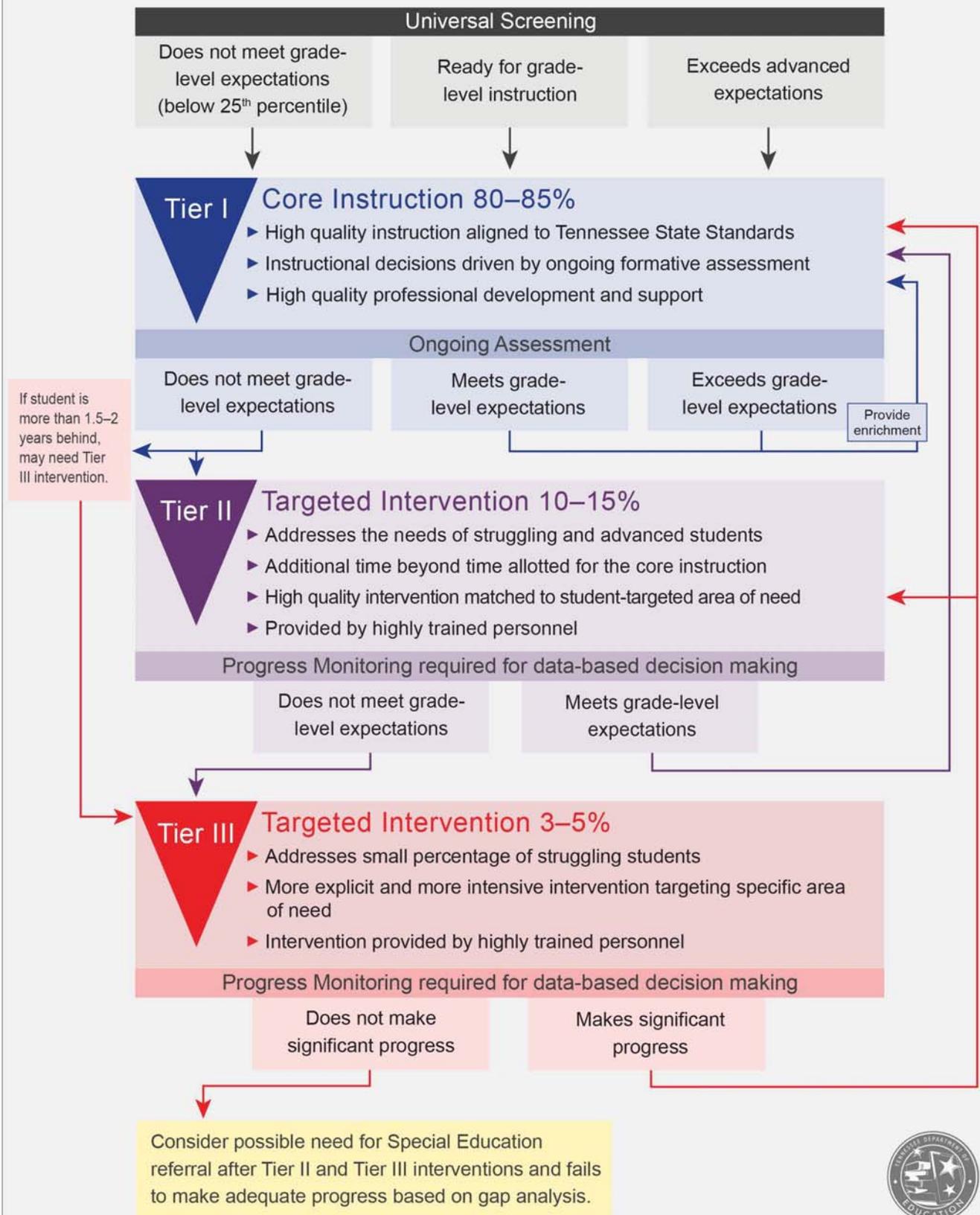
Data-based decision making is the process of using appropriate data to inform and drive each instructional decision. The universal screener establishes at-risk cut scores. These cut scores should be based on national norms (but can also be based on relative norms- see paragraph below) and identify students who are at-risk. As a guideline, students below the 25th percentile would be considered “at-risk.” Students who exceed grade level expectations may be considered “advanced.”

If a school has a large number of students falling below national norms, a 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. A school uses relative norms to serve students that are most at-risk when all at-risk students cannot be served. LEAs should continue to use national comparisons for overall program evaluation.

LEAs will explain what decisions will be made for instruction and interventions based on the results of the data. Typically, students who are the most “at-risk” or who have the most intensive need as identified by the **universal screener** would receive interventions first.

The RTI² Decision Making Process is outlined below in a flow chart showing all three tiers. This chart shows how instructional and intervention decisions are made based on data.

RTI² Decision-Making Process



1.5 Students Entering Mid-term

A culture of collaboration that is focused on student achievement will include educators, families, and communities. When students enroll mid-term, a culture of collaboration will be fostered to ensure that the students' needs are met.

Procedures will be in place for students who enroll mid-term, or any time after the **universal screening** is completed. A plan will be in place for administering the **universal screening** for these students. This plan will include what decisions will be made based on the screening data and who will make these decisions. It will also include how schools will secure the records from the previous school. Every effort will be made to quickly obtain educational records from the previous school. LEAs will also include a plan for students who transfer between schools within the district.

1.6 Parent Contact

Parent contact is an essential component of RTI² and reinforces the culture of collaboration. A variety of means to reach parents may be used, including: automated phone systems, electronic mail, US Mail, and student-delivered communications. LEAs must designate a person to coordinate and/or make contact with parents at the school level.

This person must contact parents for each of the following reasons: before initiating or discontinuing tiered interventions, to communicate **progress monitoring** data in writing every 4.5 weeks for students receiving tiered interventions, in the event there is a referral to special education, and regarding the dates and duration of **universal screenings**.

1.7 Procedures for English Language Learners

As stated in the Guiding Principles, RTI² is a process focused on **prevention** and **early intervention** and designed to ensure success for ALL students, including **English Language Learners (ELLs)**. LEAs will administer a **universal screener** to **English Language Learners (ELLs)**. **Universal screeners** will be culturally sensitive and free of bias. Thoughtful consideration will be made for how ELLs will participate in tiered interventions. An ESL teacher should be part of the school level RTI² team if an ELL is being discussed.

Component 2: Tier I Procedures

2.1 Description and Length of Core Curriculum

Kindergarten through Grade 2 (K-2) English Language Arts and Mathematics

Instruction in K-2 should have a strong hands-on, **multi-sensory** emphasis--- remembering that young children are concrete rather than abstract thinkers at this stage in their understanding. Evidence-based instructional practices occur across multiple tiers using a scientifically **research-based core curriculum** aligned to the **Tennessee State Standards**.

In K-2, the **core curriculum** (or Tier I) addresses the needs of all students. All students will receive instruction with grade-level standards in small and whole group settings. Tier I is the first layer of **prevention** and it should be the focus of instruction, providing a strong foundation, and striving to meet the needs of all students. Classroom teachers should use **flexible small groups** and target specific skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. They should be provided with tools and training including:

- Core reading and mathematics programs, scientifically **research-based** and aligned to grade-level **Tennessee State Standards**;
- A nationally normed, skills-based **universal screener**;
- **Formative assessment** data at least 3 times per year to determine instructional needs; and
- Ongoing embedded support and **professional development**.

K-2 Minimum Recommended Instructional Times:

Tier I	Kindergarten	First	Second
ELA	150 minutes daily	150 minutes daily	150 minutes daily
Mathematics	60 minutes daily	60 minutes daily	75 minutes daily

It is strongly recommended that 90-minutes of the 150-minute ELA Tier I instruction be uninterrupted.

Tier I **English Language Arts** (ELA) instruction should include all of the Tennessee State Standards ELA strands (Reading [Literature, Informational Text, and Foundational Skills], Writing, Speaking and Listening and Language). As per the standards, reading instruction can also include Science and Social Studies texts.

Tier I Mathematics instruction should align to the domains (Counting and Cardinality, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Number and Operations in Fractions,

Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Geometry, and Measurement and Data) and the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

Diverse building and grade-level structures may have an effect on scheduling.

Third through Fifth Grade (3-5) English Language Arts and Mathematics

Instruction in grades 3-5 should have a strong hands-on, **multi-sensory** emphasis, with high levels of student verbal interaction and engagement. Research indicates that students continue to “learn” to read in grades 3-5 even as they now “read to learn,” particularly in Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics curricula.

Strong emphasis should be given to the ELA Reading Standards: Foundational Skills strand which continues to strengthen students’ overall reading skills and provides the foundation for greater growth in the other five strands.

Students should be given time to discuss and compare ideas with peers along with the opportunity to revise their own thinking. Research indicates that students should frequently engage in cognitively demanding tasks with the opportunity to explore and make sense of mathematical concepts.

Teachers in grades 3-5 should move students toward a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application in mathematics. Teachers should strive for a balance in the types of tasks and materials used and how time is spent in **direct instruction**, individual think time, small group or partner discussion, and whole class discussion.

Instruction in 3-5 should be student-focused, with ongoing opportunities for students to read, interact, and engage with a text and each other, with the teacher guiding students to gain their own insights from reading. In particular, 3-5 students should build the necessary reading skills, including comprehension and stamina, in order to read, understand, and write about increasingly complex and lengthy texts. Because the Tennessee State Standards for ELA are so closely integrated across strands, every reading unit should focus on:

- Close reading (including re-reading and chunking particularly difficult sections);
- Speaking and listening about the text through text-dependent questioning (requiring students to cite evidence and analyze content and structure);
- Vocabulary development through the text (with a focus on understanding academic vocabulary, or Tier Two words, using context); and
- Writing-to-sources (students write about what they have read).

In 3-5, the **core curriculum** (or Tier I) addresses the needs of all students. All students should receive instruction with grade-level standards in small and whole group settings.

Tier I is the first layer of **prevention** and it should be the focus of instruction, providing a strong foundation, and striving to meet the needs of all students. Classroom teachers should use **flexible small groups** and target specific skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They should be provided with tools and training including:

- Curricular materials and programs, scientifically **research-based** and aligned to grade-level Tennessee State Standards;
- A nationally normed, skills-based **universal screener**;
- **Formative assessment** data at least three times per year to determine instructional needs; and
- Ongoing embedded support and **professional development**.

3-5 Minimum Recommended Instructional Times:

Tier I	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
ELA	Minimum of 90 minutes daily (120 minutes recommended)	Minimum of 90 minutes daily (120 minutes recommended)	Minimum of 90 minutes daily (120 minutes recommended)
Mathematics	90 minutes daily	90 minutes daily	90 minutes daily

It is strongly recommended that Tier I ELA and mathematics be 90-minutes of uninterrupted instruction in grades 3-5.

The ELA Tennessee State Standards must be taught in an integrated manner across all strands (Reading [Literature, Informational Text, and Foundational Skills], Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language). It is recommended that the same highly skilled teacher teach all ELA content. Separating these ELA strands into separate courses does not reflect best practice.

Tier I Mathematics instruction should align to the domains (Counting and Cardinality, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Number and Operations in Fractions, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, and Measurement and Data) and the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

Extended time for mathematics allows for uninterrupted practice and exploration, focusing on both mathematics procedures and concepts.

Diverse building and grade-level structures may have an effect on scheduling.

Sixth Through Twelfth Grade (6-12) English Language Arts

Instruction in grades 6-12 should be student-focused with constant opportunities for students to read, interact, and engage with a text and each other, with the teacher guiding students to gain their own insights from reading (rather than telling students what a text means). Research indicates that students now “read to learn,” particularly in Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics courses, although students well behind grade-level may still struggle to “learn to read.” In particular, 6-12 students should build the necessary reading skills, including comprehension and stamina, to read, understand, and write about increasingly complex and lengthy texts. Because the standards for ELA are so closely integrated across strands, every reading unit should focus on:

- Close reading (including re-reading and chunking particularly difficult sections);
- Speaking and listening about the text through text-dependent questioning (requiring students to cite evidence and analyze content and structure);
- Vocabulary development through the text (with a focus on understanding academic vocabulary, or Tier Two words, using context); and
- Writing-to-sources (students write about what they have read).

In 6-12 ELA, the **core curriculum** (or Tier I) addresses the needs of all students. Using **flexible small groups** and targeting specific skills in reading, specifically vocabulary/word-study, classroom teachers should be provided with tools and training including:

- Core ELA or literature programs, **research-based** and aligned to grade-level Tennessee State Standards;
- A nationally normed, skills-based **universal screener** (through grade 8);
- **Formative assessment** at least three times per year to determine instructional needs; and
- Ongoing embedded support and **professional development**.

6-12 ELA Minimum Recommended Instructional Times:

Tier I	6-8 (traditional)	6-8 (block)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
ELA	55 (daily)	90	55 (daily)	90

It is strongly recommended that Tier I be a minimum of 45-minutes of uninterrupted instruction.

It is strongly recommend that all schools move away from the practice of separating ELA instruction into Reading and Language Arts classes and instead move toward a single,

coherent, integrated ELA course model. The integrated nature of the Tennessee State Standards requires students to work across multiple strands at once. Separating reading from the work students do in writing and language violates the spirit and intent of the state standards.

Diverse building and grade-level structures may have an effect on scheduling.

Sixth Through Twelfth Grade (6-12) Mathematics

While the Tennessee State Standards specifies the content necessary for all students to become college and career ready, we recognize that not every student moves at a uniform pace to meet that goal.

In 6-12 Mathematics, the **core curriculum** (or Tier I) addresses the needs of all students. **Flexible small groups** may be used. Instruction in 6-12 should be student-focused, with constant opportunities to engage in mathematical thinking and reasoning. As teachers shift toward a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application, they should engage students in a variety of tasks and activities that address specific goals, always embedding the Standards for Mathematical Practice in all instruction and assessments. Problem solving should be at the heart of the mathematics classroom. Students should have the opportunity to make sense of mathematical concepts on their own and regularly discuss their ideas with peers. Teachers should be skilled in frequently assessing student understanding and pressing students toward the mathematical goals and essential understanding without telling students how to solve problems. Teachers should be skilled in orchestrating classroom discussions that promote connections between student ideas and multiple representations for deeper understanding. Students should have regular practice and support in demonstrating fluency with both number facts and algebraic manipulation. Students should have the opportunity to apply problem-solving skills in new and unfamiliar contexts and situations.

6-12 Mathematics Minimum Recommended Instructional Times:

Tier I	6-8 (traditional)	6-8 (block)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Mathematics	55 (daily)	90	55 (daily)	90

It is strongly recommended that Tier I be 45 minutes of uninterrupted instruction. When time becomes an issue for struggling students, school staff should prioritize the time spent on the focus content.

Diverse building and grade-level structures may have an effect on scheduling.

2.2 Instructional Practices

All students should receive high-quality **differentiated instruction** from the **general education** teacher during Tier I. Effective **core instruction** should meet the needs of 80-85% of the students. If at least 80% of the students are not meeting grade-level standards, the **core curriculum**, as well as the delivery of instruction, should be evaluated and adjustments should be made.

The following is an example of Tier I instruction for K-5 ELA:

Core instruction in the area of K-2 elementary reading will consist of 150 minutes, with 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction. Explicit writing and language instruction will take place within the 150 minutes. As noted on the Tennessee ELA Standards, Science and Social Studies texts will be used during this time to enhance the reading and understanding of informational text and strengthen the Language, Writing, and Speaking and Listening strands.

Core instruction in the area of 3-5 elementary reading will consist of a 90 minute uninterrupted reading block. Explicit writing and language instruction will take place during this time. This entire block of literacy instruction (reading, writing, and language) should be taught by the same teacher. The ELA standards should be taught in an integrated manner across all strands (Reading [Literature, Informational Text, and Foundational Skills], Writing, Speaking and Listening and Language). Separating these ELA strands into separate courses does not reflect best practice. If possible, this 90-minute block should be increased to 120-minutes to have adequate time to fully teach writing.

The reading block should contain roughly 30 minutes of whole group instruction. This time may be non-consecutive. Whole group instruction may include such activities as: close reading, shared reading, interactive read-alouds, mini-lessons, and share time (reflective learning using speaking and listening standards).

The reading block should also contain approximately 60 minutes of small group instruction. Teachers should meet with 3-4 small groups daily. Each small group should contain no more than 6-8 students and should meet for approximately 15-20 minutes. The small groups should be teacher-led, **flexible**, and **differentiated**.

Flexible grouping is a basic strategy for differentiating instruction that allows students to work together in a variety of ways and in a number of arrangements. Groupings may be whole group, small group, partners, individual, teacher-led, or student-led, and depend on instructional activities, learning goals, and student needs. **Flexible grouping** provides for the changing needs of students, as shown in assessment data.

Differentiation during core Tier I instruction uses assessment data (e.g., formative assessments, placement tests, teacher-made assessments, text book-based

assessments, common assessments, benchmark assessments and universal screening) to identify individual student needs. Instruction addresses individual needs and matches instructional materials to support the specific skills. The small groups that are formed based on this assessment data are **flexible**, meaning group membership changes based on student progress, interests, and needs. Differentiated **core instruction** is not using only whole-class instruction, using small groups that never change, or using the same independent seatwork assignments for the entire class.

Students should rotate between a teacher-led group and two purposeful practice time segments and should have teacher contact a minimum of every other day. Teachers could have three to four groups in a classroom. It is recommended that struggling students be seen by the teacher every day. Student conferencing may occur during this time as well.

Small group instruction should focus on students reading and discussing text. Lessons should include activities such as rereading familiar text, guided reading of new text, skill work, and word work. Small groups should be formed based on **formative assessments** and should be **flexible**.

When not in a small group, students should engage in purposeful practice that reinforces the standards being taught in whole and small group. Purposeful practice may include such activities as partner reading, reflective journaling, learning stations, skill practice, word sorts, reader response, novel studies, writing activities, and independent reading.

The following is an example of Tier I instruction in 6-12 ELA:

Core instruction in the area of 6-12 ELA will consist of a 90-minute block or 55 minutes in a traditional schedule. At least 45 minutes should be uninterrupted. Explicit reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language instruction will take place during this time period. The same teacher should teach this entire block of literacy instruction.

The ELA block should contain roughly 30 minutes of whole group instruction. This time may be non-consecutive. Whole group instruction may include such activities as: close reading, shared reading, interactive read-alouds, mini-lessons, and share time (reflective learning using speaking and listening standards).

The ELA block should also contain several sessions of small group work or instruction per week. Teachers should regularly monitor and interact with each group. Each small group should contain no more than 6-8 students. The small groups can be teacher-led, transitioning to student-led as students learn to independently own their work. Small group instruction should be **flexible** and **differentiated**.

Differentiation during core Tier I instruction uses assessment data (e.g., formative assessments, placement tests, teacher-made assessments, text book-based assessments, common assessments, benchmark assessments and universal screening) to identify individual student needs. Instruction addresses individual needs and matches instructional materials to support the specific skills. The small groups that are formed based on this assessment data are **flexible**, meaning group membership changes based on student progress, interests, and needs. Differentiated **core instruction** is not using only whole-class instruction, using small groups that never change, or using the same independent seatwork assignments for the entire class.

Students should have teacher contact a minimum of every other day. It is recommended that struggling students be seen by the teacher every day. Student conferencing may occur during this time as well, or outside of class.

The following is an example of Tier I instruction in K-2 Mathematics:

Tier I instruction in mathematics should be uninterrupted for 60 minutes in Kindergarten and grade 1 and 75 minutes in grade 2. Students should receive regular, **systematic direct instruction** from the teachers. The teacher should demonstrate problem-solving strategies, provide models for different representations of mathematical concepts, and develop the students' mathematical vocabulary.

Students should spend time in small groups of 3-5 students discussing and sharing ideas on a regular basis. Students can explore mathematical ideas together and listen to other students' ideas as they begin to develop mathematical reasoning and arguments. Small group time can also be stations set up for students to work individually or collectively on specific skills according to the needs of the students as determined by the teacher through frequent **formative assessment** data. It is recommended that the teacher work to interact with as many groups as possible daily and have contact with individual students at least every other day.

Students should also engage productively in whole class discussion facilitated by the teacher where they can share ideas and demonstrate their reasoning to the class. Students will learn how to present their ideas, as well as listen to and learn from others in a respectful manner.

The following is an example of Tier I instruction in 3-5 Mathematics:

Tier I instruction in mathematics should be 90 minutes of uninterrupted instructional time. Students should receive regular, **systematic direct instruction** from the teacher. The teacher should demonstrate problem-solving strategies, provide models for different representations of mathematical concepts, and develop the students' mathematical vocabulary.

Students should be given time to work individually to build perseverance in problem solving. Depending on the students, teachers can work to develop perseverance by starting with short, private think times a few times a week as they increase in **frequency** and **duration**. Teachers should work to develop students who are able to sustain productive individual engagement in a task for 5-6 minutes daily.

Students should spend time in small groups of 3-5 students discussing and sharing ideas on a regular basis. Students can explore mathematical ideas together and listen to other students' ideas as they begin to develop mathematical reasoning and arguments. Small group time can also be stations set up for students to work individually or collectively on specific skills according to the needs of students as determined by the teacher through frequent **formative assessment** data. It is recommended that the teacher work to interact with as many groups as possible daily and have contact with individual students at least every other day.

Students should also engage productively in whole class discussion facilitated by the teacher where they can share ideas and demonstrate their reasoning to the class. Students will learn how to present their ideas as well as listen to and critique the reasoning of others in a respectful manner.

The following is an example of Tier I instruction in 6-12 Mathematics:

Tier I instruction in mathematics should be 90 minutes (55 minutes if on traditional schedule) of uninterrupted instructional time. Students should receive regular, **systematic, direct instruction** from the teacher. The teacher should demonstrate problem-solving strategies, provide models for different representations of mathematical concepts, and develop the students' mathematical vocabulary.

Students should be given time to work individually to build perseverance in problem solving. Depending on the students, teachers can work to develop perseverance by starting with a short private think time a few times a week and then increase in **frequency** and **duration**. Teachers should work to develop students who are able to sustain productive individual engagement in a task for 6-8 minutes daily.

Students should spend time in small groups of 3-5 students discussing and sharing ideas on a regular basis. Students can explore mathematical ideas together and listen to other students' ideas as they begin to develop mathematical reasoning and arguments. Small group time can also be stations set up for students to work individually or collectively on specific skills according to the needs of the students as determined by the teacher through frequent **formative assessment** data. It is recommended that the teacher work to interact with as many groups as possible daily and have contact with individual students at least every other day.

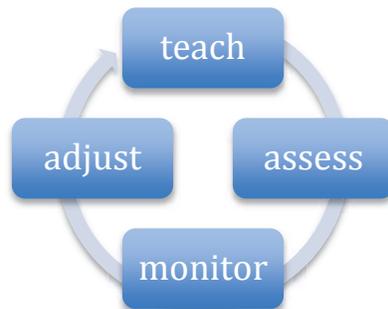
Students should also engage productively in whole class discussion facilitated by the teacher where they can share ideas and demonstrate their reasoning to the class. Students will learn how to present and defend their ideas as well as listen to and critique the reasoning of others in a respectful manner.

2.3 Ongoing Assessment in Tier I

Ongoing assessment of student learning provides continuous feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and indicates areas where a change in instructional strategy may be advised. Ongoing assessment is essential to the determination of effectiveness of instructional programs.

Ongoing assessment is a method for tracking and comparing an individual's or a group's performance and progress through collecting data. Ongoing assessment creates data points. These data points can be used to make decisions regarding instruction. Once several data points are collected, a pattern of response can be investigated.

In Tier I, ongoing assessment is used for all students, aligned with grade-level instruction, and done continuously throughout the year. This creates a cycle of: teach, assess, monitor and adjust.



Ongoing assessment in Tier I may include:

- **Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes;**
- **Formative assessments** (both formal and informal) such as placement tests, teacher-made tests, text book-based assessments, benchmark assessments, and common assessments; and
- **Summative assessments.**

2.4 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

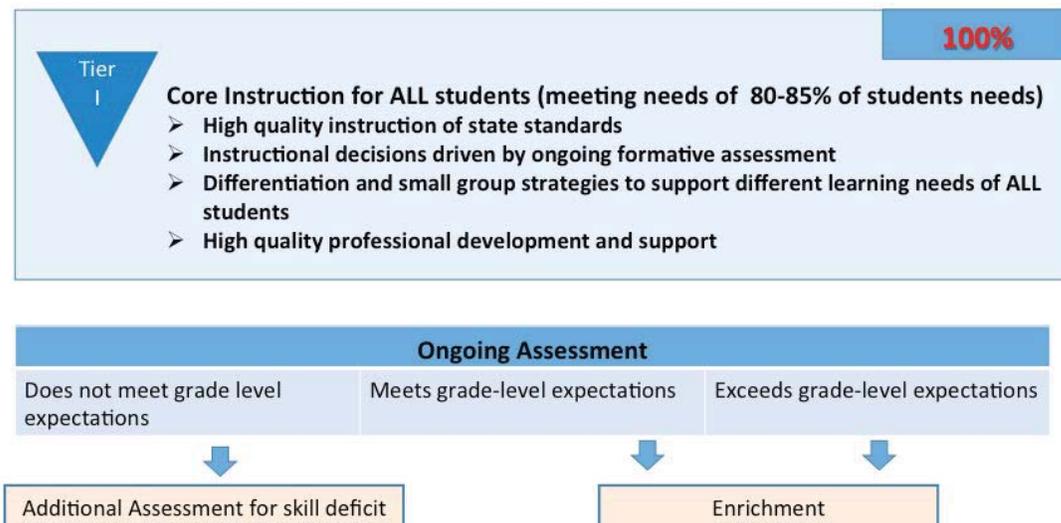
Data-based decision making is the process of using appropriate data collected to inform and drive each instructional decision. Cut scores must be established based on the **universal screening**. These cut scores should be based on national norms and identify students who are at-risk. As a guideline, students below the 25th percentile would be considered “at-risk.” Students who exceed grade-level expectations may be considered “advanced.”

If a school has a large number of students falling below national norms, a 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. A school uses relative norms to serve students that are most at-risk when all at-risk students cannot be served. LEAs should continue to use national comparisons for overall program evaluation.

LEAs should explain what decisions will be made for instruction and interventions based on the results of student data. Teachers must show knowledge and evidence of setting goals for each child that are based on grade-level benchmarks or expectations, show how students are progressing toward these goals and must use the data from ongoing assessment to make instructional decisions. The school team should have plans in place for students that do make adequate progress and for those not making adequate progress.

The **data-based decision making** process in Tier I is shown below in a flow chart that illustrates how instruction and intervention decisions are made based on data.

Core Instruction: ALL students



2.5 Professional Development in Tier I

Professional development (PD) generally refers to ongoing learning opportunities available to teachers and other education personnel through their schools and districts. RTI² professional development opportunities that cover specific content pertaining to Tier I instruction, universal screening, ongoing assessment, and data-based decision making should be available for new teachers and veteran teachers.

2.6 Fidelity Monitoring

Fidelity is the accuracy or extent to which core (Tier I) materials and other curricula are used as intended by the author/publisher. LEAs must have a process for monitoring fidelity. This process must include a description of who is responsible for fidelity monitoring and how often fidelity in Tier I instruction will be monitored.

In Tier I, fidelity is monitored using the TEAM evaluation process. There is no additional fidelity monitoring or record keeping required for the RTI² process.

Component 3: Tier II Procedures

3.1 Description of Tier II Interventions

Tier II in K-2 Reading and Mathematics:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Tier II is in addition to Tier I (see charts in section 3.2 for minutes). Those students who require additional assistance beyond the usual time allotted for the **core instruction** (Tier I) should receive additional skill-based group intervention daily in the specific area of need. Tier II intervention is explicit and systematic. Tier II requires high-quality intervention matched to students' needs and provided by **highly-trained personnel**. Advanced students should receive targeted reinforcement and enrichment. **Enrichment** activities expand on students' learning in ways that may differ from the strategies used during Tier I instruction. They often are interactive and project-focused. They enhance a student's education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways to deepen students' understanding. These activities are designed to be interesting, challenging, and impart knowledge. They should allow students to apply knowledge and skills learned in Tier I to real-life experiences.

Tier II in 3-5 Reading and Mathematics:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students and occurs daily. Tier II is in addition to Tier I (see charts in section 3.2 for minutes). Those students who require additional assistance beyond the usual time allotted for **core instruction** should receive additional skill-based group intervention daily in the specific area of need. Tier II intervention is explicit and **systematic**. Instructional interventions are differentiated, **scaffolded**, and targeted based on the needs of individual students as determined by current assessment data. Advanced students should receive reinforcement and enrichment. Enrichment activities expand on students' learning in ways that may differ from the strategies used during Tier I instruction. They often are interactive and project-focused. They enhance a student's education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways to deepen students' understanding. These activities are designed to be interesting, challenging, and impart knowledge. They should allow students to apply knowledge and skills learned in Tier I to real-life experiences.

Tier II in 6-12 Reading:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Those students who require assistance beyond the usual time allotted for **core instruction** should receive additional skill-based group intervention daily in the specific area of need (see charts in section 3.2 for minutes). Tier II intervention is explicit and systematic. Advanced students should receive reinforcement and **enrichment**. Note that the text complexity standards (Reading Anchor Standard Number 10) apply to all students. While leveled reading is useful in building confidence, stamina, fluency, and engagement, all students should be given the opportunity to encounter and productively struggle with on- or above-grade-level complex text. With struggling

readers, teachers are encouraged to differentiate the level of **scaffolding** or support they provide students (e.g., different entry points to text, vocabulary support, modeling of comprehension strategies) rather than the level of text.

Intervention should include **explicit instruction** within the area of need for all struggling students. For example: If a student in sixth grade has phonics deficits, then this student requires intervention in the area of phonics. If computer programs are used, students should still have daily interaction with a teacher who can hold them accountable for what they have read and to ensure that they practice new skills.

Tier II in 6-12 Mathematics:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Advanced students should receive reinforcement and **enrichment**. Students who require assistance beyond the usual time allotted for Tier I instruction should receive additional intensive small group attention daily (see chart in section 3.2 for minutes). Teachers should use the vertical coherence of the Tennessee State Standards to identify standards from previous grades that might be prohibiting a student from accessing grade-level standards. Research indicates that students' struggles in mathematics are often attributed to a lack of conceptual understanding of number sense. It is important to diagnose specific student deficiencies through survey level assessments in order for the proper support to be given. Students who struggle with fluency can oftentimes continue to learn grade-level concepts. In this case, Tier II intervention should target the necessary fluencies to support conceptual understanding.

Tier II Description:

Tier II is in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I and should meet the needs of 10-15% of students. Students who score below the designated cut score on the **universal screening** will receive more **intense** intervention in Tier II. These cut scores should be based on national norms and identify students who are at-risk. As a guideline, students below the 25th percentile would be considered "at-risk." Students who exceed grade level expectations may be considered "advanced."

If a school has a large number of students falling below national norms, a 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. A school uses relative norms to serve students that are most at-risk when all at-risk students cannot be served. LEAs should continue to use national comparisons for overall program evaluation.

When teachers and school level RTI² support teams are making placement decisions for Tier II interventions, it may be necessary to consider other assessments, data, and information on the student. Such examples may include past retention or performance on TCAP. (See Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 2.4 for more information on universal screening and data-based decision making.) When a student begins an intervention a more precise assessment may be needed to identify the specific area(s) of deficit.

Tier II interventions should be **systematic, research-based** (see Scientifically-based researched interventions section below) interventions that target the student's identified area of deficit (basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving or written expression). Interventions will 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 will be selected. There will be evidence that interventions are focused on **specific skill** needs rather than the standards focus of Tier I.

Scientifically **research-based** interventions are interventions that produce **reliable** and **valid** results. When these interventions are used properly, adequate gains are expected.

There will be a clear description as to whether a **problem-solving, standard protocol, or hybrid intervention** is being used for each of the areas (reading, math, or writing).

1. A **problem-solving approach** within an RTI model is used to tailor an intervention to an individual student. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluation.
2. A **standard protocol** approach within an RTI model relies on the same empirically-validated intervention for all students with similar academic needs. **Standard protocol** interventions facilitate quality control. For example: a **standard protocol** would be the use of Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org) Student Center Activities as interventions for Tier II students depending on the area of deficit.
3. A **hybrid approach** within an RTI model combines methods of **problem-solving** and **standard protocol** approaches.

Scientifically-based researched interventions have the following characteristics according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi)]. **Scientifically-based** research involves the application of rigorous, **systematic**, and objective procedures to obtain **reliable** and **valid** knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:

- Employs **systematic**, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide **reliable** and **valid** data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators; Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the
- Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls; allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

An effective intervention is:

- Implemented by **highly-trained** personnel;
- Implemented with **fidelity** and confirmed with measurement; and
- Progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met.

The school level RTI² support team will determine which students will be placed in Tier II. See section 3.4 on data-based decision making for more information.

3.2 Tier II Configuration

The following charts illustrate the strongly recommended minimum instructional times

Tier II	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
Reading	20 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Mathematics	20 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes

Tier II	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Reading	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Mathematics	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

Tier II	6-8 (traditional)	6-8 (block)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Reading	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Mathematics	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

In K-2, 3-5, and 6-12, the interventions in Tier II should be provided daily. If students need interventions in more than one area (Reading and Mathematics), then the five days of interventions a week can be split in a two-day/three-day manner based on the area of greater need. For example, if a student needs intervention in Reading and Mathematics but is weaker in math, he/she should receive three days of Mathematics interventions and two days of Reading interventions each week.

The decision to provide a two-day/three-day split in an RTI² team decision and may be appropriate for some students, who need reading and math intervention. If a team chooses to do a split intervention, the team must watch the student's progress closely and make intervention adjustments if the student is not progressing in this model. The team may also choose to provide intervention five days/week in the area of greatest need or provide intervention five days/week in both areas of deficit. Student data should guide this decision.

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 tiered interventions in reading, math or written expression. In this case, both special education services and tiered interventions would be provided.

Intervention groups should be small. Research supports small groups for interventions. The following are suggested ratios of **highly-trained** personnel to students during Tier II interventions:

Grade	Ratio
K-5	1:5
6-12	1:6

The interventions need to be delivered by **highly-trained personnel**. **Highly-trained personnel** are people who are adequately trained to deliver the selected intervention as intended with **fidelity** to design. When possible, Tier II interventions should be taught by qualified, certified teachers. Research supports the most trained personnel working with the most at-risk students.

3.3 Progress Monitoring Procedures in Tier II

Progress monitoring is used to assess student's academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier II, the effectiveness of the intervention should be progress monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through at least every other week administration of **probes** that are parallel forms of the ones used in **universal screening**. **Progress monitoring** will be done in the area of deficit using an instrument that is sensitive to change.

While the universal screening tool measures student performance on grade level, **progress monitoring** must be conducted with measures that are at a student's skill/instructional level. The skill/instructional level at which a student will be progress monitored can be determined through a **survey-level assessment**. A **survey-level assessment** is a process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate **rate of improvement** and growth. **Survey-level assessment** provides vital information for students suspected of being 1.5 to 2 years behind or who fall below the 10th percentile.

Progress monitoring in Tier II may include:

- **Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes,**
- Assessments from **intervention materials/kits:** When analyzing these tools, teams should ensure that the assessments include national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, are sensitive to change, and specify areas of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression. In addition, the tools should report results so that rate of improvement (ROI) can be calculated and transferred to graph form, or
- Computer-based assessments: Requirements: national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, sensitive to change, and specific to an area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, the tools should report results so that rate of improvement (ROI) can be calculated and transferred to graph form.

Progress monitoring in Tier II will take place at a **frequency** of at least every other week. **Highly-trained personnel** should administer the **progress monitoring** in Tier II and classroom teachers should continuously analyze the **progress monitoring** data.

3.4 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

Teachers must show knowledge and evidence of setting goals for each child. Expected growth can be determined by using measures provided by or created through the progress-monitoring instrument. It should be related to each specific area of need.

For example, if the student has high error rates in **reading fluency**, a survey level assessment may be completed. If the student has phonics skills deficits, the teacher would intervene first in phonics before addressing fluency. If the student is in third grade, he/she may need measures on first grade fluency **probes** or phonics **probes** to determine an accurate **rate of improvement (ROI)**. **Survey-level assessments** can provide this additional level of specific skill areas of need (see section 3.3).

Teachers must show how students are progressing toward these goals using a **rate of improvement (ROI)** to determine adequate progress. Teachers must use the data from **progress monitoring** to make instructional decisions.

A student's **rate of improvement (ROI)** on **progress monitoring** is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have

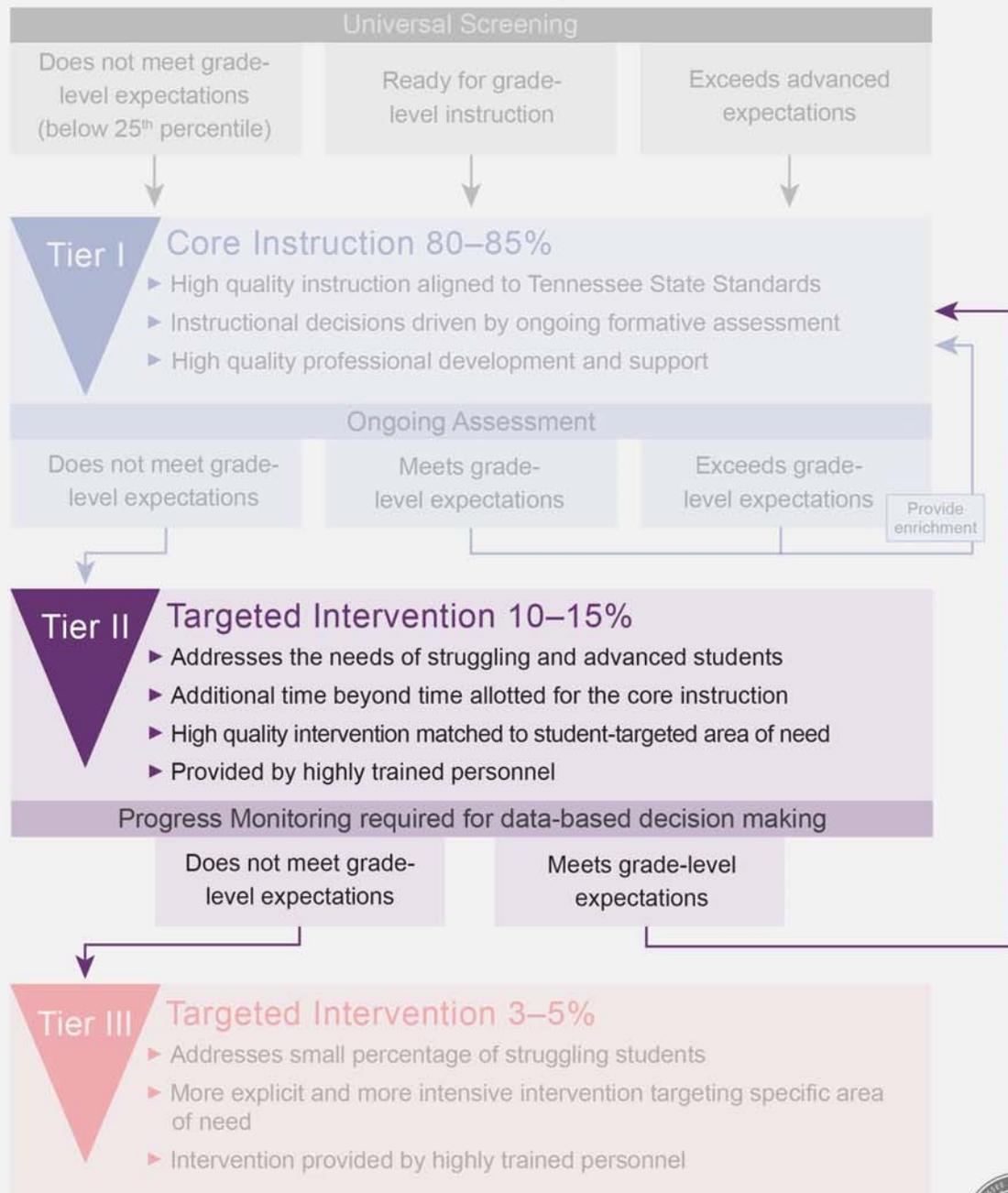
elapsed. The **rate of improvement** (ROI) is compared to the **rate of improvement** of a typical peer and is one of the factors considered in determining whether a student has made adequate progress. The at-risk student's **rate of improvement** must be greater than the **rate of improvement** of a typical student in order to "close the gap" and return to grade level functioning. Many **intervention materials** and/or **progress monitoring materials/assessments** calculate the **rate of improvement**.

School RTI² teams will meet to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions and check student progress toward goals. A plan will be in place for when students are and are not making adequate progress within Tier II. If students are not making adequate progress in Tier II, the intervention may need to be changed. Students should have at least four data points during Tier II 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; and
- Changing time of day intervention is delivered.

A minimum of 8-10 data points (if **progress monitoring** every other week) OR 10-15 data points (if **progress monitoring** weekly) are required in order to make a data-based decision to change to Tier III. School RTI² teams will decide the best placement for students in Tier III. Tier III interventions must be more **intense** than Tier II interventions. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

RTI² Decision-Making Process Tier II



3.5 Professional Development for Tier II

Professional development will cover specific content pertaining to Tier II interventions, Tier II **progress monitoring**, Tier II **data-based decision making**, and Tier II **fidelity monitoring**. All personnel involved in Tier II interventions, including administrators, will receive **professional development**.

3.6 Fidelity Monitoring

Fidelity is the accuracy or extent to which Tier II 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, 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.

LEAs must have a process for monitoring **fidelity**. This process must include a description of who is responsible for **fidelity monitoring** and how often **fidelity** in Tier II intervention will be monitored. In Tier II, **fidelity** will be monitored at least three times before making a data-based decision to increase the intensity of the intervention (i.e. Tier III).

Students may remain in Tier II for varying amounts of time. The purpose of monitoring fidelity is to provide ongoing information about the effectiveness of the intervention being provided. Many students will receive Tier II interventions for an extended period of time. These students will receive more than the minimum required fidelity checks. Student attendance should be collected and documented reasons for absence will be taken as a data point to determine the student access to Tier II intervention.

Instead of determining fidelity check by marking period, a data team should ensure that three fidelity checks occur within the period of time that 8-10 data points are collected.

Therefore, a data team should review three fidelity checks and 8-10 data points when reviewing the effectiveness of an intervention.

If the intervention is effective and students are making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), the fidelity checks do not need to be as intensive. For example, the fidelity check might be a walk through or a short observation.

If the students are not making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), then fidelity checks need to be more thorough. For example, a thorough fidelity check might be a 30-minute direct observation.

Tier II: Three fidelity checks (at minimum)	
Direct Fidelity Check	Indirect Fidelity Check
2 direct	1 indirect
<p>Options for Direct Checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk through observation • Short observation (partial intervention session) • Full observation <p>Direct observations may vary in length depending on the intensity of the observation needed.</p>	<p>Options for Indirect Checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of intervention lesson plans • Review of progress monitoring data • Review of schedules • Review of attendance (including reasons for absence)
<p>Documentation:</p> <p>Fidelity checks can be done for an entire group at the same time; however, the information they provide should be looked at from the student level because the team will be making decisions about each student's needs.</p>	<p>Documentation:</p> <p>The data team should conduct reviews of student data. When analyzing one student's progress, the team should consider the group and/or student rate of improvement.</p>
<p>Example personnel to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals, administrators, or other appointed designees; • Instructional coaches; literacy/numeracy coaches; • RTI Coordinators, fidelity monitors; • School psychologists; and • Special education teachers. 	<p>Example personnel to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data team (as a regular component of data team meetings)

Interventions must be implemented with **integrity**. If the intervention is not implemented with **integrity** of at least 80% or greater, the **interventionist** should be supported with training until **integrity** reaches 80%.

Component 4: Tier III Procedures

4.1 Description of Tier III Interventions

Tier III in K-2 ELA & Mathematics:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II interventions and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level 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. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Tier III in 3-5 ELA & Mathematics:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level 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. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Tier III in 6-12 ELA:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level 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. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Tier III in 6-12 Mathematics:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary mathematics skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual interventions targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more **intense** than interventions received in Tier II. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Tier III Description:

Tier III is in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I. Tier III interventions should meet the needs of 3-5% of students. School RTI² teams will decide the best placement for students in Tier III. Tier III interventions must be more **intense** than Tier II interventions. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Students who have not made adequate progress with Tier II interventions or who score below the designated cut score on the **universal screening** will receive more **intense** intervention in Tier III. These cut scores should be based on national norms that identify students who are at-risk.

As a guideline, students below 10th percentile would be considered the most "at-risk" and in possible need of Tier III intervention. When teachers and school level RTI² support teams are making placement decisions for Tier III interventions, it may be necessary to consider other assessments, data and information on the student. Such examples may include attendance records, past retention, or performance on TCAP. (See Sections 1.3, 1.4, and 3.4 for more information on **universal screening** and data-based decision making.)

If a school has a large number of students falling below national norms, a 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. A school uses relative norms to serve students that are most at-risk when all at-risk students cannot be served. LEAs should continue to use national comparisons for overall program evaluation.

Tier III interventions will be **systematic, research-based** interventions that target the student's identified area of deficit (basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression). Interventions will 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 more **intense** than Tier II.

There will be a clear description of the problem-solving approach to intervention being used for each of the areas (reading, math, or writing). A problem-solving approach within an RTI model is highly recommended so that the data team can tailor an intervention to an individual student. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluation. A hybrid or standard protocol approach can also be used. For more information, see section 3.1.

Scientifically **research-based** interventions are interventions that produce **reliable** and **valid** results. When these interventions are used properly, adequate gains should be expected. To be considered **research-based**, they must have a clear record of success.

Scientifically **research-based** interventions have the following characteristics according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi)]. **Scientifically-based** research involves the application of rigorous, **systematic**, and objective procedures to obtain **reliable** and **valid** knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:

- Employs **systematic**, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide **reliable** and **valid** data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators
- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls
- Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

An effective intervention is:

- Implemented by **highly-trained** personnel;
- Implemented with **fidelity** and confirmed by measurement; and
- Progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met.

The school level RTI² support team will determine which students will be placed in Tier III. See section 4.5 on data-based decision making for more information.

4.2 Tier III Configuration

In grades K-8, the interventions in Tier III should be provided daily. The following charts illustrate the strongly recommended intervention times for **Tier III** in grades K-8:

Tier III	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
Reading	40-45 minutes	45-60 minutes	45-60 minutes
Mathematics	40-45 minutes	40-45 minutes	45-60 minutes

Tier III	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Reading	45-60 minutes	45-60 minutes	45-60 minutes
Mathematics	45-60 minutes	45-60 minutes	45-60 minutes

Tier III	6-8 (traditional)	6-8 (block)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Reading	45-55 minutes	45-60 minutes	45-55 minutes	45-60 minutes
Mathematics	45-55 minutes	45-60 minutes	45-55 minutes	45-60 minutes

While it is recommended that students in grades 9-12 receive Tier III interventions for 45-60 minutes daily, in some instances this may not be possible. However, students in need of Tier III interventions should receive a minimum of 225 minutes each week. The following charts illustrate the weekly minimum intervention times for Tier III in grades 9-12:

Tier III	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Reading Weekly Minimums	225-275 minutes	225-300 minutes

Tier III	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Mathematics Weekly Minimums	225-275 minutes	225-300 minutes

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 tiered interventions in reading, math or written expression. In this case, both special education services and tiered interventions would be provided.

Intervention groups should be small. Research supports small groups for interventions. The following are suggested ratios of **highly-trained** personnel to students during Tier III interventions:

Grade	Ratio
K-5	1:3
6-8	1:6
9-12	1:12*

*See Component 4.8 regarding High School Tier III Intervention Courses

The interventions need to be delivered by **highly-trained personnel**. **Highly-trained personnel** are people who are adequately trained to deliver the selected intervention as intended with **fidelity** to design. When possible, Tier III interventions should be taught by qualified, certified teachers. Research supports the most trained personnel working with the most at-risk students.

4.3 Progress Monitoring Procedures in Tier III

Progress monitoring is used to assess student's academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier III, the effectiveness of the instructional intervention should be monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through administration of **probes** that are parallel forms of the ones used in **universal screening**. Students in Tier III should be progress monitored at least every other week in grades K-12. **Progress monitoring** will be done in the area of deficit using an instrument that is sensitive to change.

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 a survey-level assessment. A **survey-level assessment** is a process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate **rate of improvement** and growth. **Survey-level assessment** is also necessary for students suspected of being 1.5 to 2 years behind or who fall below the 10th percentile. **Progress monitoring** in Tier III may include:

- **Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes;**
- Assessments from intervention materials/kits: When analyzing these tools, teams should ensure that the assessments include national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, are sensitive to change, and specify areas of deficit including

basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, and written expression. In addition, the tools should report results so that rate of improvement (ROI) can be calculated and transferred to graph form, or

- Computer-based assessments (Requirements: national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, sensitive to change, and specific to an area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, and written expression). In addition, the tools should report results so that rate of improvement (ROI) can be calculated and transferred to graph form.

Progress monitoring in Tier III will take place at a **frequency** of at least every other week. **Highly-trained personnel** should administer the **progress monitoring** in Tier III and classroom teachers should continuously analyze the **progress monitoring** data.

4.4 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

Teachers must show knowledge and evidence of setting goals for each child. Expected growth can be determined by using measures provided by or created through the **progress monitoring** instrument. It should be related to each area of need.

For example, if the student has high error rates in **reading fluency**, additional assessment is completed that includes **phonics** assessments. If the student has **phonics** skills deficits, the teacher would intervene first in **phonics** before addressing fluency. If the student is in third grade, he/she may need measures on first grade fluency **probes** or **phonics probes** to determine an accurate **rate of improvement** (ROI). This would be determined through **survey-level assessments** (see section 4.3).

Teachers must show how students are progressing toward these goals using a **rate of improvement** (ROI) to determine adequate progress. Teachers must use the data from **progress monitoring** to make instructional decisions.

A student's **rate of improvement** (ROI) on **progress monitoring** is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. The **rate of improvement** (ROI) is compared to the **rate of improvement** of a typical peer and is one of the factors considered in determining whether a student has made adequate progress. The 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. Many **intervention materials** and/or **progress monitoring** materials/assessments calculate the **rate of improvement**.

School RTI² teams will meet to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions and check student progress toward goals. A plan will be in place for when students are and are not making adequate progress within Tier III. If students are not making adequate progress in Tier III, the intervention may need to be changed. Students should have at least four data points during Tier 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; and
- Changing time of day intervention is delivered.

A minimum of 8-10 data points (if **progress monitoring** every other week) OR 10-15 data points (if **progress monitoring** weekly) are required in order to make a data-based decision to refer for special education consideration.

Students who were immediately placed in Tier III interventions must receive the total number of minutes for intervention as reflected in section 4.2.

Furthermore, students who are immediately placed in Tier III interventions will be given adequate time to respond to prescribed intervention before a referral to special education is made.

These students typically demonstrate a higher need and therefore may require Tier III intervention for a longer period of time before student growth meets expectations. During this extended support in Tier III intervention, a student's progress should be monitored closely so that changes to the intervention can be made. The student's progress should guide the data team in making these changes to the intervention.

The purpose of immediately placing a student in Tier III intervention is to increase the **intensity** of the intervention, not to shorten the **duration** of the intervention period. The student will be given the same amount of time to respond to the intervention as a student who first received Tier II interventions.

RTI² Decision-Making Process

Tier III



4.5 Professional Development for Tier III

Professional development will cover specific content pertaining to Tier III interventions, Tier III progress monitoring, Tier III data-based decision making, and Tier III fidelity monitoring. All personnel involved in Tier III interventions, including administrators, will receive professional development.

4.6 Fidelity Monitoring

Fidelity is the accuracy or extent to which Tier III 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, instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models as originally developed. In Tier III, **fidelity monitoring** will focus on the intervention specific to each student and will use reliable and valid measures. The goal of fidelity monitoring is to ensure that the intervention is being implemented with integrity.

LEAs must have a process for monitoring **fidelity**. This process must include a description of who is responsible for **fidelity monitoring** and how often **fidelity** in Tier III intervention will be monitored. Student attendance should be collected and documented reasons for absence will be taken as a data point to determine the student access to Tier II intervention. (See chart on p. 56 for additional details).

In Tier III, fidelity will be monitored at least five times before making a data-based decision to increase the intensity of the intervention. For students receiving Tier III intervention, an increase in intensity would be a referral to special education.

Students may remain in Tier III for varying amounts of time. This variability is determined by the student's progress in Tier III. A data team will review rate of improvement data and fidelity monitoring data to determine the student's ongoing intervention needs.

Many students will receive Tier III for an extended period of time and therefore will have more than the minimum number of fidelity checks. Fidelity should be monitored at least 5 times in Tier III for every 8-10 data points to provide ongoing information about the fidelity of the interventions. The fidelity of implementation per intervention will be assessed throughout the process; however, the minimum requirement is a combined total of 8 checks:

If the intervention is effective and students are making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), 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 (as determined by their rate of improvement), then fidelity checks need to be more thorough. For example, a thorough fidelity check might be a 30-minute direct observation.

Tier III: Five fidelity checks (at minimum)	
Direct Fidelity Check	Indirect Fidelity Check
3 direct	2 indirect
<p>Options for Direct Checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk through observation • Short observation (partial intervention session) • Full observation <p>Direct observations may vary in length depending on the intensity of the observation needed.</p>	<p>Options for Indirect Checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of intervention lesson plans • Review of progress monitoring data • Review of schedules • Review of attendance (including reasons for absence)
<p>Documentation:</p> <p>Fidelity checks can be done for an entire group at the same time; however, the information they provide should be looked at from the student level because the team will be making decisions about each student's needs.</p>	<p>Documentation:</p> <p>The data team should conduct reviews of student data. When analyzing one student's progress, the team should consider the group and/or student rate of improvement.</p>
<p>Example personnel to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals, administrators, or other appointed designees; • Instructional coaches; literacy/numeracy coaches; • RTI Coordinators, fidelity monitors; • School psychologists; and • Special education teachers. 	<p>Example personnel to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data team (as a regular component of data team meetings)

If the intervention is not implemented with integrity of at least 80% or greater, the interventionist should be supported with training until integrity reaches 80%.

4.7 Consideration for Special Education

A referral for special education for a **specific learning disability (SLD)** in **basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression** will be determined when the data indicate that Tier III is ineffective. Information obtained from any **screenings** completed during the intervention process may be used as part of the eligibility determination following informed written parental consent. Consent for an evaluation may be requested or received during Tier III interventions, but evidence from Tier III must be a part of determination, and a lack of response to Tier III interventions may not be pre-determined. An evaluation for SLD may be in conjunction with the second half of Tier III but may not be concluded before Tier III interventions are proven ineffective at the end of Tier III.

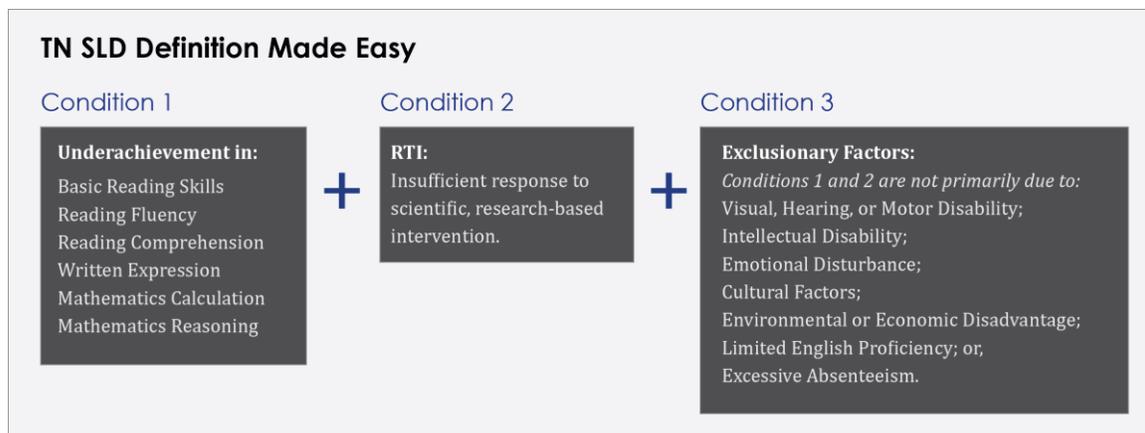
The fidelity of implementation per intervention will be assessed throughout the process; however, the minimum requirement is a combined total of 8 checks:

- 3 checks in Tier II where 2 must be a direct observation; and
- 5 checks in Tier III where 3 must be direct observations and two must be a review of implementation data (i.e., student attendance, lesson plans, progress monitoring results).

Team members involved in making a decision to refer for special education may include:

- School psychologist
- Principal or other designee
- Intervention/Support team members

Parents must be invited to a meeting to discuss a referral for special education evaluation. See Component 5 for more information.



4.8 High School Tier III Intervention Courses

The Department of Education will offer high school course codes for Tier III intervention. There are two courses offered: Tier III ELA Intervention and Tier III Mathematics Intervention. Students will receive 1/2 credit per course. Using progress monitoring data to make data-based decisions, students may repeat the intervention courses as needed and move in and out of the intervention courses as needed. These data-based decisions should be made by the School RTI² Support Team. These are elective courses beyond the required ELA and Mathematics classes needed for graduation. These courses will be offered daily (or as described in Component 4.2) and will be taught by a certified teacher. These courses will use research-based interventions and follow the guidelines within Component 4.1 for Tier III intervention. The majority of the course should be direct intervention provided by any certified teacher; however, computer-based and/or technology assisted interventions can be used a portion of the time. The intervention program should match the area of deficit and be delivered with high fidelity. It is recommended that class size should not exceed a 1:12 ratio.

**Component 5:
Special Education
Procedures**

Component 5-Special Education Eligibility Procedures

5.1 Special Education Referral Procedures. A special education referral for a student suspected of a **Specific Learning Disability** may only be deemed necessary after the student has received tiered interventions, and the intervention(s) provided were not successful in closing the achievement gap. A student may be referred during Tier III, but eligibility will not be determined until interventions have been implemented with **fidelity** at all levels. Data based decisions will be made at each tier using a minimum of 8-10 data points (if **progress monitoring** every other week) OR 10-15 data points (if **progress monitoring** weekly). Furthermore, a change in intervention will be considered within each tier before moving to the next tier of intervention (as referenced in sections 3.4 and 4.4). Number of data points reflects empirical research required to make an informed data based decision. The intervention must have empirical evidence supporting its use in remediating the area of suspected disability (i.e., Basic Reading Skills), and the **progress monitoring** tool selected must be able to provide evidence that the student did not make a sufficient amount of progress in the area of suspected disability. It is the LEA's responsibility to document that the student received intervention and was progress monitored as outlined by the Tier II and Tier III guidelines.

Student screening: Students may be screened by a specialist (e.g., school psychologist or reading specialist) at any time within the Tiers to provide instructional and/or program planning information. For example, the student's phonological processing or academic skills may be screened to provide additional information to inform instruction and/or intervention. All **screenings** will be conducted in accordance with the examiner's manual with regard to standardization and examiner qualifications. Prior to a special education referral, this screening information may only be used to help identify the needs of the student and to assist with instructional program planning. Furthermore, this information will not be used to predetermine the student's ability or lack thereof to make progress. If a student fails to make adequate progress after receiving intervention at all levels, the information obtained from any **screenings** completed during the intervention process may be used as part of the eligibility determination following informed written parental consent. **Screenings** conducted for instructional programming may be necessary but are not sufficient to document underachievement in the event a **special education** referral is made (See section 5.2).

If, within the RTI² process, the team suspects that a student may be evidencing a disability other than a **Specific Learning Disability**, then the referral process for that disability must be followed. It is important to note that the RTI² process is not required or appropriate for all areas of suspected disability. For example, a Kindergarten age student who enters school with developmental delays as indicated by multiple sources of information would not necessarily need to go through all tiers of intervention before being evaluated for a Developmental Delay. Similarly, a student who is suspected of having an Intellectual Disability may also be referred prior to the completion of the RTI²

process. Any information collected through the screening/**progress monitoring** process will be vitally important when making these decisions. None of these procedures will conflict with the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs Memorandum 11-07.

Progress Monitoring Requirements:

A lack of sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more areas (i.e., Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Mathematics Calculation, Mathematics Problem Solving) based on the student’s responsiveness to scientific, **research-based** intervention shall be documented using the following criteria:

Tier of Instruction and Intervention	Guidelines of Tier	Screening Provided	Frequency	Duration
Tier I	TIER I-as defined per Tier I guidelines.	Skills Based universal screening	(K-8) 3x per year (fall, winter, and spring) (9-12) recommended 3x per year (fall, winter, and spring)	Ongoing measurement
Tier II	TIER II: In addition to Tier I. As defined by Tier II guidelines.	Progress monitoring in specific area of deficit that is sensitive to change and provides a ROI.**	Every other week	Minimum of 8-10 data points to make a data based decision to change to Tier III*
			Weekly	Minimum of 10-15 data points to make a data based decision to change to Tier III*
Tier III	TIER III: In addition to Tier I and more intense than Tier II. Per Tier III guidelines.	Progress monitoring in specific area of deficit that is sensitive to change and provides a ROI.**	Every Other Week	Minimum of 8-10 data points with Tier III interventions to make a data based decision to refer for special education consideration*
			Weekly	Minimum of 10-15 data points with Tier III interventions to make a data based decision to refer for special education consideration*

****Rate of Improvement (ROI)**

*If a student is 1.5 grade levels or more behind then the student may immediately require Tier III intensive intervention. Refer to the guidelines for all grade levels in Components 3 or 4. Students who are immediately placed in Tier III level intervention must receive the minimum number of recommended minutes of intervention as reflected in the tables in Sections 3.2 and 4.2. Furthermore, students who are immediately placed in Tier III intervention will be given adequate time to respond to prescribed intervention before a referral to **special education** is made. The purpose of immediately placing a student in Tier III intervention is to increase the **intensity** of the intervention, not to shorten the **duration** of the intervention period. The student will be given the same amount of time to respond to the intervention as a student who first received Tier II interventions. This allows schools teams time to make the necessary changes to Tier III interventions in order to establish that all possible options have been considered. If all options have been exhausted at Tier III and the team has data to indicate that the interventions were not effective, a referral to special education may be considered.

If Tier III interventions have been provided and a gap analysis indicates that a student's progress is not sufficient for making adequate growth with the current interventions, then the team may obtain *Notice and Consent for Initial Evaluation*. The team must complete all evaluations and establish the student's eligibility for service within the initial evaluation timeline. The student will remain in intervention and will continue to be monitored while the requested evaluations are being completed. All information collected including the student's responsiveness to intervention will be a part of the student's eligibility determination.

Special Education Referral Information:

A referral to **special education** will include (at a minimum):

- *Parent Input* to include any pertinent familial information, family/student medical history, and etc.;
- *Teacher Input* to include an indirect observation, work samples, documentation of **differentiated instruction**, etc.;
- *Documentation of the Problem* to include classroom-based performance assessments, standardized testing results, and other relevant assessment data;
- *A Detailed Description of the Intervention Process* to include interventions used, attendance, **frequency** of implementation, **duration** of implementation, and **fidelity monitoring**; and
- **Progress Monitoring** data indicating a lack of responsiveness to intervention.

5.2 Components of a Special Education Evaluation/Re-evaluation. The following outlines the eligibility criteria and eligibility determination when establishing the eligibility of a student for **special education** services based on a **Specific Learning Disability**.

Specific Learning Disabilities Eligibility Criteria

Definition: The term **Specific Learning Disability** means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or

written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do **mathematical calculations**, and that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Such term includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities (e.g., visual processing), brain injury that is not caused by an external physical force, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. **Specific Learning Disability** does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of Visual Impairment; Hearing Impairment; Orthopedic Impairment; Intellectual Disability; Emotional Disturbance; Limited English Proficiency; or Environmental or Cultural Disadvantage.

The characteristics as identified in the Specific Learning Disabilities definition are to include:

- A. Evaluation for Specific Learning Disabilities shall meet the following standards:
 1. To ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having a **Specific Learning Disability** is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction (i.e., empirically **research-based** instruction that is rigorous, **systematic**, and peer-reviewed) in the student's State approved grade level standards, the following must be obtained:
 - a. Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the student was provided appropriate instruction (i.e., empirically **research-based** instruction that is rigorous and **systematic** throughout all Tiers of instruction/intervention) in regular education settings, delivered by qualified and appropriately trained personnel; and
 - b. Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement, reflecting **formative assessment** of student progress during intervention, which was provided to the student's parents of once every four and one-half (4.5) weeks.
 2. The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or state-approved grade level standards:
 - a. Basic Reading Skills
 - b. Reading Fluency Skills
 - c. Reading Comprehension
 - d. Written Expression
 - e. Mathematics Calculation
 - f. Mathematics Problem Solving

An evaluation of Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension shall be completed pursuant to the Speech or Language Impairment eligibility standards if an SLD is suspected in either area. If a student has been evaluated by a Speech

Language Pathologist and does not qualify as Language Impaired, then the IEP team may consider a **Specific Learning Disability** in either Oral Expression or Listening Comprehension if either continues to be a suspected area of disability; however, the rigorous intervention and **progress monitoring** standards must be met.

In order to substantiate inadequate achievement, an individual, standardized, and norm-referenced measure of academic achievement must be administered after initial consent is obtained in the area of suspected disability (i.e., Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Mathematics Calculation, and Mathematics Problem Solving). Intensive intervention must occur within the tiers before inadequate classroom achievement can be assessed. The score from a standardized achievement test administered prior to receiving intensive intervention may not be used to determine inadequate classroom achievement. The team will select assessment instruments that are sensitive to floor effects and developmental levels, especially for students in the primary grades.

3. The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more areas (i.e., Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Math Calculation, Mathematics Problem Solving) when using a process based on the student's responsiveness to scientific, **research-based** intervention in each area of suspected delay.

A lack of sufficient progress will be established by examining the student's **Rate of Improvement (ROI)** including a gap analysis and will be based on the following criteria:

- The rate of progress or improvement is less than that of his/her same-age peers,
or
 - The rate of progress is the same as or greater than that of his/her same age peers but will not result in reaching the average range of achievement within a reasonable period of time.
4. The LEA must ensure that the child is observed in the student's learning environment (including the **general education** classroom setting) to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty.

A pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance shall be documented by two **systematic** observations in the area of suspected disability. One may be conducted by a **special education** teacher and one must be conducted by the School Psychologist or **certifying specialist**:

- a. **Systematic** observation of routine classroom instruction, and

- b. **Systematic** observation during intensive, scientific **research-based** or evidence-based intervention.

In the case of a student who is in a placement outside of the **local education agency** (LEA), a team member must observe the student in an environment appropriate for a student of that age.

5. The team must determine that underachievement is not primarily the result of Visual, Motor, or Hearing Disability, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disturbance, Cultural Factors, Environmental or Economic Factors, Limited English Proficiency, or Excessive Absenteeism.

A measure of cognition is not required for all students referred to **special education** based on a suspected **Specific Learning Disability**. Only when the team suspects the student may be evidencing another disability (e.g. Intellectual Disability or Functional Delay) will a comprehensive measure of the student's intelligence be administered.

- B. A student whose characteristics meet the definition of a student having a **Specific Learning Disability** may be identified as a student eligible for **special education** services if:
 - 1) All of the aforementioned eligibility criteria are met, and
 - 2) There is evidence, including observation and/or assessment, indicating how the Specific Learning Disabilities adversely impact the student's performance in or access to the **general education** curriculum.
- C. Evaluation participants must include:
 - 1) The parent or guardian;
 - 2) The student's **general education** classroom teacher;
 - 3) A licensed **special education** teacher;
 - 4) At least one person qualified to conduct an individual **diagnostic evaluation** (i.e., School Psychologist and/or Speech-Language Pathologist); and
 - 5) Other professional personnel as indicated (i.e., Occupational Therapist).

In the case of a private evaluation and/or diagnosis (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Visual Processing), the team should consider information presented to help inform instruction and intervention. The student must be provided academic interventions congruent with the RTI ² guidelines if the team suspects the presence of a **Specific Learning Disability** as either a primary or secondary disability.

Exclusionary/Rule-out Factors:

Within the **special education** evaluation process, these factors must be ruled-out as the primary reason for the student's underachievement.

Exclusionary Factor:	Source of Evidence:
Visual, Motor, or Hearing Disability	Sensory screenings, medical records, observation
Intellectual Disability	Classroom performance, academic skills, language development, adaptive functioning (if necessary), IQ (if necessary)
Emotional Disturbance	Classroom observation, student records, family history, medical information, emotional/behavioral screenings (if necessary)
Cultural Factors	Level of performance and rate of progress compared to students from same ethnicity with similar backgrounds
Environmental or Economic Factors	Level of performance and rate of progress compared to students from similar economic backgrounds, situational factors that are student specific
Limited English Proficiency	Measures of language acquisition and proficiency (i.e., BICs and CALPs), level of performance and rate of progress compared to other ELL students with similar exposure to language and instruction
Excessive Absenteeism	Attendance records, number of schools attended within a 3 year period, tardies, absent for 23% of instruction and/or intervention

Eligibility Determination:

In order for a student’s eligibility for **special education** services to be established, the team must complete and sign the Specific Learning Disabilities Assessment Documentation Form. This form will replace the typical comprehensive Psychoeducational Evaluation as it relates to a **Specific Learning Disability ONLY**. An Eligibility Report and a Prior Written notice indicating the student’s eligibility determination must also be completed.

Re-evaluations:

All re-evaluations for students with a **Specific Learning Disability** will be grounded in **progress monitoring** data. For students who qualified for services using the discrepancy model, it is assumed that the initial eligibility process was **valid**. Existing student-

centered data including ongoing assessments of progress and focused/**diagnostic evaluations** will be reviewed through the *Re-evaluation Summary Report* to determine if additional information is needed. Again, a gap analysis will be completed and the student's ROI will be calculated in order to determine the amount of services/intervention required to close his or her achievement gap. The level of service required (**special education** versus **general education**) will be used to negate or substantiate continued eligibility.

Transfers:

When a student with a SLD transfers from one Tennessee LEA to another, the school psychologist will conduct a records review to ensure that all eligibility components were met; however, there is no need to complete the *Re-evaluation Summary Report* unless components of the student's eligibility for services are missing. There is also no need to create a new Eligibility Report when all eligibility criteria have been clearly met.

When a referred student transfers from one Tennessee LEA to another before an eligibility determination is made, the new LEA must facilitate the timely completion of the requested evaluation. The previous school district must send all relevant assessment information to the inheriting school district as soon as possible so that the evaluation and eligibility determination processes are not delayed. If additional time is needed to establish the student's eligibility for services, then the inheriting school district may submit a request to extend the evaluation timeline. This may be accomplished using the formal extension process, which requires any extension of the timeframe be amended by mutual written agreement between the student's parents and a group of qualified professionals.

Consistent with previous guidance, all out-of-state transfers will be treated as re-evaluations. Furthermore, the team will use the *Re-evaluation Summary Report* to document all relevant information and make a determination. If the previous eligibility process is sufficient to establish the student's eligibility for services based on Tennessee SLD criteria, then the team may choose to adopt those results. A new Eligibility Report will be completed reflecting this decision.

For students with an SLD who were made eligible using a model other than RTI², whose pre-referral intervention and/or **progress monitoring** data is missing, or whose previous evaluation does not meet TN SLD criteria, it is assumed that the student did not respond to **general education** intervention; however, a comprehensive re-evaluation (i.e., **progress monitoring** and achievement data collection) will be completed for eligibility purposes. The student's responsiveness to intervention as indicated by **progress monitoring** data will be collected, based on services (intervention) provided through the IEP. Again, a gap analysis will be completed and the student's ROI calculated in order to determine the amount of services/intervention required to close his or her achievement gap. The level of service required (**special education** versus **general education**) will be used to negate or substantiate continued eligibility. All information will be collected and

an eligibility determination will be made within the initial evaluation timeframe unless the team agrees to request an extension of the timeline.

Private/Home School:

IDEA requires that districts use a proportionate amount of funding to provide services to students in private and home school settings. In order to establish a student's need for these services, districts must engage in child find activities and respond to parental requests for evaluation. There are two possible scenarios:

1) If the student is referred but consent for evaluation has not been received:

In order to rule-out lack of appropriate instruction, the district should engage in meaningful consultation with the private or home school regarding both the intervention and **progress monitoring** process. If **universal screening** and/or academic achievement information is not available, the LEA is encouraged to initiate the referral/problem-solving process by gathering this information.

2) If the parent provides written request for evaluation:

During the evaluation timeline that begins with the receipt of a written request for evaluation, the LEA will collect data on the appropriateness of the student's current curriculum, the **fidelity** of instruction, and any interventions implemented prior to the request. If interventions are put into place and the student begins making significant progress, the LEA will meet with the parent and decide whether or not to request an extension of the evaluation timeline. This may be done using the formal extension process, which requires any extension of the timeframe be amended by mutual written agreement between the student's parents and a group of qualified professionals. If the student makes minimal to no progress, the evaluation and eligibility determination must be completed within the evaluation timeframe.

If a district accepts the referral but then later chooses not to qualify the student because lack of appropriate instruction cannot be ruled out, parents may exercise their right to an independent evaluation or initiate due process.

5.3 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures. When determining eligibility for **special education**, the team will consider data collected with tiered interventions. Data will have been used to determine movement within and out of tiered interventions. Students will have had researched-based, peer-reviewed interventions within the specific area of deficit. They will have been progress monitored over time and a **rate of improvement** will have been determined. Students that are making sufficient progress will remain at the level of support required to be successful. After tiered interventions have been exhausted and the student has demonstrated insufficient progress, then the student's eligibility for **special education** service may be determined. The team may initiate the referral process using the following criteria:

- A student does not appear to making sufficient progress after tiered interventions have been implemented with **fidelity** and data based decisions have been made using 8-10 data points (every other week) or 10-15 data points (weekly) at each tier.
- ROI and a gap analysis must be completed for students being referred for **special education** to determine if needs are beyond **general education** Tier III interventions.

The Tennessee SLD criteria identifies two decision rules to inform the IEP team analysis of **progress monitoring** data from intensive, scientific **research-based** or evidence-based intervention. A student's rate of progress during intensive intervention is insufficient if either of the following apply:

- The rate of progress is less than that of his/her same-age peers,
or
- The rate of progress is greater than his/her same-age peers but will not result in reaching the average range of achievement in a reasonable period of time.

5.4 Parent Request for Evaluation. If a parent or legal guardian requests an evaluation within the RTI² process, the team must complete the agreed upon components of the evaluation within the initial evaluation timeline as indicated by the LEA's receipt of informed parental consent. The student may be eligible for services as a student with a **Specific Learning Disability** based only on the aforementioned eligibility standards. There is no option to use either a discrepancy model or a pattern of strengths and weaknesses model to identify a **Specific Learning Disability**.

If a parent requests an evaluation, the LEA will include for consideration all intervention and **progress monitoring** data available at the time of referral. The student will continue to receive intervention in the specific area of deficit and will continue to be progress monitored. If the initial evaluation timeline will expire before adequate data has been collected, then all information and testing completed to that point will be used to establish the student's eligibility for **special education**. If the team lacks sufficient evidence to establish the student's eligibility for services, the team may agree to request an extension of the evaluation timeline or the student will be made ineligible until sufficient data can be collected.

5.5 Fidelity Monitoring (per Guidelines in Tier II and Tier III). The **fidelity** of implementation per intervention should be assessed by qualified personnel throughout the process; however, the minimum requirement is a combined total of 8 checks: 3 checks in Tier II where 2 must be a direct observation, and 5 checks in Tier III where 3 must be direct observations and 2 must be a review of implementation data (i.e., attendance, lesson plans, **progress monitoring** results). Ongoing **fidelity** documentation of intervention should include: interventions used, evidence of implementation at 80% or greater, student attendance, **progress monitoring** results, and any other anecdotal

information that might account for the student's progress or a lack thereof. If the intervention is not implemented with **integrity**, the **interventionist** should be supported with training until **integrity** reaches 80%. **Fidelity monitoring** should continue within **special education** interventions and follow the same **fidelity monitoring** schedule as Tier III interventions.

5.6 Progress Monitoring and Intervention Procedures in Special Education. Students who qualify for special education with a **Specific Learning Disability** will be assigned services by their Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Special education services will be the most intensive level of intervention. The student will remain in the **core instruction** (Tier I) and will have access to tiered intervention within the **general education** curriculum to the greatest extent possible. The same **problem solving approach** used in the **general education** RTI² process will be used in special education. Furthermore, interventions will be tailored to the student in the area of identified disability, and progress toward their IEP goals will be monitored weekly or every other week. When students fail to respond to intervention as a result of the provision of special education services, an IEP team meeting will be reconvened.

5.7 Dismissal from Special Education. Students may move from special education interventions to **general education** interventions if there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the student no longer needs special education services. Movement from special education to **general education** will be supported by multiple sources of data including ROI, gap analysis, evidence of meeting IEP goals, and student need. The goal is for all students to be served at their level of need within the least restrictive environment. The team will use the Re-evaluation Summary Report process to gather all sources of information and make an eligibility determination.

5.8 Program Evaluation. The RTI² process within a district will be continually monitored and adjusted to better meet the needs of all students. All students should benefit from the data based decision making process and all decisions should be made for the best interest of an individual student. District data, school data and student data will continually be monitored and changes will be adjusted based on the data collected (e.g. strengthening Tier I or more **research based** interventions in Tier III).

Glossary of Terms

Basic Reading (Skills)- Basic reading skills include the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in language; to identify printed letters and their associated sounds; to decode written language.

Benchmark- Short term or long-term assessment goal used to indicate grade level expectations during a specific grade level and at a specific time period (e.g., fall, winter, spring).

Certifying Specialist- An assessment professional that is involved in the evaluation of a student for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education services. Certifying specialists may include school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, etc.

Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)- A system for on-going monitoring of student progress through a specific curriculum. Through the use of CBM assessments, teachers assess students' academic performance on a regular basis with very brief tests. Results are used to determine whether students are progressing appropriately from the core (Tier I) instructional program, and to build more effective programs for the students who do not benefit adequately from core (Tier I) instruction.

Comprehension (Reading)- The ability to understand and make meaning of text.

Comprehensive Evaluation- Assessments that are completed for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education services. Components of the evaluation are chosen based on the referral and are specific to the Tennessee State eligibility standards for the suspected disability or disabilities.

Core Curriculum/Instruction (Tier I Instruction)- Grade level instruction provided to all students in the regular education classroom. Core instruction often includes various instructional orientations to include whole class, small-differentiated groups, collaborative, and individual opportunities for learning. Core instruction is targeted to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Materials and lesson protocols used from the core program are based on current data and are designed to meet the needs of all students. The Tennessee State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics will be used for Tier I instruction.

Data-Based Decision Making- Data-based decision making is the process of using appropriate data collected to inform and drive each instructional decision.

Diagnostic Evaluation/Assessment- Standardized assessments designed to assess the extent to which students are on track to master grade level standards and to determine individual strengths and concerns of skills. Diagnostic assessments may also provide evidence of curricular strengths and needs in particular skill areas.

Differentiated Instruction (Differentiation)- Targeted instruction provided to meet the needs of students. Instruction includes diverse avenues to learn the skills and content to process, construct, extend, generalize, or make sense of ideas. Furthermore, differentiation will develop learning opportunities so all students within a classroom will learn effectively, regardless of differences in student progress, interests, and needs.

Direct Instruction- Direct instruction is an instructional approach that utilizes explicit and structured teaching routines. A teacher using direct instruction models, explains, and guides the students through extended practice of a skill or concept until mastery is achieved. The lessons are fast paced, students are academically engaged, and teachers are enthusiastically delivering instruction. Direct instruction is appropriate instruction for all learners, all five components of reading, and in all settings (whole group, small group, and one-on-one).

Duration- The length of time intervention is provided a student as indicated by benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results.

Early Intervention- Specialized instruction specifically designed to target skill deficits and provide appropriate instruction to meet the needs of students. Intervention is provided early in order to prevent future learning disabilities or present academic performance deficits with the goal of maintaining grade-level or above grade-level performance.

English Language Arts (ELA)- Tennessee State Standards in English Language Arts that includes teaching, learning, and mastery of skills to appropriately build and possess the strong foundational skills of reading; read various types of texts to include literature, fictional, informational and technical texts and media technology; write and speak for different purposes and to various audiences; and to have full command and use of appropriate language.

English Language Learner (ELL)- A student who through testing and other means is found to have some difficulty speaking, reading, and/or writing in English.

Enrichment- Enrichment activities expand on students' learning in ways that may differ from the strategies used during Tier I instruction. They often are interactive and project-focused. They enhance a student's education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways to deepen students' understanding. These activities are designed to be interesting, challenging, and impart knowledge. They should allow students to apply knowledge and skills learned in Tier I to real-life experiences.

Evidence Based Intervention- Interventions that have been tested and have demonstrated success with a particular group of students. This means that the research results are reliable and valid. As a result, the research shows there is reasonable evidence to indicate the program or strategies will result in academic gains when used appropriately.

Explicit Instruction- Instruction that 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.

Fidelity- The extent to which the prescribed instruction or intervention plan is executed. Fidelity includes addressing the deficit area, using the type of intervention prescribed, maintaining an appropriate group size, length of session, etc.

Fidelity Monitoring- The systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (i.e. principal, instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of instruction or an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models originally developed. Fidelity monitoring has increasing significance for evaluation and treatment effectiveness. The fidelity of implementation per intervention and instruction should be assessed throughout the process as per the guidelines in the manual.

Flexible grouping/small groups- A basic strategy for grouping students for the purpose of providing targeted instruction to meet the needs of student groups. Grouping provides the opportunity for students to work together in a variety of ways, and in a number of arrangements. Groupings may be whole class, small groups, individual, and partners, teacher-led or student-led and are commensurate to instructional activities, learning goals, and student needs. Flexible grouping provides the opportunity for student groups to change based on the changing needs of students, as indicated in benchmark and progressing monitoring assessments.

Reading (fluency)- Reading fluency refers to the ability to read words accurately, quickly, and effortlessly. Moreover, fluency skills include the ability to read with appropriate expression and intonation (prosody). Reading fluency is the ability to read with sufficient accuracy and rate to support comprehension. Reading fluency applies to accurately reading on-level fiction, prose, and poetry with expression through repeated reading. Non-fiction and technical reading passages generally requires a slower more thoughtful level of reading rate to support comprehension. Reading fluency can also be the rate at which young students demonstrate and name their conceptual understanding of letter-sound correspondence, alphabetic knowledge, and reading **nonsense words**, sight words, sentences, and texts.

Math (fluency)- Mathematical fluency is the ability to make sense of problems and/or patterns and structure and to proficiently calculate and accurately find appropriate solution paths to identify, solve, and find reasonable explanations. Mathematical fluency can also be the rate at which young students demonstrate and name their conceptual understanding of numerals, counting, naming numerals, and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts.

Focused Assessment- A focused assessment is a prescribed measure used to evaluate a particular skill area to determine levels of performance.

Formative Assessment- Quality instruction includes assessments during instruction to provide the information needed to effectively direct and target teaching and learning as it occurs. Formative assessments enable the teacher to push instruction toward the targeted goals to ensure mastery of intended outcomes.

Frequency- The number, proportion, or percentage of items in a particular set of data.

General Education- The program of education that students receive based on state standards that are evaluated by the annual state educational standards tests.

Grade Level Content Expectations- The Grade Level Content Expectations build from the Tennessee State Standards. Reflecting best practices and current research, they provide a set of clear and rigorous expectations for all students and provide teachers with clearly defined statements of what students should know and be able to do as they progress through school.

Highly-trained personnel- Teachers adequately trained to deliver the selected instruction as intended, that is, with fidelity to design.

Hybrid intervention- A hybrid approach within an RTI model combines methods of a problem-solving and a standard protocol approach.

Implementation Integrity- The extent to which core instruction and intervention materials are used as intended by the author/publisher. Implementation integrity also includes the prescribed amount of time and the frequency required for the treatment to yield its best results.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)- As reauthorized in 2004 ensure services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. (Reference: Ed.gov, United States Department of Education)

Intense (intensity)- The measure of strength by which instruction or intervention is delivered. Intensive academic and/or behavioral interventions are characterized by their increased focus for students who fail to respond to less intensive forms of instruction. Intensity can be increased through many dimensions including length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Intervention- Support at the school level for students performing below grade-level expectations. Educational professionals determine academic intervention needs of students (determined by ongoing data), determine methods for dealing with academic issues, and – most important – monitor on an ongoing basis whether these methods are resulting in increased student learning and achievement.

Interventionist- An educator trained to deliver a prescribed intervention with fidelity. This may include a general education teacher, special education teacher, trained teaching assistant, or intervention specialist.

Intervention kit/materials- A research-based curriculum designed to target specific instructional needs with varying intensity.

LEA – Local Education Agency- A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

Manipulatives- Any object that allows students to explore an idea in an active, hands-on approach. Manipulatives include anything that can be manipulated to include counters, blocks, shapes, toys, letter tiles, etc.

Math (Mathematics/Mathematical) Calculation- The knowledge and retrieval of facts and the application of procedural knowledge in calculation.

Math (Mathematics/Mathematical) Problem Solving- Involves using mathematical computation skills, language, reasoning, reading, and visual-spatial skills in solving problems; applying mathematical knowledge at the conceptual level.

Multi-Sensory- Multi-sensory teaching and learning is simultaneously visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile to enhance memory and learning. Links are consistently made between the visual (what we see) auditory (what we hear), and kinesthetic-tactile (what we feel) pathways in learning to read, spell, reason, count, and compute.

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)- A standardized assessment of consonant-vowel-consonant and vowel-consonant nonsense words that are individually administered to assess letter/sound relationships and blending (and/or segmenting) of phonetic sounds (e.g., fim, nen, sig).

Other Health Impairment (OHI)- Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia; and Tourette’s Syndrome that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. A child is “Other Health Impaired” who has chronic or acute health problems that require specially designed instruction due to: 1) impaired organizational or work skills; 2) inability to manage or complete tasks; 3) excessive health related absenteeism; or 4) medications that affect cognitive functioning.

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)- A standardized reading measure of accuracy and fluency with connected text or passages, usually measured beginning mid-first grade through sixth grade.

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)- A standardized measure of a student’s ability to segment three and four phoneme words into individual phonemes fluently, for example the examiner says “bat” and the student says /b/ /a/ /t/. PSF is usually measured mid-kindergarten through the spring of first grade.

Phonemic Awareness- The ability to hear, think about, identify and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

Phonics- Phonics refers to a systematic approach of teaching letters (and combinations of letters) and their corresponding speech sounds. Phonics begins with the alphabetic principle: language is comprised of words made up of letters that represent sounds.

Phonological Awareness- Phonological awareness is a broad skill that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language – parts such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. Children who have phonological awareness are able to identify and make oral rhymes, can clap out the number of syllables in a word, and can recognize words with the same initial sounds like “money” and “mother.” (Reference: Reading Rockets)

Probe- When using Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), the instructor administers a brief, timed assessment or “probes” made up of academic material taken from grade-level curriculum.

Progress Monitoring- Progress monitoring is used to assess students' academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Prescriptive Intervention- An intervention specifically targeted to meet the instructional needs of the student.

Prevention- The practice of providing additional assistance in any academic area to prevent students from falling behind.

Problem-Solving Approach within RTI- Within RTI, a problem-solving approach is used to tailor an intervention to an individual student. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluated (PAIR).

Professional Development (PD)- Continuous targeted research-based instruction for school professionals and staff to improve learning outcomes for students and meet goals of the adult learner, class, school and/or district. The purpose of PD should be to provide educators with current research concerning best practices for teaching and learning

Rate of Improvement (ROI)- The expected rate of improvement on progress monitoring assessments is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the

intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. The ROI is compared to the improvement of a typical peer to determine adequate progress.

Reliable- Reliability refers to the consistency with which a tool classifies students from one administration to the next. A tool is considered reliable if it produces the same results when administering the test under different conditions, at different times, or using different forms of the test.

Research-Based Instruction/Intervention- A research-based instructional practice or intervention is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of students, the student can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice.

Scaffold- 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.

School Psychologist- School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students. School psychologists are highly-trained in both psychology and education, completing a minimum of a specialist-level degree program. This training emphasizes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and systems. School psychologists must be certified and/or licensed by the state in which they work. For more information, go to nasponline.org.

Scientifically-Based Research- Scientifically-based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;
- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;
- Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Screening- A quick checklist, survey or probe used to provide an initial general indicator of levels of performance. Screenings may also include diagnostic assessments to gain more information about a student’s academic strengths and/or areas of concern.

Special Education- The most intensive interventions and specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students identified with an educational disability. This term may include related services such as speech/language or occupational therapy depending on student needs.

Specific Learning Disability- The term **Specific Learning Disability** means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, and that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Such term includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities (e.g., visual processing), brain injury that is not caused by an external physical force, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific Learning Disability does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of Visual Impairment; Hearing Impairment; Orthopedic Impairment; Intellectual Disability; Emotional Disturbance; Limited English Proficiency; or, Environmental or Cultural Disadvantage. Specific Learning Disabilities may be identified in the following areas: Basic Reading, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Math Calculation, Math Problem Solving, Written Expression, Oral Expression, and/or Listening Comprehension.

Specific Measurable Outcome- The statement of a single, specific desired result from an intervention. To be measurable, the outcome should be expressed in observable and quantifiable terms (i.e., Johnny will demonstrate mastery of grade-level basic math calculation skills as measured by a score of 85% or better on the end-of-the unit test on numerical operations).

Standard protocol intervention- Standard protocol intervention relies on the same, empirically validated intervention for all students with similar academic or behavioral needs. Standard protocol interventions facilitate quality control.

Standardized Assessment- An assessment test that is developed using standard procedures and is then administered and scored in a consistent manner for all test takers.

Summative Assessment- Summative assessment is a form of evaluation used to describe the effectiveness of an instructional program or intervention, that is, whether the intervention had the desired effect. With summative assessment, student learning is typically assessed at the end of a course of study or annually (at the end of a grade).

Survey-Level Assessment- A process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate rate of improvement and growth.

Systematic- 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. Systematic instruction is clearly linked within, as well as across the five major areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). 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 instruction.

Tennessee State Standards(mathematics and English language arts)- Curricular standards developed to strengthen the knowledge and skills in English Language Arts and Mathematics to prepare students to become college and career ready. These standards define the knowledge and skills students are required to possess in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses, technical institutes, and in workforce training programs. They are based on the most current national and international standards, with the intention of providing students a competitive advantage in the global economy.

Trend line or trajectory- A straight line that connects a series of results from assessments on a graph used to help determine progress toward intended target.

Universal Screening/Screeners- An LEA must administer a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener. A universal screener is a brief screening assessment of academic skills (i.e. basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression) administered to **ALL** students to determine whether students demonstrate the skills necessary to achieve grade level standards. Universal screening reveals which students are performing at or above the level considered necessary for achieving long-term success (general outcome measures). This data can also serve as a benchmark for measuring the improvement of a group, class, grade, school or district. Furthermore, universal screening can be used to identify students in need of further intervention due to identified skill deficits. A more precise assessment may be needed to determine a student's specific area(s) of deficit before beginning an intervention.

Valid- Validity refers to the extent to which a tool accurately measures the underlying construct that it is intended to measure.

Written Expression- Involves basic writing skills (transcription) and generational skills (composition). **Transcription:** difficulty producing letters, words, spelling;
Composition: difficulty with word and text fluency, sentence construction, genre-specific discourse structures, planning processes, and reviewing and revising processes.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

January 21, 2011

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OSEP 11- 07

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Directors of Special Education
FROM: Melody Musgrove, Ed.D. Director, Office of Special Education Programs
SUBJECT: A Response to Intervention (RTI) Process Cannot Be Used to Delay-Deny an Evaluation for Eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The provisions related to child find in section 612(a)(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), require that a State have in effect policies and procedures to ensure that the State identifies, locates and evaluates all children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services. It is critical that this identification occur in a timely manner and that no procedures or practices result in delaying or denying this identification. It has come to the attention of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) that, in some instances, local educational agencies (LEAs) may be using Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies to delay or deny a timely initial evaluation for children suspected of having a disability. States and LEAs have an obligation to ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of an RTI strategy.

A multi-tiered instructional framework, often referred to as RTI, is a schoolwide approach that addresses the needs of all students, including struggling learners and students with disabilities, and integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level instructional and behavioral system to maximize student achievement and reduce problem behaviors. With a multi-tiered instructional framework, schools identify students at-risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness.

While the Department of Education does not subscribe to a particular RTI framework, the core characteristics that underpin all RTI models are: (1) students receive high quality research-based instruction in their general education setting; (2) continuous monitoring of student performance; (3) all students are screened for academic and behavioral problems; and (4) multiple levels (tiers) of instruction that are progressively more intense, based on the student's

response to instruction. OSEP supports State and local implementation of RTI strategies to ensure that children who are struggling academically and behaviorally are identified early and provided needed interventions in a timely and effective manner. Many LEAs have implemented successful RTI strategies, thus ensuring that children who do not respond to interventions and are potentially eligible for special education and related services are referred for evaluation; and those children who simply need intense short-term interventions are provided those interventions.

The regulations implementing the 2004 Amendments to the IDEA include a provision mandating that States allow, as part of their criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability (SLD), the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention¹. See 34 CFR §300.307(a)(2). OSEP continues to receive questions regarding the relationship of RTI to the evaluation provisions of the regulations. In particular, OSEP has heard that some LEAs may be using RTI to delay or deny a timely initial evaluation to determine if a child is a child with a disability and, therefore, eligible for special education and related services pursuant to an individualized education program.

Under 34 CFR §300.307, a State must adopt, consistent with 34 CFR §300.309, criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10). In addition, the criteria adopted by the State: (1) must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has an SLD; (2) must permit the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; and (3) may permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has an SLD. Although the regulations specifically address using the process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based interventions (i.e., RTI) for determining if a child has an SLD, information obtained through RTI strategies may also be used as a component of evaluations for children suspected of having other disabilities, if appropriate.

The regulations at 34 CFR §300.301(b) allow a parent to request an initial evaluation at any time to determine if a child is a child with a disability. The use of RTI strategies cannot be used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation, pursuant to 34 CFR §§300.304-300.311, to a child suspected of having a disability under 34 CFR §300.8. If the LEA agrees with a parent who refers their child for evaluation that the child may be a child who is eligible for special education and related services, the LEA must evaluate the child. The LEA must provide the parent with notice under 34 CFR §§300.503 and 300.504 and obtain informed parental consent, consistent with 34 CFR §300.9, before conducting the evaluation. Although the IDEA and its implementing regulations do not prescribe a specific timeframe from referral for evaluation to parental consent, it has been the Department's longstanding policy that the LEA must seek parental consent within a reasonable period of time after the referral for evaluation, if the LEA agrees that an initial evaluation is needed. See Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities, Final Rule, 71 Fed. Reg., 46540, 46637 (August 14, 2006). An LEA must conduct the initial evaluation within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe. 34 CFR §300.301(c).

¹ The Department has provided guidance regarding the use of RTI in the identification of specific learning disabilities in its letters to: Zirkel - 3-6-07, 8-15-07, 4-8-08, and 12-11-08; Clarke - 5-28-08; and Copenhaver - 10-19-07. Guidance related to the use of RTI for children ages 3 through 5 was provided in the letter to Brekken - 6-2-10. These letters can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/index.html>.

If, however, the LEA does not suspect that the child has a disability, and denies the request for an initial evaluation, the LEA must provide written notice to parents explaining why the public agency refuses to conduct an initial evaluation and the information that was used as the basis for this decision. 34 CFR §300.503(a) and (b). The parent can challenge this decision by requesting a due process hearing under 34 CFR §300.507 or filing a State complaint under 34 CFR §300.153 to resolve the dispute regarding the child's need for an evaluation. It would be inconsistent with the evaluation provisions at 34 CFR §§300.301 through 300.111 for an LEA to reject a referral and delay provision of an initial evaluation on the basis that a child has not participated in an RTI framework.

We hope this information is helpful in clarifying the relationship between RTI and evaluations pursuant to the IDEA. Please examine the procedures and practices in your State to ensure that any LEA implementing RTI strategies is appropriately using RTI, and that the use of RTI is not delaying or denying timely initial evaluations to children suspected of having a disability. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ruth Ryder at 202-245-7513.

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Letter to Clarke, 4-28-08

Letter to Copenhagen, 10-19-07

Letters to Zirkel, 3-6-07, 8-15-07, 4-8-08 and 12-11-08

cc: Chief State School Officers
Regional Resource Centers
Parent Training Centers
Protection and Advocacy Agencies
Section 619 Coordinators

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