



Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII): An Introduction

The Pennsylvania Department of Education strongly endorses the RtII model as the assessment and instructional framework to organize and implement Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System (SAS) to improve student achievement. RtII in PA is not viewed as a stand-alone strategy, product or program; rather it is a part of the state's comprehensive system of continuous school improvement and provides a structure for schools to arrange and implement standards aligned instruction, core strategies, and interventions in the building to meet the academic and relational support needs of all students.

Definition

RtII is **an early intervening strategy** and carries dual meaning in Pennsylvania. It is a comprehensive, multi-tiered, standards aligned strategy to enable early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk. RtII may be considered as one alternative to the aptitude-achievement discrepancy model for the identification of students with learning disabilities after the establishment of specific progress measures.

RtII allows educators to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties prior to student failure. Monitoring student response to a series of increasingly intense interventions assists in preventing failure and provides data that may guide eligibility decisions for learning disabilities.

The goal of RtII is to improve student achievement using research-based interventions matched to the instructional need and level of the student.

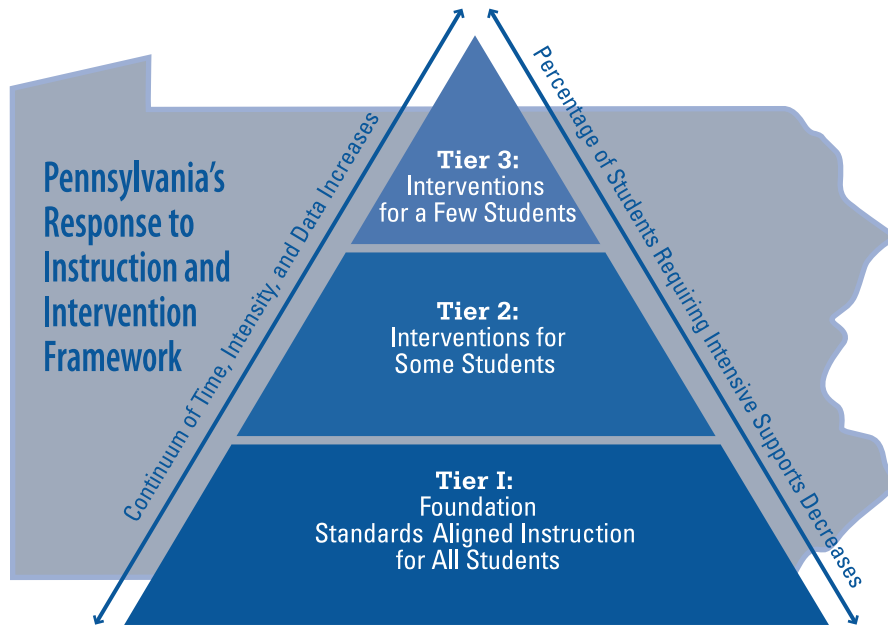
Core Characteristics of RtII

- **Standards aligned instruction:** All students receive high quality, research-based instruction in the general education standards aligned system.
- **Universal screening:** All students are screened to determine academic and behavior status against grade-level benchmarks.
- **Shared ownership:** All staff (general education teachers, special education teachers, Title I, ESL) assume an active role in students' assessment and instruction in the standards aligned system.
- **Data-Based Decision Making:** Student performance data is analyzed to guide school decisions on instructional changes, choices of interventions, and appropriate rates of progress.
 - **Progress Monitoring:** Continuous monitoring of student performance and use of data to determine intervention effectiveness and drive instructional adjustments, and to identify/measure student progress toward instructional and grade-level goals.
 - **Benchmark and Outcome Assessment:** Student progress is assessed periodically throughout the year, and at the end of the year against grade level benchmarks and standards.
- **Tiered Intervention and Service Delivery System:** Some students receive increasing intense levels of targeted scientifically, research-based interventions. Instruction is differentiated to meet learner needs and consists of:
 - **Research-based Interventions:** Interventions with proven effectiveness are matched to students' level of need.
 - **Flexible grouping:** Students move among flexible instructional groups.
 - **Fidelity of Implementation:** Teachers deliver curriculum and program content and use instructional strategies in the same way that they were designed to be used and delivered.
- **Parental Engagement:** Parents receive information regarding their child's needs, including:
 - a description of the specific intervention and who is delivering instruction,
 - clearly stated intervention goals and academic progress expected for their child,
 - regular progress or lack of progress reports, and
 - the right to request a special education evaluation at any time.

Regulatory Support

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) support the involvement of all students in the general education curriculum and the use of research-based interventions to improve student achievement. Additionally, IDEA 2004 permits school districts to use a process to intervene early with struggling students and

to determine if a child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures for students with learning disabilities. In Pennsylvania, this assessment and instructional framework is known as Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII).



Tier 1: Foundation/Standards Aligned Instruction for All Students

Definition: Standards aligned instruction and schoolwide foundational interventions are provided to all students in the general education core curriculum. Tier I also is used to designate instructional interventions for students who are making expected grade level progress (benchmark students) in the standards aligned system and who demonstrate social competence.

Foundation/Benchmark Interventions

- High quality, effective instruction designed to engage and challenge students
- Clear and high expectations for student learning and behavior
- Effective support to enhance student engagement in the learning process and to promote school completion
- 4Sight benchmark assessments or other periodic progress monitoring benchmark assessments

Tier 2: Strategic Interventions for Some Students

Definition: Academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies, and practices designed for some students who are not making expected progress in the standards aligned system and who are **at risk** for academic and behavioral failure. Students require additional academic and behavioral support to successfully engage in the learning process and succeed in the standards aligned system.

Strategic Interventions

- Standards aligned instruction with supplemental, small group instruction which may include specialized materials
- Use of standard protocol interventions - A standard protocol intervention is scientifically research-based and has a high probability of producing change for large numbers of students. It is usually designed to be used in a standard manner across students and is typically delivered in small groups.
- Scientifically research-based interventions
 - Academic content areas (reading, mathematics)
 - Behavior
- Specialists assist with strategic instruction in the general education classroom and small group instruction as needed

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions for a Few Students

Definition: Academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies and practices designed for a few students who are significantly below established grade-level benchmarks in the standards aligned system or who demonstrate significant difficulties with behavioral and social competence.

Intensive Interventions

- Use of standard protocols interventions
- May use supplemental instructional materials for specific skill development
- Small intensive, flexible groups
- Additional tutoring provided by specialists as part of the school day
- Instructional changes based on data based decision making