GUIDING TOOLS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING (GTIPS)
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 <strong>Guiding Principles:</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Meeting the Needs of All Students</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 <strong>Making Connections:</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Aligning Practices, Efforts,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Commitments, and Initiatives</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 <strong>Continuous Improvement:</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Problem-Solving Process</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 <strong>Team Engagement</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 <strong>Special Education Eligibility Decisions</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) developed the *Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem-Solving (GTIPS)* manual with the invaluable assistance of the writers and reviewers listed in the acknowledgements beginning on page iii.

The purpose of this manual is to assist districts as they implement and support data-based decision making using a systematic problem-solving process at all levels of operation: district level, school level, grade level (pre-kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and high school), classroom level, student subgroup level, and individual student level.

This manual aligns directly with Florida’s implementation of problem-solving and response to instruction/intervention (PS-RtI) in every school and sets the stage for schools to approach instructional decisions from a broader context of quality instruction, intervention, and assessment to address the learning and behavioral needs of all students.

Additionally, this manual addresses ways in which districts can assess whether their core curricula and instruction, as well as interventions, are effective and, in turn, use such data in various decision-making processes for students. Decisions about the effectiveness of core instruction and interventions must be made for all students, not just those who may be struggling. Therefore, it is important that district and school leadership teams take an active role in examining curricular materials, instructional methodologies, the learning environment, and other practices across school settings to determine their effectiveness and assess their impact on academic and behavioral student learning.

The Florida Department of Education views PS-RtI as an avenue to continue to work collaboratively to significantly improve the way in which the needs of students enrolled in Florida schools are addressed so that students, at all points on the continuum of educational need, receive assistance that is effective. Accordingly, the Department looks forward to continuing unified efforts to support the implementation of PS-RtI across the state.
Acknowledgements

This manual was developed and reviewed through a collaborative effort between the Florida Department of Education and selected Florida experts and stakeholder representatives. The writers were charged with examining the conceptual framework of Response to Instruction/Intervention in relation to current infrastructure, federal regulations, and state rules, as well as to review guidance materials from Florida and other states, to ensure the comprehensive content of this manual. In addition to the writers listed below, over 100 stakeholder representatives were asked to review and provide feedback on the contents of this publication. The Department wishes to thank the writers and reviewers for their various contributions and for their time, support, and dedication to this publication.

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Introduction

The mission of the State Board of Education, as stated in section 1008.31, Florida Statutes (F.S.), is to increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system by providing them with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities and to maintain an accountability system that measures student progress toward the following goals:

- Highest student achievement
- Seamless articulation and maximum access
- Skilled workforce and economic development
- Quality efficient services

Ultimately, the role of the education system is to prepare every student for life beyond formal schooling. To this end, it is the position of the Department that the problem-solving and response to instruction/intervention (PS-RtI) framework represents a logic and set of core beliefs, including the systematic use of a problem-solving process that must be integrated seamlessly into educational initiatives throughout Florida. Ideally, this integration should be evident within school improvement efforts, student progression plans, and the development and implementation of K–12 Comprehensive Reading Plans to provide the legal structure for the implementation of PS-RtI in districts across the state. Florida’s Statewide PS-RtI Plan was disseminated in 2008 and is accessible at Florida’s RtI website (http://www.florida-rti.org/flMod/fits.htm). The plan outlines a framework for statewide implementation of PS-RtI through the establishment of an infrastructure that includes district-based leadership teams (DBLT) implementing district-based plans to support school-based leadership teams (SBLT) implementing school-based plans.

As stated in Florida’s Statewide PS-RtI Plan (2008) “…all schools in Florida should ensure evidence-based practices, instructionally relevant assessments, systematic problem-solving to meet all students’ needs, data-based decision making, effective professional development, supportive leadership, and meaningful student and parent involvement. These are the foundation principles of an RtI system, which provides us the framework to elevate the efficacy of our statewide improvement efforts.” The plan defines RtI as the practice of providing (1) high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and (2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to (3) make important educational decisions. PS-RtI is an ongoing process of using student performance and related data to guide instructional decisions and intervention decisions for ALL students. It is a multi-tiered, problem-solving model of prevention, early intervention, and use of educational resources to address
student needs. PS-RtI matches instructional strategies and supports to student need in an informed, ongoing approach for planning, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum, the instruction, and related supports.

It is imperative to consider specific types of decisions for students, such as eligibility for special education services, in the larger context of the systemwide PS-RtI implementation. More important than its role in making eligibility decisions, PS-RtI is about creating and sustaining learning environments that are effective and lead to desired outcomes for all students. Consequently, the PS-RtI framework outlined in this manual has a significant impact on instruction and assessment practices in Florida schools.

Ultimately, this manual provides Florida schools and districts with detailed information on the process for the collection of student performance data through the systemwide implementation of the PS-RtI framework and delineates how those data can be used to assist with making important educational decisions for all students.
CHAPTER 1

Guiding Principles:
Meeting the Needs of All Students

Purpose

In June of 2008, the FDOE published a *Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI) Implementation Plan* that provided the initial, formal, state-level framework to assist districts with critical components, definitions, and applications to support the development of schoolwide PS-RtI implementation. The plan is accessible at Florida's Response to Instruction/Intervention website at http://www.florida-rti.org/flMod/fits.htm. The publication of the statewide implementation plan marks a significant point in our state’s development, reflecting our state-level, collective intent to engage in large-scale systems change.

Since 2004, Florida has engaged in continuous efforts to determine how systematic problem solving and the RtI framework integrate the various elements of Florida’s education system and how the PS-RtI logic affects resource allocation and access through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As elements of our system grow and change, it is important that we continue to examine how PS-RtI logic affects Florida’s system as a whole, rather than applying procedures in isolation.

The *Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem Solving (GTIPS)* manual illustrates the comprehensive way in which PS-RtI is universally applied to decision making in Florida, including, *but not limited to*, decisions related to eligibility for special education services and supports. The purpose of GTIPS is to:

- Guide the application of district- and schoolwide problem solving within the RtI framework as a systemwide school improvement model
• Provide districts and schools with the practical decision-making tools that maintain the integrity of the problem-solving process within the RtI framework

• Reinforce the purpose of effective instructional decision making to improve the effects of instruction for all students while acknowledging its role in evaluation and eligibility decisions related to special education

Foundation Beliefs

Florida’s educators who are involved in the systematic PS-RtI implementation share the following beliefs about the ideal educational conditions for promoting student achievement. Using the following beliefs to guide our efforts is one way to ensure consistent movement toward maximizing student achievement:

1. Highly effective personnel deliver scientific, research-based instruction and evidence-based practices.

2. Curriculum and instructional approaches have a high probability of success for most students.

3. Instruction is differentiated to meet individual learning needs.

4. Reliable, valid, and instructionally relevant assessments include the following:

   • **Screening Measures**: Assessment tools designed to collect data for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of core instruction and identifying students needing more intensive interventions and support

   • **Diagnostic Measures**: Formal or informal assessment tools that measure skill strengths and weaknesses, identify skills in need of improvement, and assist in determining why a problem is occurring

   • **Progress Monitoring Measures**: Ongoing assessment conducted for the purposes of guiding instruction, monitoring student progress, and evaluating instruction/intervention effectiveness

   • **Formative Measures**: Ongoing assessment embedded within effective teaching to guide instructional decisions

   • **Summative (Outcome) Measures**: Typically administered near the end of the school year to give an overall perspective of the effectiveness of the instructional program

5. Ongoing, systematic problem solving is consistently used, from enrollment to graduation for all students, to make decisions across a continuum of student needs.
6. Student data are used to guide meaningful decision making.

7. Professional development and follow-up coaching with modeling are provided to ensure effective instruction at all levels.

8. Actively engaged administrative leadership for data-based decision making is inherent to the school culture.

9. All students and their parent(s) are part of one proactive and seamless educational system.

Problem-Solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention Framework

PS-RtI is consistently defined in Florida as the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important instructional decisions. PS-RtI involves the systematic use of assessment data to most efficiently allocate resources in order to improve learning for all students. To ensure efficient use of resources, schools begin with the identification of trends and patterns using school-wide and grade-level data. Students who need instructional intervention beyond what is provided universally for positive behavior or academic content areas are provided with targeted, supplemental interventions delivered individually or in small groups at increasing levels of intensity.

The RtI framework is characterized by a continuum of academic and behavior supports reflecting the need for students to have fluid access to instruction of varying intensity levels. Three tiers describe the level and intensity of the instruction/interventions provided across the continuum. The three tiers are not, conversely, used to describe categories of students or specific instructional programs. The three tiers are characterized as follows:

**Tier 1: Core Universal Instruction and Supports** – General academic and behavior instruction and support designed and differentiated for all students in all settings

**Tier 2: Targeted Supplemental Interventions and Supports** – More focused, targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support *in addition to and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum and instruction*

**Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Interventions and Supports** – The most intense (increased time, narrowed focus, reduced group size) instruction and intervention based upon individual student need provided *in addition to and aligned with core and supplemental academic and behavior, curriculum, instruction, and supports*
The problem-solving process is critical to making the instructional adjustments needed for continual improvement in both student level of performance and rate of progress and is critical for assessing (through students’ response) the effectiveness of the instruction/interventions provided. Throughout the continuum of instruction and intervention, problem solving is used to match instructional resources to educational need. *Teams continue to engage in problem solving to ensure that student success is achieved and maintained.* The four critical parts of the on-going problem-solving cycle as a consistent way of work for teams are as follows:

I. **Define the problem** by determining the difference between what is expected and what is occurring. Ask, “What specifically do we want students to know and be able to do when compared to what they do know and are able to do?” When engaged in problem solving at the individual student level, the team should strive for accuracy by asking, “What exactly is the problem?”

II. **Analyze the problem** using data to determine why the issue is occurring. Generate hypotheses (reasons why students are not meeting performance goals) founded in evidence-based content area knowledge, alterable variables, and instructionally relevant domains. Gather assessment data to determine valid/nonvalid hypotheses. Link validated hypotheses to instruction/intervention so that hypotheses will lead to evidence-based instructional decisions. Ask, “Why is/are the desired goal(s) not occurring? What are the barriers to the student(s) doing and knowing what is expected?” Design or select instruction to directly address those barriers.

III. **Develop and implement a plan** driven by the results of the team’s problem analysis by establishing a performance goal for the group of students or the individual student and developing an intervention plan to achieve the goal. Then delineate how the student’s or group of students’ progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be supported. Ask, “What are we going to do?”

IV. **Measure response to instruction/interventions** by using data gathered from progress monitoring at agreed upon intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan based on the student’s or group of students’ response to the intervention. Progress-monitoring data should directly reflect the targeted skill(s). Ask, “Is it working? If not, how will the instruction/intervention plan be adjusted to better support the student’s or group of students’ progress?” Team discussion centers on how to maintain or better enable learning for the student(s).

For an illustration of the multi-tiered framework, the problem-solving cycle, and considerations for progress monitoring at each tier, see Figure 1 – Progress Monitoring within Florida’s Problem-Solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention Framework.
Progress Monitoring within Florida’s Problem-Solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention Framework

**Core, Universal Monitoring**
- Research-based, high-quality, general education instruction and support
- Screening and benchmark assessments for all students
- Assessments occur for all students
- Data collection continues to inform instruction
- If less than approximately 80% of students are successful given core, universal instruction, engage in Tier 1 level problem solving

**Targeted, Supplemental Monitoring**
- Interventions are based on data revealing that students need more than core, universal instruction
- Interventions and progress monitoring are targeted to specific skills to remediate or enrich, as appropriate
- Progress monitoring occurs more frequently than at the core, universal level to ensure that the intervention is working
- If more than approximately 15% of students are receiving support at this level, engage in tier one and tier two level, systemic problem solving

**Intensive, Individualized Monitoring**
- Intensive interventions based on individual student needs
- Students receiving prolonged interventions at this level may be several grade levels behind or above the one in which they are enrolled
- Progress monitoring occurs most often to ensure maximum acceleration of student progress
- If more than approximately 5% of students are receiving support at this level, engage in tier one and tier two level, systemic problem solving

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**Academics and/or Behavior**

**Define**
What’s the problem?

**Analyze**
Why is it occurring?

**Implement**
What are we going to do about it?

**Evaluate**
Is it working?

---

**Few**

**Some**

---

Guiding Principles
The application of the problem-solving cycle across the three tiers is an essential component of a functional PS-RtI system. The underpinning idea is that the level of support a student needs to be successful exists on a continuum. The continuum includes students needing no support beyond the differentiated core curriculum and instruction to those needing extraordinary support. Tiered resources are arranged along that continuum such that students have access to instruction/intervention at a level of intensity commensurate with their need. For this tiered arrangement of resources to result in maximum student outcomes, instruction within each tier must be effective for large numbers of students.

When this is not the case, the four steps of the problem-solving process are applied to facilitate decision making to improve the effectiveness of the instruction/intervention delivered. For example, if the third grade core package of services delivered in math results in only 50 percent of the students meeting grade-level benchmarks, the four problem-solving steps are implemented with a focus on Tier 1 so that the team may (1) identify the discrepancy between what the students are able to do and what we want them to do, (2) generate hypotheses as to why that discrepancy exists, (3) link data-verified instructional changes to those hypotheses, and (4) measure student(s) response to the adjusted instruction. The same process is applied at subsequent tiers if the measured level of effectiveness of the services provided at that tier does not meet expectation. See Table 1 – Imperative Questions, which includes important questions for teams to address in order to guide discussions about the effectiveness of instruction at each tier.

The effectiveness of each tier of instruction must be monitored to ensure the strength of the entire system. The problem-solving process is a recursive, self-correcting, ongoing methodology used for effective decision making at all levels within the system. This logic and theme of data-based decision making is embedded in a variety of existing structures such as school improvement, student progression, reading plans, positive behavior support, the continuous improvement model, and district policies and procedures.
Imperative questions to ask while engaging in problem solving at the core, supplemental, and intensive levels include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1: Core Instruction and Universal Supports</th>
<th>Are students provided with well-delivered, scientific, research-based core instruction? How is this verified?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What assessment tools or processes are used to identify instructional needs and the students' response to instruction?</td>
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<td>Is the core instruction/support effective?</td>
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<td>• What percent of students are achieving standards/benchmarks/behavioral expectations (approximately 80 percent or more)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What percent of students in subgroups are achieving standards/benchmarks/behavioral expectations (approximately 80 percent or more)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If addressing an individual student's needs, what percent of students in their subgroup are achieving benchmarks/standards/behavioral expectations (approximately 80 percent)?</td>
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<td>If core instruction is not effective,</td>
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<td>• Is the curriculum appropriately matched to the needs of the students?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Is support provided for implementation fidelity?</td>
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<td>To what extent is the school-based leadership team engaged in Tier 1-level problem solving in order to increase the effectiveness of core instruction/behavioral supports?</td>
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<td>How are parents and students involved or engaged in supporting effective core instruction/behavioral supports?</td>
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<td>What is the decision rule to determine if student(s) will require supplemental and more intensive, individualized intervention/support?</td>
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</table>
| Tier 2: Supplemental Interventions and Supports | What specific supplemental intervention/support is planned to improve the performance of students who need additional instruction and support (more academic-engaged time, more focused intervention, smaller group, type of delivery, methodology, in addition to and aligned with core instruction, etc.)? Consider at least six pieces of information:  
- Amount of additional time  
- Focus of the intervention and support  
- Specific instructional strategies/behavioral support  
- Method and frequency of progress-monitoring assessments  
- Evidence of fidelity  
- Sufficiency of intervention/support |
| --- | --- |
| | How is the supplemental intervention implemented?  
- Academic-Engaged Time – How much more time is provided?  
- Curriculum – What is used?  
- Personnel – Who, when, and where is it provided? Are the highest levels of instructional expertise and skill matched to the students with the most significant needs? How is support provided to ensure fidelity of implementation?  
- Parents – How are the student’s parents involved or engaged in supporting the interventions? |
| | How effective is the supplemental instruction for groups of students who need additional instruction and support?  
- What assessments are used for ongoing data collection aligned with core instruction?  
- How frequently are assessments conducted? How frequently are they analyzed by the team?  
- How are the student’s parents engaged in the progress monitoring and analysis of level of performance and rate of progress?  
- How does the team determine whether the instruction/intervention is effective?  
- If the intervention is ineffective (poor or questionable student response), how does the team monitor and support implementation fidelity?  
- What is the decision rule to determine if student(s) will require more intensive, individualized intervention/support? |
## Table 1
### Imperative Questions (continued)

| Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Intervention and Support | What specific intensive, individualized intervention is planned to improve the level of performance and the rate of progress of the individual student (e.g., more academic-engaged time, more focused intervention, smaller group, type of delivery, methodology, in addition to and aligned with core/supplemental instruction)? Consider at least six pieces of information:  
- Amount of additional time  
- Focus of the instruction/intervention  
- Specific instructional/behavioral strategies  
- Evidence of fidelity  
- Sufficiency of instruction/support  
- Method and frequency of progress-monitoring assessments |
| --- | --- |
| Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Intervention and Support | How is the intensive, individualized intervention delivered?  
- Academic-Engaged Time – How much more time is needed?  
- Curriculum – What does the student need?  
- Personnel – Who, when, and where is it provided? Are the highest levels of instructional expertise and skill being matched to the students with the most significant needs? How is support provided to ensure fidelity of implementation?  
- Parents – How are the student’s parents involved or engaged in supporting interventions to increase the students’ level of performance and rate of progress? |
| Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Intervention and Support | How effective is the intensive, individualized intervention for the student?  
- What assessments are used for ongoing data collection?  
- How frequently are assessments conducted? How frequently are they analyzed by the team?  
- How, and to what degree, are the student’s parents involved or engaged in the progress monitoring and analysis of the student’s level of performance and rate of progress?  
- How unique is the student’s response in comparison to peers?  
- How do teams determine whether the intervention is effective?  
- What is the decision rule to determine any necessary adjustments to the instruction/interventions?  
- If the intervention is ineffective (poor or questionable student response), how does the team monitor and support implementation fidelity? |
CHAPTER 2

Making Connections: Aligning Practices, Efforts, Commitments, and Initiatives

“Begin with the idea that the purpose of the system is student achievement, acknowledge that student needs exist on a continuum rather than in typological groupings, and organize resources to make educational resources available in direct proportion to student need.”

David Tilly, Director, Innovation and Accountability, Heartland Area Education Agency

The FDOE and districts throughout the state share the goal and responsibility of increasing the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system (section 1008.31, F.S.). An efficient and effective public education system is fundamental to Florida’s ability to make significant social and economic contributions in our national and global marketplace. Evidence of a national emphasis on reforming public education to prepare students to be competitive in the 21st century global economy is found in federal legislation such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 2002 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004.

Data-based decision making, the use of evidence-based practices, and accountability for student performance are also embedded in important federal legislation that impacts education. Congress authorized the ESEA of 2002 to hold schools accountable for the educational outcomes of students. ESEA requires states to ensure that all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve predetermined levels of academic proficiency as determined through statewide assessments. Implementation of evidence-based instructional practices is mandated to increase the percentage of students who demonstrate proficiency on statewide assessments. Similar to ESEA, the IDEA
focuses on the use of data and research-based practices in the selection of curriculum and pedagogy. Schools must make decisions regarding how to respond to these mandates using all of the available educational expertise by blending resources and unifying efforts within PS-RtI implementation.

The RtI framework is the practice of providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and using data over time (learning rate over time and level of performance) to make important educational decisions. It is the position of the FDOE that this practice represents a logic and set of core beliefs, including the systematic use of a problem-solving process that must be integrated seamlessly into school improvement plans, student progression plans, K-12 comprehensive reading plans, differentiated accountability plans, etc. This problem-solving process must be applied to all learners, which includes general education students from pre-k through graduation, students with disabilities, and advanced and gifted learners, in order to elevate the efficacy of statewide improvement efforts and processes.

The PS-RtI framework supports the implementation of FDOE requirements and can be a catalyst for student learning by supporting the implementation of services to improve the academic and behavior performance of all students, including students at risk for educational failure. The framework also becomes a catalyst for adult learning through embedded professional development.

Important education practices, such as Lesson Study, which is an ongoing professional development process used within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to allow teachers the opportunity to create a model for high-quality instructional practices, contribute to this framework by matching the method of quality instruction to students’ needs. Information about the Lesson Study approach can be found at http://www.flbsi.org/pdf/Lesson%20Study%20TAG_Final.pdf. Other examples of how various initiatives are connected to PS-RtI, such as Florida’s reading initiatives, the Next Generation PreK-20 Education Strategic Plan, and the State Performance Plan, are as follows.

The PS-RtI framework supports Florida’s reading initiatives by:

1. Collaborating with Just Read, Florida! (JRF) and the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) to increase the number of schools using problem-solving, data-based decision making at early grades to prevent reading failure

2. Including PS-RtI components in district K–12 Comprehensive Reading Plans

3. Increasing the number of early grade interventions to facilitate early identification and intervention for students at risk for reading failure
4. Decreasing the percent of students in need of special education services through the use of systematic problem solving as a prevention and early intervention process rather than one that requires the student to fall behind prior to receiving assistance

The PS-RtI framework supports the Next Generation PreK-20 Education Strategic Plan areas by:

1. **Improving Quality of Teaching in the Education System**: PS-RtI provides teachers with the skills to identify at-risk students, to improve performance in the use of student-based data, and to improve performance in the delivery of evidence-based interventions.

2. **Professional Development** – Increasing the number of leadership training opportunities throughout the state.

3. **Strengthening Foundation Skills**: PS-RtI is an evidence-based system to significantly improve the academic and behavioral skills of low-performing students.

4. **Closing the Gap**: PS-RtI is an evidence-based method to significantly reduce disproportionality and improve performance for minority populations, students from low socio-economic environments, and English language learners (ELLs).

5. **High School Graduation**: PS-RtI results in the improvement in performance of students and early intervention will improve graduation rates in the future.

6. **Aligning Resources to Strategic Goals**: PS-RtI has proven to be a more efficient way of delivering services and deploying personnel, resources, and time allocation.

Florida’s IDEA, Part B, State Performance Plan (SPP), consists of 20 Performance Indicators that include specific targets to ensure that Florida’s students with disabilities are receiving a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The FDOE has a responsibility to support districts in achieving the performance targets for each indicator and for reporting progress annually to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Access Florida’s SPP and Annual Performance Report on the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, website at [http://www.fldoe.org/ese/](http://www.fldoe.org/ese/).

The PS/RtI framework assists districts in addressing applicable SPP indicators in primarily two ways:
1. Problem Solving: The focus of this framework is to provide districts and schools with a blueprint for problem solving that addresses district, school, and student-level problems. The entire focus is on systems change and the process of implementing reform efforts that improve student performance, school climate, and family participation.

2. Program Evaluation: Schools and districts are able to use data resulting from PS-RtI implementation to identify areas that require targeted assistance and to document the effects of interventions implemented to address those areas. In particular, this framework is able to provide assistance to districts and schools in addressing disproportionality in the identification of students with disabilities, their educational placements, and discipline.

The quality implementation of PS-RtI directly impacts the SPP indicators. Specific details of each indicator are located in the SPP and can be accessed directly at http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/RevisedSPP.pdf.

Over the past three years, important lessons learned from Florida’s Statewide Problem Solving and Response to Intervention Project reveal a need to make connections and blend resources throughout this process of systems change. As schools and districts confront the challenges involved in building consensus, making connections, aligning efforts, developing an infrastructure, and responding to legislative initiatives, it is essential not to reduce the focus of PS-RtI to its special education relevance. We must remember that the need for RtI-based reforms emerged because of ineffective practices within our previous system, as well as the availability of improved practices based on research. More importantly, the crucial point to understand is that successful implementation of PS-RtI principles encompasses general education initiatives that impact all students. Special education application for the purposes of determining eligibility for specific education programs becomes secondary to the broader implementation.

Therefore, leaders must help all educators acknowledge the need for change and embrace a shared purpose of ensuring all students learn at high levels and take collective responsibility for achieving this shared purpose. This represents a shift from operating within territorial silos to depending on blended expertise and resources. See Table 2 – Matrix for Making Connections, which district- and school-based leadership teams can use to blend expertise and resources across state-, district-, and school-level initiatives.
## Table 2
### Matrix for Making Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Board of Education Mission</th>
<th>PS/RtI</th>
<th>Professional Learning Communities &amp; Lesson Study</th>
<th>System for School Improvement: Differentiated Accountability Plan (DAP)</th>
<th>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system by providing them with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities and to maintain an accountability system that measures student progress toward the following goals:</td>
<td>Provide high quality instruction and intervention matched to students’ needs</td>
<td>Focus on Learning</td>
<td>Educator Quality, Curriculum aligned and paced, Lesson Study, and Florida’s Continuous Improvement Model</td>
<td>Educator Quality; Coordination and Integration; Implementation of evidence-based strategies; Professional development aligned with strategies</td>
<td>ESEA, IDEA, FDOE Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Rules, F.S. 1008 Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP), K–12 Reading Plan</td>
<td>Just Read, Florida! Florida Center for Reading Research Problem Solving and Response to Intervention Project Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project Office of Early Learning, FDOE Differentiated Accountability, Regional Teams Bureau of School Improvement, FDOE Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, FDOE Florida Response to Intervention, FDOE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use data over time to make important educational decisions</td>
<td>Focus on Results</td>
<td>Instructional Review, Self-Study, Monitoring process and plans, classroom observations, interviews, review of school and student data, and the writing of action plans.</td>
<td>Needs assessment to identify trends and patterns; Processes to monitor, determine effectiveness of strategies; Evaluation tool</td>
<td>ESEA, IDEA, FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 PMP, K–12 Reading Plan, SPP, SIP, DAP</td>
<td>IDEA, FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 PMP, SPP, K–12 Reading Plan, SIP, DAP</td>
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<td>Implement team processes and structures</td>
<td>Collaborative Culture</td>
<td>Regional Support Team, Leadership, School improvement planning</td>
<td>PLC, Coaching, Monitoring, Fidelity of Implementation, Rtl Leadership Team, Lead Literacy Team</td>
<td>FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 PMP, SPP, K–12 Reading Plan, SIP, DAP</td>
<td>FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 Progress Monitoring Plan, K–12 Reading Plan, Plan, SPP, SIP, DAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement the Problem-Solving Process:</td>
<td>Inquiry Cycle</td>
<td>Increase schools’ capacity for data analysis and problem identification, problem analysis, goal setting, development and implementation of intervention plans, and monitoring of intervention effectiveness</td>
<td>Identify current level of performance &amp; expected level of performance; identify anticipated barriers; evaluation to determine response to intervention</td>
<td>Florida Response to Intervention, FDOE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Problem ID</td>
<td>Multi-tiered service delivery model within which the intensity and type of interventions vary depending on a school’s grade, percent of adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements met, and the number of years the school has failed to meet AYP criteria</td>
<td>Goals &amp; strategies aligned to support the differentiated needs of the learners in the school</td>
<td>ESEA, IDEA, FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 PMP, K–12 Reading Plan, SPP, SIP, DAP</td>
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<td>2. Problem Analysis</td>
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<td>3. Plan Development and Implementation</td>
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<td>4. Response to Intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use tiered supports and decision protocols</td>
<td>Action Experimentation</td>
<td>Multi-tiered service delivery model within which the intensity and type of interventions vary depending on a school’s grade, percent of adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements met, and the number of years the school has failed to meet AYP criteria</td>
<td>Goals &amp; strategies aligned to support the differentiated needs of the learners in the school</td>
<td>ESEA, IDEA, FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 PMP, K–12 Reading Plan, SPP, SIP, DAP</td>
<td>FDOE ESE Rules, F.S. 1008 Progress Monitoring Plan, K–12 Reading Plan, Plan, SPP, SIP, DAP</td>
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</table>

- **Highest student achievement**
- **Seamless articulation and maximum access**
- **Skilled workforce and economic development**
- **Quality, efficient services**
CHAPTER 3

Continuous Improvement:
The Problem-Solving Process

Needs Assessment

Florida is engaged in a long-term, sustainable, systems change effort. As educators, we must continually seek to elevate the effectiveness of our system by building our capacity to scale-up the effective implementation of PS-RtI. When scaling up the PS-RtI effort within a district and/or school, a needs assessment can serve dual purpose—both to identify areas in need of development and to mark progress toward the implementation of a functional PS-RtI system for decision making. See Appendix A, *Self-Assessment of Problem-Solving Implementation (SAPSI)*, which is tool to help district- and school-based leadership teams address the aforementioned dual purpose. The SAPSI includes a guide for administration that provides descriptions and examples for each item. The SAPSI is organized around a three-component model of systems change. Thus, the items on the SAPSI are meant to assess the degree to which schools implementing the PS/RtI model are (1) achieving and maintaining consensus among key stakeholders, (2) creating and maintaining the infrastructure necessary to support implementation, and (3) engaging in the implementation of practices and procedures consistent with the framework.

Making Systemwide Changes

The most significant factor driving educational reform is the focus on outcomes for all students and not just those being considered for services through IDEA. Within this framework, the core question becomes “What do we want students to know and be able to do?” Responding to this question requires educators to know what is expected of students academically in all core subject and special areas throughout the course of the academic year. In addition, districts should have well-defined behavioral expectations that serve as the nonnegotiable benchmarks for behavior. To illustrate the broad range of students who benefit
from existing within a school culture of PS-RtI, consider the application of systematic problem solving to gifted and high-ability learners. Gifted and high-ability learners may also have needs beyond core instruction (Tier 1), and therefore require supplemental interventions for acceleration and enrichment purposes. For related information, access resources on the Working on Gifted Issues (WOGI) website at http://www.unfwogi.com/rti.

In Florida, the expectation that schools provide effective instruction and support to foster success for all students is embedded in Rule 6A-6.0331, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), *General Education Intervention Procedures, Identification, Evaluation, Reevaluation and the Initial Provision of Exceptional Education Services*, which states that “it is the local school district’s responsibility to develop and implement coordinated general education intervention procedures for all students who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment.”

This rule includes educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction. This leads to a need for reconsidering professional development for teachers and other school staff and instruction in the use of adaptive and instructional software as interventions that may be appropriate.

When educators and stakeholders consider the question “What do we want students to know and be able to do?,” improved academic and behavioral outcomes result. This question is also central when examining response to Tier 1 instruction/intervention (i.e., when considering response to class or grade-level academic and/or behavioral expectations). To effectively implement PS-RtI, Tier 1 questions (see Table 1 – *Imperative Questions*) regarding the efficiency of core instruction must be addressed as a priority to examining individual student concerns within the PS-RtI framework.

**Steps of the Problem-Solving Process**

Regardless of whether examining the effects of core instruction (Tier 1) or determining the need for more intensive supports for groups or individual students (Tier 2 and Tier 3), teams should engage in and follow a systematic problem-solving process. Florida’s PS-RtI model includes a four-step problem-solving process, which is introduced in Chapter 1 of this manual. The four steps of the problem-solving process are as follows:

- **Step I: Problem Identification** – What exactly is the problem?
- **Step II: Problem Analysis** – Why is the problem occurring?
- **Step III: Intervention Design and Implementation** – What exactly are we going to do about it?
- **Step IV: Response to Instruction/Intervention** – Is the plan working?
Within this cyclical process, the problem to be systematically addressed is defined as the discrepancy between what is expected of a student in a given age or grade level and the current, observed level of performance. Hence the existence of a deficiency is defined, in part, by the discrepancy between expected and observed performance as opposed to any former discrepancies, such as the discrepancy between ability and achievement. Central to problem solving is an analysis of factors that impede performance beyond those that may (or may not) reside within the learner. As a result, all factors that impact learning (i.e., instruction, curriculum, environment, and learner variables) are considered through the analysis of student performance data when assessing effectiveness of instruction/intervention and determining students’ instructional needs.

School teams can use *Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheets*, found in Appendix B, to systematically address the steps of PS-RtI. The components within the *Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheets* capture many of the elements addressed in Rule 6A.6-0331, F.A.C. The school team members use critical thinking skills in order to apply the four steps of problem solving effectively.

**Problem Identification (Step I):** During problem identification, teams are asked to consider curricular and behavioral expectations as well as data to determine peer performance. Consideration must be given to the percentage of peers demonstrating performance similar to that of the targeted student as the response may lead to the hypothesis that the issue is related to instructional, curricular, or environmental variables. As demonstrated in Figure 2 – Decision-Making Rubric for Use with Schoolwide Screening, when 20 percent or more students show similar problems, the likelihood increases that intervening at a group or systemic level may result in the greatest improvement for the most students through efficient use of available resources.

Conducting a gap analysis can help teams determine at which Tier they should intervene (regardless of whether or not the student receives special education services). Essentially teams must ask, “Is it a large group problem, a small group problem, or an individual student problem?” More importantly, by identifying the percentage of students with similar problems, educators can determine if class-wide instruction should be the focus or if individual/small groups of students would benefit from targeted, supplemental intervention. Figure 2 – Decision Making Rubric for Use with Schoolwide Screening, can assist teams in determining how to focus the problem-solving effort. If the discrepancy between the benchmark and peer group performance is large and the discrepancy between peer group performance and the student’s performance is minimal, it would not be appropriate to automatically determine that the student would benefit from special education. Nor would it be appropriate, in this example, to assume that we would only be focusing on an individual student. The Gap Analysis section of the *Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheets*, found in Appendix B, further illustrates this thinking.
Figure 2
Decision-Making Rubric for use with Schoolwide Screening

Is this an individual student problem or a larger systemic problem?

Are over 20% of students not meeting expectations?
Examine instruction, curriculum, and environment for needed adaptations and develop group intervention

Are between 5% and 20% of students not meeting expectations?
Develop small group intervention

Are 5% or fewer students not meeting expectations?
Go to problem definition

Go to intervention evaluation
Problem Analysis (Step II): During problem analysis, the team seeks the response to “Why is the problem occurring?” Teams develop hypotheses to explain why the problem is occurring and predict what might prevent the problem from occurring in the future. As the Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheets found in Appendix B illustrate, hypothesis statements are framed as “The problem is occurring because __________.” Subsequently, prediction statements are written as “If ______________ would occur, then the problem would be reduced.” Data are collected to confirm or reject the hypotheses that were developed. During this phase, it is important to determine if the problem reflects a skill deficit (i.e., “can’t do”) or motivation deficit (i.e., “won’t do”). For information on problem analysis and, more specifically, on hypotheses development, see the Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheets, found in Appendix B.

Intervention Planning and Implementation (Step III): During intervention planning and implementation, the team focuses on “What are we going to do about it?” Specifically, the Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheets found in Appendix B guide teams through the process of identifying who is responsible for intervention plan implementation, what will be done, when will it occur, and where will it occur. Components of the comprehensive intervention plan found in Appendix B, also include a support plan, intervention documentation, and monitoring the plan for determining student rate of progress.

Response to Instruction/Intervention (Step IV): Evaluating the students’ actual response to the instruction/intervention is a critical component of this model. Review and analysis of data are used to determine if the plan is working. The worksheet for Step IV, included in Appendix B, guides the team through thoughtful consideration of graphed data to determine if there has been a positive, questionable, or poor response to intervention.

Decision Rules

Response to instruction/intervention is considered positive when the gap between expected performance and observed performance is closing. Ideally, the point at which the target student will “come in range” of grade-level expectations—even if it is the long range—can be extrapolated. Questionable response to instruction/intervention exists when the rate at which the gap is widening slows considerably but is still widening, or when the gap stops widening but closure does not occur. The student(s) response to instruction/intervention is considered poor when the gap continues to widen with no change in rate of progress after the instruction/intervention is implemented.

The conditions of positive, questionable, or poor response to instruction/intervention result in different sets of decisions to be made, as is described and illustrated as follows:
Positive—Under positive conditions, the current instruction/intervention may be continued with the same or increased goal. Or the current level of instruction/intervention may be faded gradually to determine whether the same level of intensity of instruction is necessary for student success. See Figure 3 – Decision Rules for Positive Response – Individual Student and Figure 4 - Decision Rules for Positive Response – Group of Students for illustrations of individual and group decision rules.

Figure 3
Decision Rules for Positive Response – Individual Student

Positive Response
- Gap is closing.
- Point at which target student(s) will “come in range” of target can be extrapolated—even if this is long range.

Potential Actions
- Continue intervention with current goal.
- Continue intervention with goal increased.
- Gradually fade intervention to determine if student(s) have acquired functional independence.

Figure 4
Decision Rules for Positive Response – Group of Student

Positive Response
- Gap is closing.
- Point at which target student(s) will “come in range” of target can be extrapolated—even if this is long range.

Potential Actions
- Continue intervention with current goal.
- Continue intervention with goal increased.
- Gradually fade intervention to determine if student(s) have acquired functional independence.
**Questionable**—When the response is questionable, the first question to be asked is one of intervention implementation fidelity—“Was the intervention implemented as intended?” If not, then supports to increase implementation fidelity are put in place. If implementation fidelity is demonstrated, then the intensity of the current instruction/intervention may be increased for a short period of time. If rate of progress improves, then instruction is continued at the more intense level. If the rate does not improve, then a return to Steps 1 and 2 of problem solving is necessary. See Figure 5 – Decision Rule for Questionable Response – Individual Student and Figure 6 – Decision Rule for Questionable Response – Group of Students for illustrations of individual and group decision rules.

**Figure 5**

**Decision Rule for Questionable Response – Individual Student**

**Questionable Response**
- Rate at which gap is widening slows considerably, but gap is still widening.
- Gap stops widening, but closure does not occur.

**Actions**
- Was intervention implemented as intended?
- If no—employ strategies to increase implementation integrity.
- If yes—increase intensity of current intervention for a short period of time and assess impact. If rate improves, continue. If rate does not improve, return to problem solving.

**Figure 6**

**Decision Rule for Questionable Response – Group of Students**

**Questionable Response**
- Rate at which gap is widening slows considerably, but gap is still widening.
- Gap stops widening, but closure does not occur.

**Actions**
- Was intervention implemented as intended?
- If no—employ strategies to increase implementation integrity.
- If yes—increase intensity of current intervention for a short period of time and assess impact. If rate improves, continue. If rate does not improve, return to problem solving.
Poor—When the response is poor, the same question of implementation fidelity is asked. Again, if implementation fidelity is problematic, supportive strategies to increase implementation fidelity are employed. If implementation integrity is good, then the steps of problem solving are retraced, asking: “Is the instruction/intervention aligned with the verified hypothesis, or are there other aligned interventions to consider?” (Intervention Design); “Are there other hypotheses to consider?” (Problem Analysis); and “Is the problem identified correctly?” (Problem Identification). See Figure 7 – Decision Rule for Poor Response – Individual Student and Figure 8 - Decision Rule for Poor Response – Group of Students for illustrations of individual and group decision rules.

Figure 7
Decision Rule for Poor Response – Individual Student

Poor Response
- Gap continues to widen with no change in rate.

Actions
- Was intervention implemented as intended?
  - If no—employ strategies to increase implementation integrity.
  - If yes—
    - Is intervention aligned with the verified hypothesis? (Intervention Design)
    - Are there other hypotheses to consider? (Problem Analysis)
    - Was the problem identified correctly? (Problem Identification)

Figure 8
Decision Rule for Poor Response – Group of Students

Poor Response
- Gap continues to widen with no change in rate

Actions
- Was intervention implemented as intended?
  - If no—employ strategies to increase implementation integrity.
  - If yes—
    - Is intervention aligned with the verified hypothesis? (Intervention Design)
    - Are there other hypotheses to consider? (Problem Analysis)
    - Was the problem identified correctly? (Problem Identification)
It is important that the first question to ask if the response is questionable or poor is whether the instruction/intervention was implemented with fidelity. The purpose of monitoring implementation fidelity is not to evaluate the teacher’s performance. Rather, it is to ensure that the team is making decisions based on what was actually provided to the student. Ultimately, the purpose for each component of PS-RtI is to increase student outcomes. Planning supports for the person delivering the instruction/intervention, such as training, coaching, documentation methods, and materials, helps the team monitor implementation fidelity. See Appendix C – Intervention Documentation Worksheets for a documentation method that addresses implementation fidelity.

For each level of response, teams either increase supports that will allow for implementation fidelity, continue with current instructional supports, adjust goals, increase intervention intensity, or reconsider hypotheses, depending on the student data.

**General Education Interventions**

In conjunction with the FDOE’s goal to increase student proficiency within a seamless system, the local school district is responsible for implementing a coordinated system of intervention procedures for each student needing additional academic and behavioral support (Rule 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C.). A coordinated, multi-tiered system of intervention support facilitates the success of all students and ensures that students receive the prevention and early intervention services that promote academic success. The general education interventions rule aligns with the statutory requirements to address the needs of students with instruction and intervention that is targeted to improve the student’s achievement (s. 1008.25(4), F.S.) and with the intent of IDEA to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Rule 6A-6.0331(1)(e), F.A.C., requires that schools implement evidence-based interventions to address the identified area(s) of concern in the general education environment. These interventions must be developed through a problem-solving process that uses student performance data to identify and analyze the area(s) of concern, select and implement interventions, and monitor the effectiveness of the interventions. The intensity and instructional focus of the interventions should match student need, and interventions must be implemented as designed and long enough for the interventions to have the expected effect. Ongoing progress monitoring must be conducted and used to evaluate the student’s progress and to revise the interventions when the interventions do not result in sufficient improvement. Therefore, in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(1)(e), F.A.C., taking responsibility for providing effective interventions that result in positive student response through general education resources is required.
Team Engagement

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in education has been widely reviewed and found to be highly linked to student learning and achievement. Reporting data to parents and involving them in decision making is critical for student success, and it is a requirement of both ESEA and IDEA. Schools must help facilitate parent understanding and involvement in this decision making.

Parental involvement is a key component for having an effective PS-RtI framework within a school. Schools need to include parent communication and input in all phases of the problem-solving process. Some districts have reported benefitting from reviewing their current parent involvement policies to ensure that they are in line with IDEA and ESEA. Suggestions regarding what level of involvement and communication should take place at each tier in the PS-RtI process are provided in the following paragraphs and summarized in Table 3 – Parent Involvement within a PS-RtI Framework.

Prior to the start of each school year, a plan should be developed for informing parents about PS-RtI. Districts and/or schools may wish to download or create parent handouts or brochures, such as Florida’s PS-RtI brochure for parents located at [http://www.florida-rti.org/RtI-Parent-Brochure.pdf](http://www.florida-rti.org/RtI-Parent-Brochure.pdf), which outlines what PS-RtI looks like within their school. A description of the PS-RtI should be included in the school’s handbook so that all parents have access to information about how their child’s school is implementing PS-RtI. Student services personnel, such as a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, can share additional information with parents as needed. Display boards, video clips, and PowerPoint presentations can be used to help describe PS-RtI concepts and benefits to children at teacher-student orientation meetings. Additional resources that support parent engagement are available at Florida’s RtI website at [http://www.florida-rti.org/](http://www.florida-rti.org/).
Different kinds of information should be shared with parents at different levels of the PS-RtI framework. Specific to Tier 1 instruction, data reflecting student progress within the core academic and/or behavioral curricula should be shared with parents of all students. During parent-teacher conferences, graphs of student progress should be provided with explanations regarding student performance. Strategies and materials for home instruction also should be shared. Also, parents may want to use a participation form to help them record notes during problem-solving meetings. See Appendix D – Parent Participation Notes for an example.

Students receiving Tier 2 supplemental instruction, in addition to the core academic and behavioral curricula, must be progress monitored more frequently. Reports of student progress also must be shared with parents more frequently at this level. Obtaining parent input and engaging parents at this phase is critical for student success. Parents should be offered specific support regarding skills that need improvement. It might be helpful to provide the parent with written documentation of what data have been collected, the intervention plan(s) put in place to improve skills, and how the plan(s) are monitored. For students receiving additional support through tutoring, schools should make efforts to communicate with the parents/tutor to help bridge the understanding of deficit skills and evidence-based interventions that are being used to address the areas of concern. This helps to ensure that the supplemental intervention being provided is aligned with the core instruction and supports.

Students receiving Tier 3 intensive interventions for specific academic or behavioral skills are progress monitored most frequently. Parents should be invited to participate in the problem-solving meetings to analyze their child’s progress (response to the Tier 3 interventions) and help make decisions about their instruction. Schools should encourage parents to document services that are being provided outside of the school day. Parents should also be provided with detailed graphs and clear explanations of their child’s response to instruction/intervention over time. If the team involved in problem solving is considering the need for evaluation procedures to potentially access special education resources, parents also must be informed of their procedural due process rights under IDEA.
Table 3

Parent Involvement within a Problem-Solving Response to Instruction/Intervention Framework

Parental involvement is a key component for having an effective PS-RtI framework within a school. Schools need to include parent communication and input in all steps of problem solving. Schools and parents benefit when parents are routinely provided information about the PS-RtI model, how parents can be involved, and how they can participate in this process. The following is an example of what level of involvement and communication should take place respective to the level of tiered instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>How to Involve Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>Preparation for opening of school</td>
<td>• Develop a campaign to inform the public regarding PS-RtI processes.</td>
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<td>• Include clear description of PS-RtI process in school handbook (parent and/or student).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Initiation of school year</td>
<td>• Send parent brochure or handout home to all parents reviewing processes initiated within the PS-RtI model to address needs of all students.</td>
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<td>• Disseminate information through conferences, websites, newsletters, and/or open houses to facilitate parents’ understanding of the problem-solving process and its benefit to their student(s).</td>
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<td>• Consider using resources, such as a PowerPoint, video, or a display board, at an open house or student orientations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Universal screenings</td>
<td>• Provide data reflecting student progress within the core curriculum for all parents at their request.</td>
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<td>• Involve parent in the intervention process. (Note: If we are teaching a targeted skill, the parent should know about this and be guided in helping the student at home to the extent the parent is willing and able.)</td>
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<td>• Consider giving the parent the Parent Participation Notes (Appendix D) as a way of helping them understand and document what help their child will be getting.</td>
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<td>• Consult with parent regarding any tutoring services the student may be receiving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Teams (content area, grade level, etc.) meet to identify students in need of targeted supports</td>
<td>• Obtaining parent input is critical. Solicit input from parents when appropriate.</td>
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<td>Documentation of progress</td>
<td>• Continue to send home reports and continuous progress-monitoring data reviewed by team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Involve parent in the intervention process. (Note: If we are teaching a targeted skill, the parent should know about this and be guided in helping the student at home to the extent the parent is willing and able.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consult with parent regarding any tutoring services the student may be receiving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Team meets to review progress and make instructional decisions</td>
<td>• Invite parents to participate in meetings and/or receive any of the data the team uses with a summary of the meeting in writing.</td>
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<td>• Encourage the parent to use the Parent Participation Notes (Appendix D).</td>
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<td>Decisions that result in a student spending more time in intensive instruction than typical peers</td>
<td>• Continue to communicate with parents and present them information on intervention plans and progress monitoring.</td>
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<td>• If a team is considering the need for an evaluation, communicate this need to the parents using the data collected during the intervention process.</td>
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</table>
**Educator Involvement**

Effective leadership is a vital component for a school to be successful within the PS-RtI framework. Collaboration among administrators, content area specialists, data specialists, and other school and district staff should represent instructionally relevant team membership. Problem-solving teams should be identified or created and used to problem solve at different levels (school level, grade level, class level, subgroup level, or student level) and may include various members, depending on the need. Though referred to with a wide variety of names, any team engaged in problem solving is considered a problem-solving team. Level of expertise, skill, and knowledge will determine the members of these teams, rather than title. Additionally, members of the problem-solving team will need to have a shared consensus regarding a clearly stated purpose of engaging in problem solving: to increase student learning, as is continually verified by students’ positive response to the instruction/interventions being provided.

The makeup of the team engaged in problem solving varies depending upon the purpose and level of the problem solving. Membership for effective problem solving at the school or grade level should include individuals who are knowledgeable about expected schoolwide (or grade level) academic and behavioral performance and rate of progress, and have an in-depth understanding of the specific challenges in the school. Members include, but are not limited to, administration, grade-level representation, intervention specialists (academic and behavioral), problem-solving facilitators, intervention support personnel, parents, and data coaches.

Problem solving teams at the individual student level should always include the parents of the student. Team members should be included according to their knowledge of the student, grade-level expectations, the problem solving process, evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessment to inform instruction. Members include the school administrator; a general education teacher; a special education teacher; someone knowledgeable in reading, math, and/or behavior; student service representatives; a problem-solving facilitator; and a data coach. Members should be added depending on the student’s needs.

When forming team membership at all levels of the framework, consider the following example. If the student requires acceleration or enrichment in one or more areas in order to remain engaged in the curriculum, then the specialist for gifted learners is an important member of the problem solving team. Administrators should consider all potential resources on staff, such as fine arts teachers, media specialists, etc. Depending on the nature of the problem, anyone the school employs may be identified as a valuable resource. Administrators should also consider existing teams, such as grade-level teams, that should engage in systematic problem solving at the Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels.
Responsibilities

The general role of the problem-solving team is to focus on improving academic and behavioral outcomes for students. In order to accomplish this task, the problem solving team will need to have certain core responsibilities. An effective problem solving team begins by reviewing student performance data (academic and/or behavioral) at the whole school, grade, class, and subgroup levels. When reviewing the data, it is important to identify any trends that may demonstrate an area of concern. Once an area is identified, the problem-solving team develops hypotheses as to why the problem is occurring. Once a team has verified one or more hypotheses, an intervention plan will be created to improve the area of concern. It will be essential to consider the resources available at the school and how best to use them. The problem-solving team will review the effectiveness of the intervention and adjust as needed. Refer to Chapter 3 for detailed descriptions of problem solving at each of the four steps in the process.

In order for meetings to be effective, problem-solving teams should consider the frequency and duration of their meetings as well as the roles and procedures used during the meetings. For instance, a school-level problem solving team may not need to meet as frequently as a grade- or individual-level team. It is also important to have a set of procedures that are consistently used during meetings to ensure that the time is spent efficiently. Problem-solving team meetings should conclude each occurrence with a written plan that outlines not only the intervention plan, including how progress and fidelity will be monitored, but also the on-going responsibilities of each of the team members. At least one member of the team should be proficient using the problem solving process systematically so that he or she can effectively facilitate the thinking process.
CHAPTER 5

Special Education Eligibility Decisions

There are multiple state board rules that require school districts to use a problem-solving process. They include:

- General Education Intervention Procedures, Identification, Evaluation, Reevaluation and the Initial Provision of Exceptional Education Services (Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.)

- Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C.)

- Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments and Qualifications and Responsibilities for the Speech-Language Pathologists Providing Language Services (Rule 6A-6.030121, F.A.C.)

- Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (Rule 6A-6.03016, F.A.C.)

School districts in Florida are required to use a problem-solving process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions (PS-RtI) when determining whether that student is, or continues to be, eligible for special education. The primary catalyst for these changes came from the 2004 reauthorization of the federal IDEA and the corresponding regulations issued in 2006. Specifically, 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 300.307 allows a state education agency to adopt criteria to identify students in the category of specific learning disabilities (SLD) using a process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions and requires school districts to use the established criteria.

Using information on how a student responds to scientifically-based instruction and intervention (i.e., PS- RtI) when determining whether a student is eligible for special education services represents a significant shift in practices used to
identify students with disabilities. The focus shifts away from identifying and diagnosing characteristics that are internal to the student and moves to identifying effective instruction and intervention. This redefines the target as the determination of those conditions that enable learning, rather than on identifying disabling conditions. When using a student’s response to intervention as a basis for special education eligibility decisions, ask the following questions:

- What is the discrepancy between the student’s level of performance and the peer group and/or standard?

- What is the student’s educational progress as measured by rate of improvement?

- What are the instructional needs of the student?

There are many advantages to using data collected within a PS-RtI system to support eligibility decisions over more traditional models of disability identification, including the following:

- Student needs are addressed proactively. The monitoring of student progress is early and frequent, which allows for scientifically based instruction and intervention to be delivered as soon as possible.

- The delivery of scientific, research-based instruction and intervention reduces the number of students who require resources through special education due to a mismatch between the instruction, curriculum, environmental conditions, and the student’s needs.

- Staff members spend their time focusing on finding what works for students and the conditions under which they are most successful instead of attempting to identify problems that are internal to the student and presumed to be stable across environments and across time.

- Eligibility determination is based more emphatically on educational need. Those with the greatest need are given the most support.

- Problem solving within the RtI framework continues when students receive special education supports, and the school team continues to work to provide instruction and interventions that result in the greatest progress for the student. The team continues to make regular and ongoing instructional decisions based on data, including when special education resources may no longer be necessary.
Consent and Evaluation Requirements When Determining Eligibility for Special Education

The integration of a PS-RtI framework in State Board of Education (SBE) rules has promoted new ways of thinking about addressing the needs of all students. Because Rule 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C., permits districts to conduct academic and behavioral evaluations when planning interventions in the general education setting, districts must clarify when parental consent is required and how to determine completion of the evaluation procedures when students are referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education.

The following questions and answers are intended to clarify requirements regarding consent and evaluation:

**What is an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and related services?**

Many parents and professionals use the term “evaluation” to mean a test, or battery of tests, that are scheduled and administered on a given date. Although an evaluation may include specific assessment instruments, in the context of IDEA and corresponding SBE rules, an evaluation refers to all of the procedures used to determine whether a student is a student with a disability and the nature and extent of the student’s special education and related service needs (Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(l), F.A.C.). An evaluation consists of all relevant assessment tools and strategies used to collect functional, developmental, and academic information about a student in order to determine specialized instructional need and if a student is eligible as a student with a disability. Therefore, an evaluation includes existing data on the student collected prior to obtaining parental consent (e.g., classroom performance; observations; interviews; screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic assessments; and district and state assessments) and any additional assessment procedures conducted subsequent to receipt of parental consent.

**What constitutes the need to obtain consent?**

Parental consent for an evaluation is required before the district conducts an initial evaluation to determine whether a student is eligible for special education and related services. Within an on-going, problem-solving process, there may come a time when the student’s response to intervention leads the team to suspect that the student might need special education and related services. The team must promptly obtain parental consent prior to conducting an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for special education in the following situations:

- When the student’s response to interventions indicates that intensive interventions are effective but require a high level of intensity and resources to sustain growth* or performance (this is empirically established by fading the intervention and measuring student response).
When the student’s response to interventions indicates that the student does not make adequate growth* given effective core instruction and intensive, individualized, evidence-based interventions.

When a parent initiates a request for an initial evaluation. If, upon review of the parent’s request, the district determines the evaluation is not appropriate, then the parent must be provided with written notice of its refusal to conduct the evaluation.

* Growth is measured relative to state-approved, grade-level benchmarks/standards or relative to behavioral expectations.

Consent is required whenever the district proposes to conduct assessment procedures for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education and related services. Therefore, once the team suspects a disability, consent is required for any subsequent assessment procedures, including the collection of additional progress-monitoring data.

Is consent required to conduct evaluations or assessment procedures that inform general education interventions?

Parental consent is not required if the sole purpose of obtaining assessment data is to inform instruction or intervention in general education (Rule 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C.). It is the purpose for which the assessment data are used, not the nature of the assessment procedures, that drives consent. If assessment and data collection procedures are conducted for the purpose of determining eligibility, then consent is required (Rule 6A-6.0331(4), F.A.C.).

How does the team determine what an evaluation should include?

As part of an initial evaluation, the team, including the parent, must review existing data on the student and, based on the review and input from the parents, identify what additional data are needed to determine eligibility and the nature and extent of special education need. In determining what additional data are needed, the team must ensure that the evaluation identifies all of the student’s special education and related services needs as well as establishes the presence of a disability. The evaluation must be individualized and comprehensive, requiring that the team address the unique circumstances of each student as well as the characteristics of the suspected disability.

The district is required to provide written notice of its proposal to evaluate the student. The notice must include a description of any evaluation procedures the district proposes to conduct, including both the administration of formal assessment instruments and the ongoing collection of progress-monitoring data, if such data will be used to determine eligibility. It is important that the team clarify what constitutes an “evaluation” when obtaining written consent from a parent.
How is the evaluation completion date determined?

The district must complete the evaluation within 60 school days that the student is in attendance after receiving parental consent, unless extended in writing by mutual agreement between the parents and the team (this extension only applies to specific learning disabilities per Rule 6A-6.03018(3)(b), F.A.C.). The evaluation is complete after the last evaluation procedure is conducted or when the team determines there is sufficient information to determine eligibility for special education. For preschool and nonpublic school students, the district has 60 school days to complete the evaluation. Once the evaluation is completed, the district must determine eligibility within a reasonable timeframe.

Could an evaluation to determine eligibility be completed without written parental consent?

Yes. OSEP provides policy guidance stating that parental consent for an evaluation is not required if the team of qualified professionals determines that existing data are sufficient to establish disability and educational need without conducting further evaluation. OSEP’s guidance reflects the U.S. Department of Education’s belief that a review of existing data would be sufficient to determine disability and need in limited circumstances. Examples of when consent to evaluate would not be required include children transitioning from Part C Early Steps to Part B services, when the assessment data Early Steps provided are sufficiently comprehensive to make an eligibility decision; or students have received comprehensive medical and educational evaluations as part of treatment provided in a rehabilitation center.

If a team concludes that existing data are sufficient to determine both the presence of a disability and the educational needs of the student, the parent must be given the opportunity to request further assessment even if the public agency determines that no additional assessment data are needed. As welcomed participants engaged in problem solving and educational planning, parents should always be aware and informed of proposed actions. The 60-day timeline does not apply if the evaluation is based on review of existing data and parent consent is not obtained. In these situations, the eligibility determination must occur promptly.

How can this be illustrated to school-based teams?

Details of the consent and evaluation process are illustrated in Figure 9 – Consent and Evaluation Flow Chart and Figure 10 – Consent for Evaluation within the Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention/Instruction Framework.
Figure 9
Consent and Evaluation Flowchart

Problem solving

PS/RtI Team proposes evaluation based on data indicating

Parent requests evaluation

Group of qualified professionals & parent review existing data

What additional data are needed to determine eligibility and educational needs?

Additional

District proposes initial evaluation

Conduct additional assessment procedures

Complete Evaluation (within 60 school days after consent)

Obtain Consent

No additional

Determine Eligibility
The district must either conduct the evaluation or provide the parent with written notice of refusal that includes the following: (1) a statement of what is being refused and the reason for the refusal; (2) the data sources upon which the refusal is based; (3) other options considered and why they were rejected; (4) any other factors relevant to the refusal; and (5) a statement that the parents have rights under the procedural safeguards, the means by which the parent can get a copy of them, and sources to contact for assistance in understanding them.

* The district must either conduct the evaluation or provide the parent with written notice of refusal that includes the following: (1) a statement of what is being refused and the reason for the refusal; (2) the data sources upon which the refusal is based; (3) other options considered and why they were rejected; (4) any other factors relevant to the refusal; and (5) a statement that the parents have rights under the procedural safeguards, the means by which the parent can get a copy of them, and sources to contact for assistance in understanding them.

Get consent when:
- The PS/RtI team has data that indicate that the student has not made adequate progress, after the provision of effective core instruction and intensive, individualized instruction for an appropriate amount of time.
- The PS/RtI team finds that intensive interventions are effective but require sustained and substantial effort that may include special education and related services.

Get consent when:
- At any time during the process, the parent requests an evaluation.

Figure 10
Consent for Evaluation within the Problem-Solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention Framework
Independent Evaluations

As part of an evaluation to determine whether a student has a disability and the education needs of the student, a group of professionals determining eligibility must review existing evaluation data, including evaluations and other information parents provide. Independent educational evaluations (IEEs) must meet the district’s criteria for conducting an evaluation, including qualifications of the examiner (Rule 6A-6.03311(6), F.A.C.). If the IEE meets the district’s criteria (including qualifications of the examiner) for conducting an evaluation, the results must be considered in decisions with respect to the provision of a FAPE to the student, but the district is not obligated to accept the recommendations of the IEE. The authority to determine the presence of a disability and educational need is placed with the team, which consists of a group of qualified professionals and the parent(s).

It is likely that districts will need to supplement the results of independent educational evaluations obtained by a parent, especially because the student’s response to intervention is an eligibility criterion. The criteria for determining eligibility should be clearly explained to parents and communicated with independent educational evaluators so that independent evaluations can provide assessment data relevant to determining disability and educational need. If a parent presents an independent evaluation that does not meet the district’s eligibility criteria, then the following should be explained to the parent: (1) the specific eligibility criterion needed and (2) the reason why the independent evaluation does not provide the information needed to determine eligibility.

Connecting Evaluation to Student Achievement

The primary purpose of assessment is to gather information that leads to improved academic and/or behavioral outcomes for students. Evaluations conducted in educational settings may include many procedures, both formal and informal, that provide information relevant for educational programming and that support the development of effective interventions. Educationally relevant evaluations include the assessment of instruction, curriculum, and learning environment, as well as the assessment of student performance and other student-related variables.

The U.S. Department of Education supports models that focus on assessments that are related to instruction and promote intervention for identified children in the analysis of comments and changes section of the Federal Regulations implementing IDEA (71 Federal Register [Fed. Reg.] 46647). The increased emphasis on using information on how a student responds to scientifically based instruction and intervention to support eligibility decisions is coupled with a decreased emphasis on the use of standardized, norm-referenced assessments of cognitive ability and cognitive processing. IDEA makes it clear that the determination of a severe discrepancy between IQ and achievement is not necessary in order to identify a student as having a specific learning disability.
Additionally, none of the federal regulations addressing special education evaluation requirements, including the additional procedures for SLD identification, specify that a particular type of assessment (e.g., assessment of psychological or cognitive processing) must be conducted. Of particular relevance is the USDOE’s response in the “Analysis of Comments and Changes” section of the federal regulations:

*The Department does not believe that an assessment of psychological or cognitive processing should be required in determining whether a child has an SLD. There is no current evidence that such assessments are necessary or sufficient for identifying SLD. Further, in many cases, these assessments have not been used to make appropriate intervention decisions.*

71 Fed. Reg. 46651

When using RtI data to determine whether a student is eligible for special education services as a student with a disability, a variety of sources of information is needed. Screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic/prescriptive assessment data can provide the information necessary for determining a student’s performance discrepancy from the peer group and grade-level standard. It can also be used to establish a pattern of educational progress over time and identify the educational circumstances under which the student performs his or her best.

**Eligibility Decisions in Specific Program Areas: Specific Learning Disabilities and Language Impairments**

Making an eligibility decision for a specific special education category such as SLD and language impairments (LI) occurs within the context of the problem-solving process and subsequent to obtaining consent to evaluate and conducting the comprehensive evaluation procedures. When engaging in eligibility decision making, consider the context and order of events as they occur as an ongoing process for the primary purpose of improving the effect of instruction for the student, rather than for the purpose of deciding on a categorical placement. If teams maintain focus on the ultimate purpose of increasing the student’s level of performance and rate of progress, then making an eligibility decision will not impact the ongoing problem solving and monitoring of the students’ response. Instead of interrupting the process or changing the focus of problem solving, the eligibility decision becomes an event for the purpose of matching available resources to provide for students’ instructional needs, thereby improving student outcomes.

The purpose of Appendix E – Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility is to assist school-based teams in analyzing and evaluating existing data to make eligibility decisions. In accordance with Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C., *Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities,* and
Rule 6A-6.030121, F.A.C., *Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments* and Qualifications and Responsibilities for the Speech-Language Pathologists Providing Language Services, this tool may be used after consent to evaluate has been obtained and the team determines that all of the necessary assessment data have been gathered.

The purpose of the Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility found in Appendix E is not solely to document procedural requirements for compliance, rather it is a tool to guide the team’s analysis. As a secondary purpose, it provides a vehicle for the required documentation. The *Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Compliance Self-Assessment: Processes and Procedures Manual* can be accessed for guidance about documenting compliance components at [http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/m-compli.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/m-compli.pdf).

**Required Documentation: Written Summary of the Group’s Analysis**

State Board of Education rules require that, for a student suspected of having a specific learning disability or language impairment, the documentation of the determination of eligibility must include a written summary of the group’s analysis of the data. The written summary must incorporate the elements listed in Rule 6A-6.03018 and 6A-6.030121, F.A.C.:

- The basis for making the determination.
- Observations establishing the relationship between behavior and academic functioning.
- Educationally relevant medical findings.
- Data confirming the existence of a specific learning disability or language impairment, including performance discrepancy, rate of progress, and educational need.
- The group’s determination of the effect of other factors, and evidence that one or more of the factors is not the primary cause of the student’s difficulty. See Table 4 – Documentation of Factors that Affect Level of Performance and Rate of Progress for resources that can be used to make this determination.
- RtI information documenting the intervention plan, student-centered data collected, the level of response of instruction/intervention, parent involvement, and the required signatures.

The written summary must reflect the professional opinion of the group responsible for determining eligibility. There is no requirement for any additional formal reports, such as separate evaluation reports, but districts may develop
procedures for documenting and reporting response to intervention data and the rationale for the eligibility decision. The expectation is that the rationale and/or justification for the team’s decision be clear from the evidence provided and the summary of the team’s analysis of that evidence.

Previous examples of coversheets that may be used to organize documentation that guides the eligibility decision process and written summary exist as appendices in two technical assistance papers (TAPs) published by the FDOE, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, titled Questions and Answers: State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03018, Florida Administrative Code, Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities, and Questions and Answers: State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.030121, Florida Administrative Code, Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments and Qualifications and Responsibilities for the Speech-Language Pathologists Providing Language Services. These TAPs are available online at the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services website, at http://www.fldoe.org/ese/tap-home.asp.

The elements of the example coversheets for the collection of information summarizing the group’s analysis have been integrated into Appendix E – Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility. The required summary of the group’s analysis can be represented by Appendix E – Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility. The first three sections (A–C) of Appendix E – Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility reflect the team’s decision-making process. Section D of Appendix E – Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility is a culmination of the team’s process as represented in the preliminary sections (A–C) and includes the requirements for documentation in the written summary of the group’s analysis.

**On-going Problem Solving**

Eligibility for special education services is not the finish line for problem solving. It is important to note that the four-step problem-solving process is systematically applied before, during, and after the determination of eligibility. Students identified as eligible for special education services are necessarily in need of intense instructional supports and, as a result, require frequent progress monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of those supports. In order to make informed instructional decisions that are critical for continued success, the four-step process of problem identification, problem analysis, intervention design/implementation, and response to instruction/intervention must be used routinely. Section E of Appendix E – Decision Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility prompts teams using the tool to plan next steps in the problem-solving process, regardless of eligibility status.
Table 4
Documentation of Factors that Affect Level of Performance and Rate of Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusionary Factor</th>
<th>Evidence of Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual, Motor, or Hearing Disability</td>
<td>Sensory screenings; medical records; observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>Classroom performance; academic skills; language development; adaptive functioning; results of tests of intellectual functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional/Behavioral Disability</td>
<td>Classroom observation; student records; discipline history, emotional/behavioral screenings; rating scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural factors</td>
<td>Level of performance &amp; rate of progress compared to students from same ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental or Economic factors</td>
<td>Level of Performance &amp; Rate of Progress compared to students from similar economic background (free/reduced lunch); situational factors that are student specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficiency</td>
<td>English language proficiency (oral language, vocabulary, verbal ability); Level of Performance &amp; Rate of Progress compared to English language learners with similar exposure to language and instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular Pattern of Attendance</td>
<td>Attendance records; number of schools attended; tardies; discipline records; migrant status &amp; pattern of attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Behavior</td>
<td>Classroom observations; Academic Engaged Time (AET); Office Discipline Referrals (ODR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Level of Performance &amp; Rate of Progress compared to students from same gender subgroup; familial or socio-cultural factors that are student specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Level of Performance &amp; Rate of Progress compared to same-age peers; situational factors that are student specific; birthdate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reevaluation Decisions

At least once every three years the district must reevaluate a student with a disability. A reevaluation may occur more often if a parent or a teacher requests it but may not occur more than once per year unless the parent and the district agree. As the construct of “evaluation” has evolved from the administration of a battery of standardized assessments to the review and analysis of data collected through the PS-RtI process in conjunction with formal assessment data as needed, teams have struggled with reevaluation for students identified as SLD, Emotional/Behavioral Disability (E/BD), or LI, asking “What does reevaluation look like within the PS-RtI framework?”

Beginning with the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA, districts have not been required to conduct, for reevaluation, the same comprehensive evaluation required for an initial evaluation and eligibility decision. Instead, as part of any reevaluation, the members of the student’s individual education plan (IEP) team, including the parent, review existing evaluation data, including information provided by the parent; current classroom-based, local, and state assessments; ongoing progress monitoring; and observations. Because schools are increasingly operating within a PS-RtI culture, a wealth of data about students’ needs are available to the IEP team at any point in time. On the basis of that review, the team identifies what additional data, if any, are required in order to determine the following:

1. Whether the student continues to be a student with a disability and the educational needs of the student

2. The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance of the student

3. Whether the student continues to need special education and related services

4. Whether any additions or modifications to the student’s special education and related services are needed to enable the student to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP and participate, as appropriate, in the general education curriculum

With the exception of sensory impairments that require specific formal assessments as part of reevaluation (i.e., deaf or hard-of-hearing, dual-sensory impairment, visual impairment), the IEP team determines what information is needed to answer the questions above and the best way to obtain it. Students continue to benefit from PS-RtI implementation until effective interventions have been identified and growth can be maintained. This includes both general education students and students who have been determined eligible for special education services. Data collected by the PS-RtI team or by individual special
education or general education teachers to measure the student’s progress toward the annual goals may also inform the reevaluation process, including the decision regarding continuing eligibility and determining the educational needs of the student.

If the IEP team determines that no additional data are needed, the parents must be notified in writing of that decision and the reasons for it and be informed that they have the right to request assessments. If the IEP team determines that additional data are needed, the district must request written, informed consent from the parent to conduct assessments. If the parent does not respond, the district may proceed with the reevaluation but must retain documentation of the attempts to communicate with the parent to obtain consent (e.g., detailed logs of telephone calls or home visits, copies of written notices).
Conclusion

The purpose of PS-RtI is to improve instructional decisions at every tier in order to maximize student outcomes. The problem-solving process is applied specific to Tier 1 instruction to adjust the core package of services delivered to all students and to result in a large percentage of students meeting benchmarks. For Tier 2 instruction, the problem-solving process is employed to determine standard protocols that are matched to the needs of small groups of students, then monitored for effectiveness. Intensive instructional interventions for individual students (Tier 3) are designed, planned, and monitored as products of the problem-solving process.

Regardless of various educational decisions that are made, teams continue to engage in problem solving to ensure that student success is achieved and maintained. It is this continuous problem solving, in relentless pursuit of successful outcomes for students, which characterizes the broad systems change process that Florida is engaging in to integrate PS-RtI as a way of work for all educators.
Appendices

Appendix A 53
Self-Assessment of Problem-Solving Implementation

Appendix B 71
Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheet

Appendix C 77
Intervention Documentation Worksheets

Appendix D 81
Parent Participation Notes

Appendix E 83
Decision-Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility
APPENDIX A
Self-Assessment of Problem-Solving Implementation

Administration Summary

This appendix is intended to provide you with a summary of the procedures for the Self-Assessment of Problem-solving Implementation (SAPSI). Below you will find information on the level of implementation the instrument assesses, the methods used to assess implementation, and how and when to complete the instrument.

- **What is the purpose of this instrument?**
  - Instrument assesses the extent to which consensus, infrastructure, and implementation activities associated with a PS/RtI model are occurring.
  - Systems change activities, believed to be critical to successful implementation of the problem-solving process, are used to determine the extent to which schools are focusing on PS/RtI issues and which activities tend to relate to better student performance in schools.

- **What methods are used to complete this instrument?**
  - Self-report is the primary method by which this instrument is completed.
  - PS-RtI coaches facilitate completion of the SAPSI by School-Based Leadership Team (SBLT) members. Coaches facilitate discussions among SBLT members for each item until consensus is reached regarding the response that should be provided.

- **How do I score this instrument?**
  - Each item is scored using a four-point scale:
    - N = Not Started
    - I = In Progress
    - A = Achieved
    - M = Maintaining
  - Only one score should be provided for each item. To help prepare coaches prior to meetings, a review of each item is provided below.

- **When is this instrument completed?**
  - This checklist may be completed three times during the school year: at the beginning, middle, and end.
Self-Assessment of Problem-Solving Implementation (SAPSI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Date of Report</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>District &amp; School ID</th>
</tr>
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</table>

INSTRUCTIONS

The members of your School-Based Leadership Team (Problem-Solving Team) should complete this needs assessment as a group. We ask that all members of the team participate in this process. Each group member should receive a copy of the needs assessment; however, only one form should be completed to reflect consensus ratings from the group. A PS-RtI facilitator may work with your team to facilitate completion of the SAPSI and to serve as the recorder. This needs assessment may be completed three times per school year to help you monitor activities for implementation of PS-RtI in your school.

The items on the SAPSI are meant to assess the degree to which schools implementing the PS-RtI framework are (1) achieving and maintaining consensus among key stakeholders, (2) creating and maintaining the infrastructure necessary to support implementation, and (3) implementing practices and procedures consistent with the model. Members of the team should not be discouraged if your school has not achieved many of the criteria listed under the Consensus, Infrastructure, and Implementation domains. This instrument is intended to help your team identify needs at your school for which action plans can be developed. Whenever possible, data should be collected and/or reviewed to determine if evidence exists that suggests that a given activity is occurring.
### PS-RtI Implementation Assessment

**Directions:**
In responding to each item below, please use the following response scale:

- **Not Started (N)** — (The activity occurs less than 24 percent of the time)
- **In Progress (I)** — (The activity occurs approximately 25 percent to 74 percent of the time)
- **Achieved (A)** — (The activity occurs approximately 75 percent to 100 percent of the time)
- **Maintaining (M)** — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75 percent to 100 percent of the time)

For each item below, please write the letter of the option (N, I, A, M) that best represents your School-Based Leadership Team’s response in the column labeled “Status.” In the column labeled “Comments/Evidence,” please write any comments, explanations, and/or evidence that are relevant to your team’s response. When completing the items on the SAPSI, the team should base its responses on the grade levels being targeted for implementation by the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consensus: <strong>Comprehensive Commitment and Support</strong></th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Comments/Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. District-level leadership provides active commitment and support (e.g., meets to review data and issues at least twice each year).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The school leadership provides training, support, and active involvement (e.g., principal is actively involved in School-Based Leadership Team meetings).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Faculty/staff support and are actively involved with problem-solving/RtI (e.g., one of top 3 goals of the School Improvement Plan, 80% of faculty document support, three-year timeline for implementation available).</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. A School-Based Leadership Team is established and represents the roles of an administrator, facilitator, data mentor, content specialist, parent, and teachers from representative areas (e.g., general ed., special ed.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Data are collected (e.g., beliefs survey, satisfaction survey) to assess level of commitment and impact of PS-RtI on faculty/staff.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Scale:**
- **Not Started (N)** — (The activity occurs less than 24 percent of the time)
- **In Progress (I)** — (The activity occurs approximately 25 percent to 74 percent of the time)
- **Achieved (A)** — (The activity occurs approximately 75 percent to 100 percent of the time)
- **Maintaining (M)** — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75 percent to 100 percent of the time)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Development: Data Collection and Team Structure</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Comments/Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Schoolwide data (e.g., FAIR, DIBELS, Curriculum-Based Measures, Office Discipline Referrals) are collected through an efficient and effective systematic process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Statewide and other databases (e.g., Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network [PMRN], School-Wide Information System [SWIS]) are used to make data-based decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Schoolwide data are presented to staff after each benchmarking session (e.g., staff meetings, team meetings, grade-level meetings).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Schoolwide data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of core academic programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Schoolwide data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of core behavior programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Curriculum-Based Measurement (e.g., FAIR, DIBELS) data are used in conjunction with other data sources to identify students needing targeted group interventions and individualized interventions for academics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Office Disciplinary Referral data are used in conjunction with other data sources to identify students needing targeted group interventions and individualized interventions for behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Data are used to evaluate the effectiveness (Rti) of Tier 2 intervention programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Individual student data are used to determine response to Tier 3 interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Special Education Eligibility determination is made using the Rti model for the following ESE programs:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (EBD)</td>
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<td>b. Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Language Impairment (LI)</td>
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Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project
(Adapted from the IL-ASPIRE SAPSI v. 1.6)
PS-Rti Implementation Assessment (Cont'd)

Scale:  
- Not Started (N) — (The activity occurs less than 24 percent of the time)  
- In Progress (I) — (The activity occurs approximately 25 percent to 74 percent of the time)  
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<tr>
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<th>Status</th>
<th>Comments/Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. The school staff has a process to select evidence-based practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Tier 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>b. Tier 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Tier 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. The School-Based Leadership Team has a regular meeting schedule for problem-solving activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. The School-Based Leadership Team evaluates target student's/students' Rtl at regular meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. The School-Based Leadership Team involves parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. The School-Based Leadership Team has regularly scheduled data day meetings to evaluate Tier 1 and Tier 2 data.</td>
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</table>

Additional Comments/Evidence:

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58
## PS-Rti Implementation Assessment (Cont’d)

### Scale:
- **Not Started (N)** — (The activity occurs less than 24 percent of the time)
- **In Progress (I)** — (The activity occurs approximately 25 percent to 74 percent of the time)
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### Implementation: Three-Tiered Intervention System and Problem-Solving Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Comments/Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. The school has established a three-tiered system of service delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Tier 1 Academic Core Instruction are clearly identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Tier 1 Behavioral Core Instruction are clearly identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Tier 2 Academic Supplemental Instruction/Programs are clearly identified.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Tier 2 Behavioral Supplemental Instruction/Programs are clearly identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Tier 3 Academic Intensive Strategies/Programs are evidence based.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Tier 3 Behavioral Intensive Strategies/Programs are evidence based.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. Teams (e.g., School-Based Leadership Team, Problem-Solving Team, Intervention Assistance Team) implement effective problem-solving procedures, including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Problem is defined as a data-based discrepancy (GAP Analysis) between what is expected and what is occurring (includes peer and benchmark data).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Replacement behaviors (e.g., reading performance targets, homework completion targets) are clearly defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Problem analysis is conducted using available data and evidence-based hypotheses.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Intervention plans include evidence-based (e.g., research-based, data-based) strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Intervention support personnel are identified and scheduled for all interventions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### PS-RtI Implementation Assessment

**Scale:**
- **Not Started (N)** — (The activity occurs less than 24 percent of the time)
- **In Progress (I)** — (The activity occurs approximately 25 percent to 74 percent of the time)
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation: Three-Tiered Intervention System and Problem-Solving Process (Cont'd)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Comments/Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f. Intervention integrity is documented.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Response to intervention is evaluated through systematic data collection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Changes are made to intervention based on student response.</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Parents are routinely involved in implementation of interventions.</td>
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**Additional Comments/Evidence:**

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## PS-RtI Implementation Assessment

**Scale:**
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### Implementation: Monitoring and Action Planning

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>A strategic plan (implementation plan) exists and is used by the School-Based Leadership Team to guide implementation of PS-RtI.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>The School-Based Leadership Team meets at least twice each year to review data and implementation issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>The School-Based Leadership Team meets at least twice each year with the District Leadership Team to review data and implementation issues.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Changes are made to the implementation plan as a result of school and district leadership team data-based decisions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Feedback on the outcomes of the PS-RtI Project is provided to school-based faculty and staff at least yearly.</td>
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</table>

### Additional Comments/Evidence:

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Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project (Adapted from the IL-ASPIRE SAPSI v. 1.6)
**Item Scoring Description**

**Consensus: Comprehensive Commitment and Support**

1. **District-level leadership provides active commitment and support (e.g., meets to review data and issues at least twice each year):** School-Based Leadership Team (SBLT) members should discuss the extent to which district-level leadership is helping facilitate school-level commitment to PS-RtI. The types of district-level leadership activities that are currently occurring should be discussed and compared to activities that would indicate that the district-level leadership is engaging schools to facilitate commitment and support. Examples of indicators include meeting with SBLT members (e.g., the team, principals) to discuss issues, providing resources such as funding and professional development opportunities, and communicating with schools on a regular basis regarding district initiatives and directions regarding PS-RtI. Note that these examples are not exhaustive but should be thought of as common indicators of district commitment and support.

2. **The school leadership provides training, support, and active involvement (e.g., principal is actively involved in School-Based Leadership Team meetings):** Stakeholders at the school, identified as individuals responsible for facilitating PS-RtI implementation, should be discussed in terms of how much training, support, and involvement related to PS-RtI they are providing. Examples of indicators of leadership involvement include the principal participating in SBLT meetings, principals and/or other school leadership engaging in activities such as presenting to staff and participating in book studies on PS-RtI, and leadership freeing up time for key staff to engage in professional development and implementation activities. Again, these indicators should not be thought of as an exhaustive list.

3. **Faculty/staff support and are actively involved with PS/RtI (e.g., one of top three goals of the School Improvement Plan, 80 percent of faculty document support, three-year timeline for implementation available):** This item assesses the extent to which staff are involved in PS-RtI at the school. A number of examples are included in the item to reference. The key issue to discuss is how much staff members receive communications regarding PS-RtI and are provided opportunities to provide input and participate in decision making.

4. **A School-Based Leadership Team is established and represents the roles of an administrator, facilitator, data mentor, content specialist, parent, and teachers from representative areas (e.g., general ed., special ed.):** Although direct representation of each of these roles by an individual is one way to discuss this item, it is not necessary to have one person for each role. Common examples of roles that may be represented by individuals indirectly include parents and sometimes teachers (although including teachers and parents directly is highly recommended). The key discussion to have is the extent to which someone with experience working as, or with, each particular role is present to advocate from that perspective. Regardless of whether the roles are directly or indirectly represented on the team, all roles must be represented for SBLTs to provide a rating of achieved (A) or maintained (M).
5. **Data are collected (e.g., beliefs survey, satisfaction survey) to assess level of commitment and impact of PS-RtI on faculty/staff:** Teams should discuss the extent to which data (e.g., surveys) are collected and used to examine how much buy-in and what needs exist among school staff. The data collected can come from the PS/RtI Project or school-developed instruments. Regardless of the source of the data, teams should ensure that data have been collected for the purpose of assessing consensus issues prior to providing a rating of achieved (A) or maintained (M).

**Infrastructure Development: Data Collection and Team Structure**

6. **Schoolwide data (e.g., FAIR, DIBELS, Curriculum-Based Measures, Office Discipline Referrals) are collected through an efficient and effective systematic process:** School teams should discuss the extent to which data can be used for universal screening and to summarize school outcomes are collected. How systematically and efficiently the data are collected (e.g., are the data collected every time within the suggested time frame) should be discussed as well. Data that can be collected and analyzed for the purposes of schoolwide decisions must be collected a minimum of three times per year for teams to provide a rating of achieved (A) or maintained (M).

7. **Statewide and other databases (e.g., Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network [PMRN], School-Wide Information System [SWIS]) are used to make data-based decisions:** Databases provided by the state (e.g., PMRN), the district, or purchased/developed by the school all can be used as indicators for this item. The extent to which they are actually used to help make data-based decisions, not just used to store data, should be part of the discussion. Both the availability and use of the database must be present for teams to rate this item as achieved (A) or maintained (M).

8. **Schoolwide data are presented to staff after each benchmarking session (e.g., staff meetings, team meetings, grade-level meetings):** The extent to which data summarizing student academic and behavioral outcomes at the school, grade, and classroom levels are presented to staff should be discussed. Data aggregated at the grade level can be used as an indicator for this item, but school-level aggregation of data should be discussed before deciding on a rating for the item. The critical issue for teams to agree on is how frequently the performance of students in a given content area is summarized and presented to staff following a benchmarking/screening session.

9. **Schoolwide data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of core academic programs:** The difference between this item and the previous one is whether discussions occur that lead to a decision regarding the effectiveness of academic content area instruction. Thus, the data examined must actually be used (can be in conjunction with other data sources) to make a decision about the extent to which core instruction met the needs of all students for a team to rate this item as achieved (A) or maintained (M).
10. **Schoolwide data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of core behavior programs:** The discussion and decisions regarding rating this item should be the same as #9. The only difference is that the focus should be on behavior rather than academic content areas.

11. **Curriculum-Based Measurement (e.g., FAIR, DIBELS) data are used in conjunction with other data sources to identify students needing targeted group interventions and individualized interventions for academics:** This item assesses the extent to which universal screening data (i.e., data collected on all students) are used to identify students in need of additional intervention to be successful in a given academic content area. Assessments such as those from the FAIR system, DIBELS, and benchmark assessments from the curriculum can be counted as long as they are administered to all students and criteria exist that allow educators to determine which students are at risk for not meeting standards in the content area being examined. Teams should be sure to discuss how frequently the data collected are actually used to identify students who are at risk before selecting a rating.

12. **Office Disciplinary Referral data are used in conjunction with other data sources to identify students needing targeted group interventions and individualized interventions for behavior:** The discussion for this item should be similar to the discussion regarding #11. Although screening data and procedures may be different for behavior and academics (e.g., ODRs, teacher nomination processes), the rating the team decides on should be based on how systematically procedures are used to screen for students who are at risk behaviorally.

13. **Data are used to evaluate the effectiveness (RtI) of Tier 2 intervention programs:** Teams should discuss how frequently data are used to evaluate how effective Tier 2 intervention protocols/programs are in terms of improving student academic and/or behavioral performance. Importantly, a part of the discussion should be the degree to which schools evaluate individual student responses versus aggregating the responses of students who were receiving the same intervention to determine how effective the protocol/program was. Teams should not rate the activity as achieved (A) or maintained (M) if they do not look at the effectiveness of the program in addition to looking at how individual students receiving Tier II interventions respond.

14. **Individual student data are used to determine response to Tier 3 interventions:** This item assesses the extent to which ongoing progress-monitoring data are used in decisions regarding student response to intervention. More frequent progress-monitoring data than what is collected through universal screenings must be frequently included in decision making for teams to rate this activity as achieved (A) or maintained (M).

15. **Special Education Eligibility determination is made using the response to intervention data for the following ESE programs:**
   a. Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities: Although the State of Florida requires the use of an RtI model in determining eligibility for EBD programs, a team should
discuss the extent to which its school actually uses an RtI model in its decisions regarding EBD eligibility when rating this item.

b. Specific Learning Disabilities: Although the State of Florida requires the use of an RtI model in determining eligibility for SLD, a team should discuss the extent to which its school actually uses an RtI model in its decisions regarding SLD eligibility when rating this activity.

c. Language Impairment: Although the State of Florida requires the use of an RtI model in determining eligibility for LI, a team should discuss the extent to which its school actually uses an RtI model in its decisions regarding LI eligibility when rating this activity.

16. The school staff has a process to select evidence-based practices:
   a. Tier 1: The team should discuss how it determines if its core instructional practices are evidence based in academic and behavioral content areas. State, district, and school policies, plans, and procedures all can be used as indicators when addressing this item.
   b. Tier 2: The same discussion should occur for supplemental practices as is referenced above for core instruction.
   c. Tier 3: The same discussion should occur for intensive, individualized interventions as is referenced above for core and supplemental instructional practices.

17. The School-Based Leadership Team has a regular meeting schedule for problem-solving activities: The team should discuss whether they have structured, protected meeting times to plan for and engage in problem solving. To rate this activity as achieved (A) or maintained (M), teams must have meetings that are scheduled in advance and that occur multiple times throughout the school year.

18. The School-Based Leadership Team evaluates target student’s/students’ RtI at regular meetings: How often student data are used to evaluate student RtI across tiers should be discussed. The frequency at which teams meet to discuss student RtI and how much data are actually used in the decisions that are made should be factored into the rating of this activity.

19. The School-Based Leadership Team involves parents: There are multiple ways that parents can be involved in PS-RtI planning and practices. Examples include having parents on the team, communicating to and receiving input from parent organizations (e.g., parent-teacher associations), and including a representative on the team whose job it is to advocate for parents. The rating of the item should be decided based on the extent to which the team has evidence that suggests parents are meaningfully involved in School-Based Leadership Team activities.

20. The School-Based Leadership Team has regularly scheduled data day meetings to evaluate Tier 1 and Tier 2 data: To rate this activity, consider the extent to which regularly scheduled meetings occur in which data are actually used to evaluate the impact of core (Tier 1) and supplemental (Tier 2) instructional practices. The team’s discussion should include the regularity with which these
meetings are scheduled and actually occur as well as how frequently data are used (in conjunction with other sources) to inform effectiveness decisions. Multiple (i.e., more than once) meetings in which data are used must occur for the team to rate this item as achieved (A) or maintained (M).

Implementation: Three-Tiered Intervention System and Problem-Solving Process

21. **The school has established a three-tiered system of service delivery:**
   - a. **Tier 1 Academic Core Instruction clearly identified:** The key question to be addressed is does the school have or are they working on ways to communicate what constitutes Tier I Academic Instruction in the school. School, district, and state plans and other documents can be used to provide evidence when rating this item.
   - b. **Tier 1 Behavioral Core Instruction clearly identified:** The rating of this item focusing on Tier I Behavior should be based on a similar discussion as is described above for 21a.
   - c. **Tier 2 Academic Supplemental Instruction/Programs clearly identified:** The rating of this item focusing on Tier II Academic instruction should be based on a similar discussion as is described above for 21a.
   - d. **Tier 2 Behavioral Supplemental Instruction/Programs clearly identified:** The rating of this item focusing on Tier II Behavior instruction should be based on a similar discussion as is described above for 21a.
   - e. **Tier 3 Academic Intensive Strategies/Programs are evidence based:** The team should discuss whether individualized, intensive academic interventions used at the school can be identified as evidence based. Documents, such as those referenced in 21a or other sources, can be used as indicators for this item.
   - f. **Tier 3 Behavioral Intensive Strategies/Programs are evidence based:** The team should discuss whether individualized, intensive behavior interventions used at the school can be identified as evidence based. Documents, such as those referenced in 21a or other sources, can be used as indicators for this item.

22. **Teams (e.g., School-Based Leadership Team, Problem-Solving Team, Intervention Assistance Team) implement effective problem-solving procedures, including the following:**
   - a. **Problem is defined as a data-based discrepancy (GAP Analysis) between what is expected and what is occurring (includes peer and benchmark data):** The team should discuss the extent to which data are used to determine the performance gap between the target student(s), and (1) benchmarks/standards (i.e., expected level) and (2) peers (tends to be more applicable when problem solving small group or individual student performance). To be rated as achieved (A) or maintained (M), teams must regularly calculate the size of the performance gap (i.e., subtract expected from current levels of performance, divide expected or peer levels of performance by target student current levels of performance) when identifying a problem.
b. Replacement behaviors (e.g., reading performance targets, homework completion targets) are clearly defined: The extent to which the team concretely and measurably defines the skill, strategy, or concept the target student(s) are expected to demonstrate should be discussed. How frequently the team specifies the target skill/behavior so that everyone understands and agrees on the instructional target should be factored into the rating of this item.

c. Problem analysis is conducted using available data and evidence-based hypotheses: The extent to which the team (1) generates hypotheses based on alterable variables and (2) uses available data to determine if the reasons generated are likely barriers to the target skill/behavior being performed should be discussed. Ratings of achieved (A) or maintained (M) require that both components of problem analysis (i.e., generating potential reasons for student struggles and using data to determine which reasons are the most likely) are completed the majority of the time.

d. Intervention plans include evidence-based (e.g., research-based, data-based) strategies: Ratings on this item should be based on the extent to which the team develops instructional/intervention plans based on (1) strategies that have been demonstrated as effective through research or (2) strategies that have locally collected data to support the impact of their use.

e. Intervention support personnel are identified and scheduled for all interventions: Teams should discuss the extent to which support plans are developed to assist educators responsible for delivering interventions to students. To receive a rating of achieved (A) or maintained (M), support plans should be developed the majority of the time that include who is responsible, what supports they will provide to the educator(s) delivering the intervention, and when and where the support will be provided.

f. Intervention integrity is documented: This item assesses the extent to which evidence that the intervention plan was implemented as intended is documented. Teams should examine how frequently documentation of instructional/intervention fidelity is presented when examining student RtI before rating themselves on this item.

g. Response to intervention is evaluated through systematic data collection: Teams should discuss how frequently benchmark and/or ongoing progress-monitoring data are used to determine how students responded to instruction/intervention. To receive ratings of achieved (A) or maintained (M) on this item, data reflecting student performance on the identified skill/behavior should be presented and decisions made regarding student RtI (e.g., good, questionable, poor) at the majority of meetings intended to discuss student progress.

h. Changes are made to intervention based on student response: The extent to which student RtI is used to adjust instruction/intervention plans should be discussed when completing this item. How frequently decisions regarding student RtI (e.g., good, questionable, poor) are directly linked to changes made (if any) in the plan for target students must be discussed prior to providing a rating.
i. Parents are routinely involved in implementation of interventions: How frequently parents are meaningfully involved in the intervention plans developed for students should be discussed.

j. Involvement can take many forms (e.g., implementing a component of the plan, being involved in the meetings where the plan is developed, receiving frequent updates on student progress). Although taking part in the actual implementation of an intervention is one way a parent can be involved, teams should not consider it the only way that parents can be involved and still receive ratings of achieved (A) or maintained (M) for this item. What is important for teams to discuss is the extent to which parents are provided the opportunity to participate in the problem-solving process for their children.

Implementation: Monitoring and Action Planning

23. **A strategic plan (implementation plan) exists and is used by the School-Based Leadership Team to guide implementation of PS-RtI:** Teams should discuss whether they have a written down, agreed upon plan for how PS-RtI will be implemented in their schools. In addition to whether the plan exists, how comprehensive (e.g., how far down the road does the plan cover; what consensus, infrastructure, and implementation issues are addressed) the plan is should be discussed. To provide a rating of achieved (A) or maintained (M) for this item, a multi-year plan that addresses consensus, infrastructure, and implementation issues must be present.

24. **The School-Based Leadership Team meets at least twice each year to review data and implementation issues:** Teams should discuss how often they meet and review student and implementation data to address issues. To provide ratings of achieved (A) or maintained (M), teams must meet a minimum of two times per year during which they examine and discuss student outcome and PS-RtI implementation data.

25. **The School-Based Leadership Team meets at least twice each year with the District Leadership Team to review data and implementation issues:** Teams should discuss how often they meet with members of their District Leadership Team (the full team is not required) to discuss the types of issues captured in the previous item. A minimum of two times per year is required to provide a rating of achieved (A) or maintained (M).

26. **Changes are made to the implementation plan as a result of school and district leadership team data-based decisions:** The difference between this item and the previous two is whether the discussions regarding student and implementation data among School- and District-Based Leadership Teams resulted in changes to the implementation plan at the school. The frequency that data are used to make changes to the plan at these meetings should be considered before providing a rating.

27. **Feedback on the outcomes of the PS-RtI Project is provided to school-based faculty and staff at least yearly:** The team should discuss the extent to which data are shared with faculty and staff at the school. How the outcomes are shared
is not as important as what is shared and the frequency that the information is provided when discussing this item. A minimum of one time per year must be established for teams to rate this item as achieved (A) or maintained (M).
## Appendix B
### Problem-Solving/RtI Worksheet
(For Individual Student Concerns)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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General description of concern:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

### STEP I – Problem Identification: What is the problem?

1. What is the benchmark/expected level of performance? ___________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. What is the student’s current level of performance? (Be sure to include data that directly
   assesses the target skill you want the student to perform.) _________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. What is the peer level of performance? ________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. What percentage of students in the classroom demonstrate this discrepancy?
   __________________________________________________________

5. Gap Analysis:
   Benchmark & Student__________________________________________
   Benchmark & Peer____________________________________________
   Peer & Student_______________________________________________

6. What is the replacement behavior or target skill? (measurable, observable, reportable)
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

7. At what tier will this problem be addressed? (circle one) Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3
   __________________________________________________________

8. Do we have enough information to complete Problem Identification? _______________________
   If yes, go to Problem Analysis.
   If no, what information is still needed? _______________________________________________
   When will we meet again? __________________________________________________________
STEP II: Problem Analysis: Why is it occurring?

Replacement behavior or target skill (from #6, Section 1: Problem Identification)

Based on available data (gathered through review, interview, observation, testing), why do you think the replacement behavior is not occurring and what is the predicted result of actions you might take?

Below, record each hypothesis for why the replacement behavior is not occurring along with its matched prediction statement. Provide any data used to validate or refute each hypothesis, and circle Yes to indicate that the data supported the hypothesis or No to indicate that it did not.

**Hypothesis**
(What are the most likely reasons this problem is occurring? – address potential domains of instruction, curriculum, environment, learner)

**Prediction Statement**
(Based upon what we’ve learned, what could be changed about the instruction, curriculum, and/or environment in order to enable the student to learn?)

“The problem is occurring because______.” “If _______ would occur, then the problem would be reduced.”

**Hypothesis 1:** 
________________________________________________________________________________

Prediction Statement 1: _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Relevant Data: ___________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________ Validated Yes/No

**Hypothesis 2:** 
________________________________________________________________________________

Prediction Statement 2: _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Relevant Data: ___________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________ Validated Yes/No

**Hypothesis 3:** 
________________________________________________________________________________

Prediction Statement 3: _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Relevant Data: ___________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________ Validated Yes/No

**Hypothesis 4:** 
________________________________________________________________________________

Prediction Statement 4: _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Relevant Data: ___________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________ Validated Yes/No

Do we have enough information to complete Problem Analysis? _____________________________

If yes, go to Intervention Implementation
If no, what information is still needed?__________________________________________________________________________________

When will we meet again?__________________________________________________________________________________
Step III: Intervention Implementation: What are we going to do about it?

Comprehensive Intervention Plan Worksheet

Who is the intervention plan being developed for?
What is the replacement behavior/target skill?
What is the expected level of performance?
What is the current level of performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verified Hypotheses</th>
<th>Intervention Plan</th>
<th>Support Plan</th>
<th>Monitoring Fidelity</th>
<th>Monitoring Plan for Determining Student Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible?</td>
<td>Who is responsible?</td>
<td>Who is responsible?</td>
<td>Who is responsible?</td>
<td>Who is responsible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will be done?</td>
<td>What will be done?</td>
<td>What will be done?</td>
<td>What will be done?</td>
<td>What data will be collected and how often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will it occur?</td>
<td>When will it occur?</td>
<td>When will it occur?</td>
<td>When will it occur?</td>
<td>How will we decide if the plan is effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where will it occur?</td>
<td>Where will it occur?</td>
<td>Where will it occur?</td>
<td>How will data be shared?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73
Example

**Comprehensive Intervention Plan Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verified Hypotheses</th>
<th>Intervention Plan</th>
<th>Support Plan</th>
<th>Monitoring Fidelity</th>
<th>Monitoring Plan for Determining Student Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randy does not self-monitor while reading connected text.</td>
<td>Who is responsible? Suzanne – reading interventionist</td>
<td>Who is responsible? Mark – classroom teacher</td>
<td>Who is responsible? Suzanne – reading interventionist</td>
<td>Who is responsible? Suzanne – reading interventionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What will be done? 30 min lessons: 5 min – warm up (phonics) 20 min – (fluency &amp; self-monitoring-tapping at word, sentence, then paragraph level) 5 min – comprehension</td>
<td>What will be done? First 2 weeks – meet with Suzanne 3 times/week(MWF) Second 2 weeks – meet with Suzanne 2 times/week (MW) Following weeks – meet with Suzanne once per week(M)</td>
<td>What will be done? The Intervention Doc. Worksheet (IDW) will be used to record intervention sessions</td>
<td>What data will be collected and how often? Oral reading fluency and accuracy will be collected on Friday of each week using grade level CBM probes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When will it occur? MWF 9:20 to 9:50</td>
<td>When will it occur? 10:00 am during 3rd grade planning time</td>
<td>When will it occur? Directly after every scheduled intervention session</td>
<td>How will we decide if the plan is effective? Graphed data will be reviewed at regularly scheduled individual student data review meetings described in Monitoring Plan column of this worksheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where will it occur? 3rd grade intervention room</td>
<td>Where will it occur? Suzanne’s intervention room</td>
<td>How will data be shared? The IDW will be shared at the student data review meetings described in Monitoring Plan column of this worksheet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who is the intervention plan being developed for? **Randy**

What is the replacement behavior/target skill? **Reading Accuracy**

What is the expected level of performance? **95% Accuracy on grade-level material**

What is the current level of performance? **76% Accuracy on grade-level material**
**Step IV – Response to Instruction/Intervention: Is the plan working?**

Attach graphed data for each review date:

**Review Date:**

Is the response to instruction/intervention Positive ___, Questionable ___, or Poor ___?

1. If Positive:
   - Continue current instructional supports.
   - Adjust goal upward.
   - Fade supports.

   Comments/Actions: ______________________________________________________________________

2. If Questionable:
   - Was intervention/instruction implemented as planned? Yes__ No__
     - If no, what strategies will be utilized to increase implementation?
     - If yes, should intervention intensity be increased? Yes ___ No____

   Comments/Actions: ______________________________________________________________________

3. If Poor:
   - Was intervention/instruction implemented as planned? Yes___ No____
     - If no, what strategies will be utilized to increase implementation?
     - If yes, was instruction/intervention aligned with the verified hypothesis, or is there other aligned instruction/intervention to consider?
     - Are there other hypotheses to consider?
     - Was the problem identified correctly?

   Comments/Actions: ______________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Intervention Documentation Worksheets

Intervention documentation worksheets were developed as an efficient means of collecting information regarding the actual minutes of supplemental or intensive instruction/intervention delivered in a self-report format. Each day of the week has a column to designate the Time, Focus, and Program for the intervention session that day.

- **Time (T)** is entered as the length of time the intervention was actually delivered, measured in minutes.

- The **Program (P)** column is used to indicate the particular program or materials used for the intervention. The legend at the bottom of the page gives the user the opportunity to create a key for the specific program or materials used.

- The **Focus (F)** of the intervention is entered using the legend at the bottom of the page or a key the user develops. For the purposes of this worksheet, the Focus is defined as the particular skill targeted by the instruction/intervention.

- The **Total Number of Minutes** is summed for the individual weeks, then those totals are summed and compared to the number of minutes originally prescribed in the intervention plan. This allows the important assessment of fidelity of the amount of planned instructional/intervention support.

For example, if the intervention is planned to occur on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week for 20 minutes each day for four weeks, that would be a planned total of 240 extra minutes of instruction. If, after examining the Intervention Documentation Worksheet, it is evident that, as a result of absences, field trips, and assemblies, only an average of 30 minutes of intervention per week was provided over the four weeks, then a total of 120 minutes of extra support would have actually been provided. When evaluating the student’s response to instruction/intervention, it is essential to understand the actual amount of support received by the student(s). Accurate data are necessary before accurate instructional decisions can be made. In the scenario above, without documentation of implementation fidelity, we may think that we are evaluating the effects of 240 minutes of additional support when, in fact, only 120 minutes of additional support had been provided. Supports to improve implementation fidelity are put in place when the actual amount of instruction is less than the planned amount of instruction. As well, continued focus on the identified instructional target (F) and on use of identified materials (P) is documented to ensure consistency throughout the intervention.
Worksheet A is formatted for recording individual student interventions. Worksheet B has been modified to record groups of students (as when providing small group supports) by replacing the row headers of Week 1, Week 2, etc., with the names of the students in the intervention group. A worksheet records one week of data in this case; thus, a new sheet is created each week.
## Intervention Documentation Worksheet for Individual Students

**Intervention Goal:**

**Teacher:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Total # of Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

- **T** = Time (# of minutes)
- **P** = Program/Strategy
- **F** = Focus
- **L** = Language
- **PA** = Phonemic Awareness
- **P** = Phonics
- **F** = Fluency
- **V** = Vocabulary
- **C** = Comprehension

*Program (Create your own key. For example, W = Wilson Fundations)*

---

1. ______ = ____________________________
2. ______ = ____________________________
3. ______ = ____________________________
# Intervention Documentation Worksheet for a Group of Students

**Intervention Goal:** 

**Teacher:** 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Total # of Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 9:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 10:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

- **T** = Time (# of minutes)
- **P** = Program/Strategy
- **F** = Focus
- **L** = Language
- **PA** = Phonemic Awareness
- **P** = Phonics
- **F** = Fluency
- **V** = Vocabulary
- **C** = Comprehension

*Program (Create your own key. For example, W = Wilson Fundations)*

---
Appendix D
Parent Participation Notes

My Child: _____________________________________

Team Members:
Administrators - _________________________________________________________
Classroom Teachers - ______________________________________________________
ESE Teachers - _____________________________________________________________
Guidance Counselor - ______________________________________________________
School Psychologist - ______________________________________________________
Reading Specialist - _________________________________________________________
Others - _________________________________________________________________

Tier 1:  Date:  __________________
Screening Results - _________________________________________________________
Current Grades - __________________________________________________________
Materials Used - __________________________________________________________

Tier 2:  Date:  __________________
Intervention - _____________________________________________________________
Materials Used - __________________________________________________________
How Can I Help? __________________________________________________________

Tier 3:  Date:  __________________
Intervention - _____________________________________________________________
Materials Used - __________________________________________________________
How Can I Help? __________________________________________________________

Notes:
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
Appendix E
Decision-Making Tool for SLD and LI Eligibility

Meeting Date:

Demographic Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>ID Number:</th>
<th>AYP Subgroup(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td>Retention History:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Evidence that student achievement is not adequate when student is provided learning experiences appropriate for chronological age or grade-level standards.

1. Does convergence of evidence from multiple sources validate that the student achieves inadequately to meet grade-level standards or is achieving inadequately based on the student’s chronological age in one or more of the following areas?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes, check the applicable area(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>LI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Oral expression</td>
<td>□ Oral expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Written expression</td>
<td>□ Written expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Reading comprehension</td>
<td>□ Reading comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Listening comprehension</td>
<td>□ Listening comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mathematics calculation</td>
<td>□ Social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mathematics problem solving</td>
<td>□ Phonological processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Basic reading skills</td>
<td>□ Reading fluency skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If YES, convergence of evidence from multiple sources validates that the student is not achieving adequately, then go to Question A.2.

If NO, this means that the student is meeting chronological age or grade-level standards and the student is not eligible for specially designed instruction and related services. Continue to address needs through ongoing, systematic problem solving. Refer to Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions of the Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem Solving (GTIPS) manual for guidance and assistance for the team to determine next steps.
2. Was the student provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for chronological age or grade-level standards? □ Yes □ No

If YES, the student was provided instruction and learning experiences appropriate for age or grade, then go to Question A.3.

If NO, this means that the student was not provided instruction and learning experiences appropriate for age or grade, the student is not eligible for specially designed instruction and related services. Provide learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student’s age or grade, and continue ongoing, systematic problem solving. Refer to Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions of the GTIPS manual.

3. Is there evidence that the student was provided well-delivered, scientific, research-based instruction addressing the identified area(s) of concern, and it was delivered by qualified personnel in general education settings? □ Yes □ No

If YES, provide documentation:
What data demonstrate that the student was provided well-delivered, research-based instruction by qualified personnel in general education?
What data substantiate the effectiveness of core instruction?

Then continue to Section B.

If NO, this means that the school-based team must simultaneously address the effectiveness of core instruction and the individual student’s needs. Refer to Table 1 page 9 – Imperative Questions of the GTIPS manual for additional guidance. Critical questions for the team when problem solving to increase the effectiveness of the core instruction include the following:

Is the curriculum appropriately matched to the needs of the students?
Is support provided for implementation fidelity?
How systematically has the School-Based Leadership Team engaged in Tier 1 level problem solving in order to increase the effectiveness of core instruction?
B. Evidence that the student does not make adequate progress when provided scientific, research-based instruction and intervention.

1. Were the school-based team’s decisions related to this student driven by a process based on the student’s response to scientific, research-based intervention?
   - Yes
   - No

   If YES, provide documentation:
   - What specific interventions were implemented?
   - What support was provided to the individual(s) implementing the interventions?
   - Were the critical elements of the intervention design implemented with fidelity?
   - What was the duration and frequency of intervention implementation?
   - What student-centered data was collected?

   If NO, explain:

   Continue ongoing, systematic problem solving. Refer to Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions of the GTIPS manual.

2. How unique is the student's current level of performance in the area(s) of concern when compared to:

   Provide available and relevant documentation of:
   - Age-level peers on nationally norm-referenced assessments:
   - Grade-level peers at the state level:
   - Grade-level peers at the district level:
   - Grade-level peers at the school level:
   - Grade-level peers at the class level:
   - Grade-level peers in specific subgroup(s) to which the referred student belongs:
3. How unique is the student’s rate of progress of performance in the area(s) of concern compared to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide available and relevant documentation of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age-level peers on <em>nationally norm-referenced</em> assessments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade-level peers at the <strong>state level</strong>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade-level peers at the <strong>district level</strong>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade-level peers at the <strong>school level</strong>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade-level peers at the <strong>class level</strong>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade-level peers in <strong>specific subgroup(s)</strong> to which the referred student belongs:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Were the parents provided documentation of repeated measures of achievement at reasonable intervals, graphically reflecting the student’s response to instruction and intervention?  □ Yes  □ No

If YES, provide documentation:

- What data was shared with the parent? How often?
- How was the data shared?
- How were the parents of the student involved and engaged in the problem-solving process?
- What information from the student’s parents contributed to the available body of evidence surrounding the student?

If NO, engage in systematic problem-solving to increase parent engagement. Refer to GTIPS Manual Chapter 4 – Team Engagement. Specify next steps:

5. Consider the information documented in Sections A and B thus far. Based on the student’s response to scientific, research-based intervention, was the student’s level of performance and rate of progress adequate to meet chronological age or grade-level standards through **general education resources** within a reasonable amount of time?  □ Yes  □ No

If YES, the student is **not eligible** for specially designed instruction and related services in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C., *Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* (SLD Rule), or Rule 6A-6.030121, F.A.C., *Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments and Qualifications and Responsibilities for the Speech-Language Pathologists Providing Language Services* (LI Rule). Continue to address student needs through systematic problem solving. Refer to GTIPS Manual Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions.

If NO, then go to Section C. Consider data from Sections B2 and B3.
C. Evidence that inadequate response to instruction and intervention is not PRIMARILY the result of any of the following factors known to impact performance:

**Note:** Questions C.1 through C.3 pertain to requirements of both the SLD and LI rules.

1. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of factors related to culture or ethnicity? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:


2. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of an irregular pattern of attendance and/or high mobility rate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:


3. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of limited English proficiency? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:


If the answer to any of questions C.1 through C.3 is YES, the student is not eligible for specially designed instruction and related services in accordance with the SLD or the LI rules. Continue to address student needs through systematic problem solving. **Refer to GTIPS manual Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions.**
Note: Questions C.4 through C.8 pertain to requirements specific only to the SLD Rule.

4. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of an intellectual disability?
   - Yes
   - No

   Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

5. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of a visual, motor, or hearing disability?
   - Yes
   - No

   Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

6. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of an emotional/behavioral disability?
   - Yes
   - No

   Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

7. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of classroom behavior?
   - Yes
   - No

   Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

8. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress **primarily** the result of environmental or economic factors?
   - Yes
   - No

   Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

If the answer to any of questions C.4 through C.8 is YES, the student is **not eligible** for specially designed instruction and related services in accordance with the SLD rule. Continue to address student needs through systematic problem solving. Refer to Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions of the GTIPS manual.
Note: Question C.9. and C.10. pertains to requirements specific only to the LI Rule.

9. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress primarily the result of chronological age?
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

10. Is the student’s level of performance and rate of progress primarily the result of gender?
    ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Provide evidence that substantiates the team’s decision:

If the answer to questions C.9. or C.10. is YES, the student is not eligible for specially designed instruction and related services in accordance with the LI rule. Continue to address student needs through systematic problem solving. Refer to Table 1, page 9 – Imperative Questions of the GTIPS manual.
D. Decision questions and collection of documentation are based on convergence of data related to all the previous questions and the group’s professional judgment informed by data:

*Note: Section D is a culmination of the team’s decision-making process in Sections A through C.*

1. Does the student achieve **inadequately** (in one or more of the eight areas) when provided learning experiences appropriate for chronological age or grade-level standards? See responses within Section A of this tool.
   - Yes  
   - No

Student does not achieve adequately for age or does not meet grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas. (Check all that apply for both eligibility areas.) Attach evidence and summarize the team’s analysis that reflects the convergence of data used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD Requirements</th>
<th>LI Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Reading comprehension:</td>
<td>☐ Reading comprehension:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Written expression:</td>
<td>☐ Written expression:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Oral expression:</td>
<td>☐ Oral expression:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Listening comprehension:</td>
<td>☐ Listening comprehension:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Basic reading skills:</td>
<td>☐ Phonological processing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Reading fluency skills:</td>
<td>☐ Social interaction:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Mathematics calculation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Mathematics problem solving:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Criterion or Norm-referenced diagnostic assessment results (if relevant):**
Note: The following information is required by the LI rule and may apply but is not required by the SLD rule. Check areas that were assessed. Attach evidence and summarize the team’s analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardized, norm-referenced assessment results from one or more sources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Phonology:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Morphology:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Syntax:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Semantics:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Pragmatics:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Does the student meet one of the following two conditions?
   a) Intensive interventions are demonstrated to result in adequate progress but require sustained and substantial effort that may include the provision of specially designed instruction and related services.
      ☐ Yes  ☐ No
   b) The student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided appropriate instruction and intense, individualized interventions.
      ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Attach documentation and provide summary of the team’s analysis below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction/Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Targeted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Intensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Analysis of Response to Intervention Data (attach relevant and available data, which includes graphs)

1. Performance discrepancy (level of performance: pre- and post-interventions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>AYP Subgroup(s)</th>
<th>Other: (e.g., Tier 2 or Tier 3 subgroup)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Rate of Progress (Attach documentation of intervention intensity, rate of progress, expected rate of progress.)

Parent(s) contributions to the process:

---

Information provided to parents:
3. Is the student's level of performance and rate of progress primarily the result of another disability or one of the other factors (e.g., economic, cultural, attendance, English proficiency)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Attach documentation and provide summary of the team's analysis below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLD Factors</th>
<th>LI Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural factors:</td>
<td>Cultural factors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English proficiency:</td>
<td>Limited English proficiency:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular pattern of attendance or high mobility rate:</td>
<td>Irregular pattern of attendance or high mobility rate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional/behavioral disability:</td>
<td>Age:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disability:</td>
<td>Gender:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental or economic factors:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom behavior:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual, hearing, or motor disability:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observations:** (Attach observation form/summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Observation and Person Responsible</th>
<th>Targeted Behavior(s)</th>
<th>Relationship to academic functioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educationally relevant medical findings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Observations are required by both the SLD rule and the LI rule. The LI rule requires that at least one observation be conducted by a speech-language pathologist.*
4. Do the data confirm that the student continues to need intensive and individualized interventions that significantly differ in intensity and duration from what can be provided through general education resources? Attach documentation and provide summary of the team’s analysis below.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional details of educational need: (Specify the student’s educational supports and services that are needed to sustain expected level of performance and adequate rate of progress.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. If the convergence of evidence leads the group of professionals determining eligibility to conclude that the responses to questions D.1., D.2. and D.4 are “YES,” and the answer to D.3. is “NO,” then the student may be determined eligible for specially designed instruction and related services provided through IDEA resources.

E. On-going problem solving

If the student is not eligible, what resources are available to continue to meet the student’s instructional needs? What are the next steps in the problem-solving process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next steps in the problem-solving process:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If the student is determined eligible for specially designed instruction and related services provided through IDEA, the student’s instructional and intervention needs will continue to be met through systematic problem-solving within the RtI framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next steps in the problem-solving process:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Glossary

**Accommodations** – Changes that can be made to the way students are instructed and assessed. Types of accommodations include the following: method of presentation, response type, schedule, setting, and assistive technology.

**Consensus** – Stakeholders involved in the change effort develop a common language of terms, a common knowledge of core concepts, and a common understanding of the rationale for the initiative. All stakeholders agree to operate in alignment with the established implementation plan, regardless of personal opinion.

**Core Curricula and Instruction** – The common package of instructional materials and delivery methods, including a scope and sequence that reflects required grade-level standards that are used with all students through general education resources targeting both academic and behavioral skills.

**Curriculum-based Measurements** – Direct skill assessment tools that are aligned with the curriculum, sensitive to instruction, repeatable, and criterion referenced, which are used for a variety of measurement purposes.

**Diagnostic Measures** – Formal or informal assessment tools that measure skill strengths and weaknesses, identify skills in need of improvement, and assist in determining why the problem is occurring.

**Differentiated Instruction** – The process of ensuring that what a student is taught, how he/she is taught it, and how the student demonstrates what he/she has learned is matched to specific student needs.

**District Based Leadership Team** – A district-level team responsible for providing leadership, advisement, and training at the district level and assisting schools in their implementation efforts.

**Educational Needs** – Specific curricular, instructional, and environmental adjustments that result in positive student performance.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** – A federal law funding and regulating public education. Current statutes established reforms based on four principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

**Evidence-based Instruction/Interventions** – Instruction /Interventions for which evidence of effectiveness in increasing student learning exists.
Exceptional Student Education (ESE) – The name used in Florida to describe special education services and programs for students with a disability or services for students who are gifted.

Formative Measures – Ongoing assessment embedded within effective teaching to guide instructional decisions.

Implementer – The person identified as responsible for delivering instruction or intervention in accordance with the team’s implementation plan.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) – A written plan to identify the annual goals and objectives and special education and related services designed to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability. The IEP is developed by teachers, parents, the student, and others, as appropriate, and is reviewed annually.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – A federal law ensuring effective services for children with disabilities. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to students with disabilities.

Infrastructure – The physical, procedural, organizational structures, and resources necessary to establish, support, and sustain implementation of problem solving and response to instruction/intervention.

Instructional Decisions – Choices made regarding what to teach and how to teach it, typically informed through engagement in the problem-solving process and focused on student improvement.

Intensity of Instruction/Intervention – Intensity consists of three variables: time, focus, and group size. An increase in intensity would be reflected by an increase in the amount of time a student(s) would be exposed to instruction/intervention and/or a narrowing of the focus of instruction/intervention and/or a reduction in group size.

Interventions – Curricular, instructional, and/or other adjustments made to address core instructional issues. Interventions may also be provided to students in small groups or individually, in addition to and aligned with core instruction in order to target a specific skill or concept.

Learning Environment – The environmental variables that either promote or inhibit learning, including the physical classroom arrangement, rules, management plans, routines, expectations, peer/family influence, task demands, etc.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – An IDEA principle that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum in the general education setting to the maximum extent possible. Reducing access to the
general education setting should be done only when necessary to provide appropriate instruction.

**Level of Performance** – A single measurement at a point in time revealing the student’s performance relevant to a standard expectation. Examples: 72 words correct per minute, 75 percent compliance to directions, percentile score of 5, and standard score of 95.

**Poor Response to Instruction/Intervention** – Student rate of progress data reveals that the gap continues to widen with no change in rate after the instruction/intervention is implemented.

**Positive Response to Instruction/Intervention** – Student rate of progress data reveals that the gap between expected performance and observed performance is closing. Ideally, the point at which the target student will “come in range” of grade-level expectations—even if it is this long range—can be extrapolated.

**Problem Solving** – The recursive, self-correcting, systematic process of finding solutions by accurately identifying problems, analyzing relevant data to understand why the problem is occurring, designing and implementing probable solutions, and measuring the effectiveness of the solutions that were implemented.

**Problem-Solving Team** – Any team that systematically engages in the process of accurately identifying problems, analyzing relevant data to understand why the problem is occurring, designing and implementing probable solutions, and measuring the effectiveness of the solutions that were implemented.

**Progress-Monitoring Measures** – Ongoing assessment conducted for the purposes of guiding instruction, monitoring student progress, and evaluating instruction/intervention effectiveness.

**Progress-Monitoring Plan (PMP)** – A written plan for individual students, or groups of students, that reflects the interventions provided and the students’ response to those interventions with student-centered data resulting in ongoing progress-monitoring measures at a frequency appropriate to the level of intervention.

**Questionable Response to Instruction/Intervention** – Student rate of progress data reveals that the rate at which the gap is widening is decreasing considerably, but is still widening, or when a gap stops widening but closure does not occur.

**Rate of Progress** – This is typically the amount of growth (e.g., words correct per minute, level of compliance) over a specified time period (week, month) demonstrated by a student or group of students.
**Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI) Framework** – The multi-tiered practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important instructional decisions.

**RtI Logic** – A way of thinking and working grounded in student-centered data-based decision making that reflects the routine application of the four steps of the problem-solving process.

**RtI Tier** – A level/type/intensity of instruction or intervention defined by student need.

**Scaling-up** – Increasing the capacity and quality implementation of the RtI logic.

**School Based Leadership Team** – A school-level team responsible for developing a school implementation plan. The school-based team becomes “trainers” and “coaches” for the school staff and will be responsible for school wide implementation.

**Scientific, Research-Based Instruction/Interventions** – Those that involve the application of rigorous systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs; those that involve research that employs systematic methods that draw on observation or experiment and rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn.

**Screening Measures** – Assessment tools designed to collect data for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of core instruction for all students and identifying students who may need more intensive interventions and support.

**State Transformation Team** – The state-level team responsible for analyzing progress toward statewide efforts, recommending actions for improvement, and supporting District Based Leadership Teams (DBLT) in order to build the capacity of districts to implement evidence-based practices and to establish integrated RtI academic and behavior systems in each school.

**Student-Centered Data** – Instructionally relevant student information gathered through record reviews, interviews, observations, and tests that are used to inform instructional decisions, including data that reflect students’ level of performance and rate of progress tied to the standard expectations of the enrolled grade-level or chronological age.

**Summative Measures** – Assessments typically administered near the end of the school year to give an overall perspective of the effectiveness of the instructional program.

**Supports** – Behavioral or academic assistance provided to any student or group of students to enable their learning.
**Systems Change** – A process of building consensus, developing infrastructure, and implementing a different way of thinking and operating within an organization.
Resources

Florida’s Resources for Problem-Solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention

- Assessments, Checklists, and Forms
  http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/tools/assessments/index.html


- Introductory RtI Online Course http://www.florida-rti.org/introCourse/

- iTunes U (RtI Intro Series) http://floridaitunesu.org/

- Positive Behavior Support Site http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/index.asp

- PS/RtI Newsletters Highlighting Lessons Learned
  http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/newsletters/index.html

- PS/RtI Pilot and Statewide Training Site http://floridarti.usf.edu/index.html


- Sample FL District Implementation Plans
  http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/tools/implementationplans/index.html

- State website http://www.florida-rti.org/index.htm

National Resources for RtI Implementation and Strategies

- IDEA Partnership
  http://ideapartnership.org

- Intervention Central
  http://www.interventioncentral.org

- National Center on Student Progress Monitoring
  http://www.studentprogress.org

- Resource and Training Webinars from The National Center on Response to Intervention
  www.rti4success.org

- RtI Action Network
  http://rtinetwork.org

- What Works Clearinghouse
  http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc
Resources for Effective Teaming

- Florida Positive Behavioral Support Effective Coaching
  http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/Effective%20Coaching/1.%20Effective%20Coaching.pdf

- Intervention Central: School Based Intervention Team Resources

- RtI Action Network: The RtI Data Analysis Teaming Process
  http://www.rtinetwork.org/Essential/Assessment/Data-Based/ar/TeamProcess

- The Colorado Department of Education Response to Intervention (RtI) Problem-Solving Consultation Process
  http://www.cde.state.co.us/RtI/downloads/PDF/RtI_VideoGuide.pdf

Resources for Parent Information

- Florida Response to Intervention
  http://www.florida-rti.org/Partnership/involvement.htm

- National Center on Response to Intervention (RtI) – RtI Stakeholders: Families

- National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD)
  http://www.nrcld.org/rti_practices/parent.html

- RtI Action Network