

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)

Weekly Memorandum Excerpts

The following selected excerpts are related to Problem-solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention. You can use the “Find Feature” in the pdf to search the excerpts for key topics.

8/6/2010

New Brochure titled “Evaluations for Special Education Services: Information for Parents” –

District program contacts expressed concerns regarding potential miscommunications between school personnel and parents when parents request an evaluation for special education services for their child.

Therefore, BEESS has provided a brochure designed to answer the following questions for parents:

- My child needs help in school. Does my child have a disability?
- What is RtI?
- I have requested an evaluation for my child. Now what?
- What is the evaluation going to include?
- How will I know the results?

The direct link to the brochure is <http://www.florida-rti.org/EvaluationsSpecialEd.pdf> or you may access the brochure at Florida’s Response to Instruction/Intervention Web site at <http://www.florida-rti.org/> under the *RtI News* section.

- Link: <http://www.florida-rti.org/EvaluationsSpecialEd.pdf>
- Link: <http://www.florida-rti.org/>

New Resource from the National Center on Response to Intervention – The [Instruction Tools Chart](#) represents the results of the first annual review of instructional programs by the Center’s Technical Review Committee (TRC). The chart provides ratings on the quality of studies demonstrating efficacy for instructional programs used within an RTI context. Additional information on how to implement the programs can be found on the chart as well. The National Center on RTI publishes this tools chart to assist educators and families in becoming informed consumers who can select instructional programs that best meet their individual needs. Please note that the Center does not endorse or recommend the programs included in the chart. The Center’s TRC will review instructional programs annually, with the next call for programs being issued in late fall 2010. Access the [Instruction Tools Chart](#) at <http://www.rti4success.org/chart/instructionTools/>.

- Link: <http://www.rti4success.org/chart/instructionTools/>

7/2/10

RTI Action Network Opportunity – The Leadership Network is designed for Principals, superintendents, curriculum directors, RTI coordinators, instructional specialists, psychologists – any district or building leader actively engaged in planning or implementing RTI at any stage, from beginning to advanced. The network provides mentoring from an experienced RTI implementer, free resources, involvement in an online community, and more. This is a unique opportunity for your members to deepen their understanding of RTI as well as sharpen their implementation skills, ultimately leading to more effective RTI implementation in all our schools for all our children. During the 2010 - 2011 school year, the RTI Action Network will be offering an opportunity to 250 building and district leaders, **free of charge**. Membership is limited and the application process closes July 30th, 2010. To submit an application, visit: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/connect/leadership-network>. Please see the attached flyer for more information.

Link: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/connect/leadership-network>

6/11/10

SLD Rule Reminder – As a reminder, **the entire Rule** entitled *Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* **became effective beginning March 23, 2009**, and is accessible at the following link: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?ID=6A-6.03018>. As part of an interim option within the effective Rule, some districts chose to require a relevant pattern of strengths and weaknesses within the comprehensive evaluation procedures along with the existing requirements related to problem-solving and students' response to intervention data. In accordance with the Rule, any determination of eligibility beginning July 1, 2010, **must not require** a pattern of strengths and weaknesses such as an ability/achievement discrepancy or a pattern on psychological processes in order to find a student eligible for SLD. This applies to all eligibility decisions for SLD made on or after July 1, 2010, regardless of when parental consent to conduct evaluation procedures was obtained.

Please ensure that this is communicated to all appropriate personnel.

- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478

6/4/10

New Resource Released on “Lessons Learned” in High School Tiered Intervention – A new report from the High School Tiered Interventions Initiative (HSTII) summarizes what HSTII has learned thus far about effective implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) in high schools. *Tiered Interventions in High Schools: Using Preliminary ‘Lessons Learned’ to Guide Ongoing Discussion* provides a brief description of the RtI framework and the essential components of RtI, illustrates how the essential components are implemented at eight schools, and highlights factors unique to high schools as well as how these factors can affect school-level implementation of tiered interventions.

- Link: http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/HSTII_LessonsLearned.pdf

Contact: Sheila Gritz, at sheila.gritz@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478

5/27/10

Reminders about Problem-solving, RtI Tiers, and specifically Tier 3 – The problem-solving process involves four questions that help parents and school-based team members find solutions to both academic and behavioral difficulties. The first question is, **“What is the problem, exactly?”** This question is important because we must be sure that we are working on the true problem. The second question is, **“Why is this happening?”** This question is important because we must understand the problem in order to design solutions that are more likely to work. The third question is, **“What are we going to do about it?”** This question is important because we must plan what needs to be taught and how it will be taught. In this step, we are designing and then doing the intervention. Sometimes the teacher or specialist providing the intervention will need support, such as extra training, new materials, or reinforcement from the student's home. The fourth question is **“How well is it working?”** This step is the RtI step because we must measure how the student responds to the intervention in order to know if it is helping or not. These four questions should guide the meetings with parents and team members engaged in problem-solving.

Remembering that the three tiers are described as follows, take a close look at your current understanding of Tier 3 and think about how tier three is understood in your school(s):

- Tier 1: Core, Universal Instruction & Supports. General academic and behavior instruction and support provided to all students in all settings.
- Tier 2: Targeted, Supplemental Interventions & Supports. More targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support *in addition to and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum.*
- **Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Interventions & 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 Tier 1 & 2 academic and behavior instruction and***

supports. This level of intervention and support is based on individual student need and may be delivered in small groups or one-on-one.

When we talk about three tiers with each other and with parents, we have to be careful to remember that they are not categories of students or stepping stones toward a special education category. There are not fixed rules about each tier, instead there are basic guidelines to help us understand the school's framework for meeting all the student's needs. Tier 1 describes the high quality teaching and school support for positive behavior that all students in the school receive. If what the school provides at the tier one level is working, most students in the school will be successful without needing additional help. Tier 2 describes the additional interventions that smaller groups of students might get if they need extra help to learn specific skills. Tier 3 describes interventions that are designed to help individual students who need the most extra help on specific skills. Students who are receiving tier three level help might need this level of help for a short time or for a longer period of time to be able to catch up. Any student in the school may, at some point, need tier two or tier three help in order to learn all the necessary skills of their grade level. *The goal of the problem-solving team will always be to provide whatever the student needs and responds to positively, so that they are successful in the general education classroom as much as possible. It is important to remember that the three tiers don't have rules because they are meant to describe different levels of help that students may get when they need it, and the levels of help will change as the needs of the student change.

Some people think that RtI is something for students with disabilities or that Tier 3 is a gateway to special education. Some even define Tier 3 as special education. The truth is the three tiers of RtI represent a way of thinking and working for schools that benefits every student in the school. For some students who need the most intensive and individualized help to maintain progress special education resources may be accessed by the school. Whether the special education resources are accessed by the school or not, every child will continue to benefit from the problem-solving that happens in a school's RtI system. Some students who receive Tier 3 level interventions and supports are students who also meet criteria for resources through special education. Other students who receive Tier 3 interventions and supports are provided those services through resources other than special education. Either way, the school has a responsibility to meet the needs of students who require intensive, individualized (Tier 3) interventions and supports. It is possible, and advisable, to provide Tier 3 interventions and supports within the general education classroom. Tier 3 interventions are planned and implemented by the team engaged in the problem-solving process. The team must consider all the details of implementation including what will be taught, who will deliver the instruction, how the intervention integrity will be supported, when, where, and how often it will occur, and how its effectiveness will be measured. In planning these implementation components the team should exercise flexibility and maintain intervention effectiveness as the primary factor of influence. Because Tier 3 interventions are the most intensive and represent the greatest student need, the most skilled interventionist is usually chosen to deliver the intervention.

Implementing RtI is helpful to schools in that resources are more appropriately and efficiently allocated in direct proportion to actual student needs determined by their response to various levels of instruction/intervention. If more than approximately 5% of students require support at the Tier 3 level, engage in Tier 1 and Tier 2 level, systemic problem-solving to find solutions to meet more students' needs at the core (Tier 1) and supplemental (Tier 2) levels in order to reduce demand for Tier 3 services.

Important questions that should be asked at the district and school-levels are, “Who receives the majority of Tier 3 level interventions and supports? Does everyone understand that the focus (scope, sequence, intensity) of instruction/intervention at Tier 3 varies based on individual student need and is adjusted according to the on-going results of frequent progress monitoring? Because Tier 3 interventions are provided in addition to core instruction rather than as a replacement, how are improvements in student performance and rate of progress examined simultaneously?” If the provision of Tier 3 interventions does not result in improvements of the student’s functioning within the core curriculum, the alignment and layering of the instruction and interventions being provided must be re-examined.

Perhaps the most challenging of circumstances is when a student is receiving Tier 3 level interventions and supports, but rather than responding positively with an accelerated rate of progress and increased level performance, the results of progress monitoring remains at a questionable or poor level of response. If Tier 3 level services are not working, the team must revisit all of the crucial stages of the problem-solving process in search for variable and barriers that may have yet to be detected. Intense examination of these questions may be especially helpful: “Did we accurately and thoroughly identify the problem? How do we know? Why is/are the desired goals not occurring?” To answer these questions, the team must analyze the problem using data to determine why the issue is occurring and re-generate hypotheses founded in: evidence-based content area knowledge; alterable variables; and instructionally relevant domains. Link validated hypotheses to instruction/intervention. Another important factor to examine is the implementation fidelity. The team should ask, “How has the interventionist been supported so far? Was the intervention implemented as planned? What support for the implementation is needed to improve the effectiveness?” If the team determines that additional resources, beyond what is available through general education, are needed to sustain or improve the effectiveness of the interventions, then provision of special education services may be considered.

*Florida’s most recent district-provided data indicate that the students who receive Tier 3 interventions and supports vary almost equally among the following groups: general education students who have not had sufficient opportunity to learn, students with disabilities, English language learners, and “other” students.

5/21/10

2010 RtI Adoption Report – Spectrum K12 School Solutions, Inc., and leading education organizations including the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) announced on May 20, 2010, the results of their 2010 survey of K-12 district administrators which gauges the extent to which Response to Intervention (RTI) has been adopted and implemented. Please see the attached document for additional information. Complete 2010 RTI Adoption survey results can be viewed at http://www.spectrumk12.com/rti/the_rti_corner/rti_adoption_report.

- Filename: 2010 RtI Adoption Report.pdf
- Link: http://www.spectrumk12.com/rti/the_rti_corner/rti_adoption_report

Resource for High School RtI Implementation – The High School Tiered Interventions Initiative (HSTII) is a collaborative effort among the National Center on Response to Intervention, the National High School Center, and the Center on Instruction that explores how RtI and tiered interventions are being implemented at the high school level. During this webinar, Dr. Lou Danielson and HSTII staff

shared information on how the essential elements of RtI can be implemented in high schools, what some of the associated challenges and considerations are, and how contextual factors specific to high school settings make RtI implementation increasingly complex and challenging. The National High School Center website is available at <http://www.betterhighschools.org>, and you can view the webinar and related material at the following links:

- View the Webinar recording:
http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1452
- View the presentation slides:
<http://www.betterhighschools.org/webinar/documents/HSTIIWebinarSlides02-11-10.pdf>
- View additional questions and answers not addressed during the presentation:
<http://www.betterhighschools.org/webinar/documents/Feb2010HSTIIWebinarQA.pdf>
- Link: <http://www.betterhighschools.org>

Featured RtI Q&A to Assist with Teacher/Parent Communications – Retrieved and adapted on May 18, 2010, from http://thestir.cafemom.com/big_kid/103012/Learning_Difficulties_Response_to featuring the Q&A response of Dr. Mary Rosen, a school psychologist, licensed counselor, graduate school instructor, and parent.

Question: My 7-year-old child has had trouble learning to read all year. He's seen a special reading teacher a few times a week, and I'm told that he's made progress. However, he's still behind and I'm wondering whether he needs more. Frankly, I'm worried he may have a learning disability. Kids with learning problems get special education help, don't they?

Answer: I understand your concern and know how frustrating it may feel to have your child get extra help and still not be where he should be with his reading, and of course you want to be sure he's getting the kind of help he needs. Nowadays, because of changes in various education laws, kids who struggle with reading or other subjects are given assistance earlier than they may have in the past, before they're very behind and/or failing, and usually before they're considered for special education services. This relatively new approach is universally referred to as *Response to Intervention* or *RTI*. In a nutshell, RTI is a process that looks at how kids in the regular classroom respond to different types of teaching approaches or interventions at differing levels of intensity. Under this model, all children are screened, usually at the start of school, to figure out who may have problems meeting the standards at their grade level.

- Under the RTI model, all kids in a given classroom are ideally provided with "scientifically based instruction," or teaching methods that research has shown to be effective. This is referred to as the first level, or Tier 1. For reading, a Tier 1 instructional intervention might include daily guided reading groups, where students, in small groups according to their reading level, read along with their teacher who strategically stops at points in their book to discuss specific concepts or vocabulary. If a student, like your child, continues to struggle after receiving general classroom reading instruction, or if a student has been identified early on in the school year through the screening process as being "at risk," he/she would then likely receive more intensive help, otherwise known as Tier 2 interventions.
- Tier 2 addresses the student's challenges more aggressively. For instance, a Tier 2 intervention may also be in a guided reading format, but this time instruction may be with a specialized reading teacher, with a smaller group of children, and with a more structured program that's given in addition to the regular class instruction. You may be wondering:

How do we know for certain (besides what we as parents might observe at home while reading with our kids) which kids are struggling? A huge part of RTI involves progress monitoring. This is consistent monitoring or evaluation of the student's skills for which he/she is getting help in order to know if the particular intervention is working. If a kid continues to make minimal progress at Tier 2, then they get even more intensive help.

- Tier 3 intervention is even more intensive; more "targeted" interventions are given. If little progress continues to be made after receiving Tier 3 interventions, the child is then usually considered for an evaluation to determine if he's eligible for special education assistance. Back in the day, students weren't routinely provided with systematic help until they were already far behind in their academics, and kids were being referred for special education for reasons other than true learning issues or other disabilities that would qualify them for those services. In addition, in the past, the way a child qualified as having a learning disability was to show a significant "discrepancy" between their cognitive abilities (aka intelligence) and their achievement skills. This has changed, and now RTI progress-monitoring information can be used as part of this evaluation process to show that a child isn't learning at an expected rate.

I suggest asking your child's teachers if they're using an RTI approach (RTI is also called "problem solving," or your child's school may have their own term) and if they are, how do they decide when a student's interventions should be modified. You may also want to ask about interventions and how they're monitoring his progress. Parent involvement is considered an essential component of RTI, so your school should readily share this information with you. It's another example where partnering with the school is the best way to go.

Link: http://thestir.cafemom.com/big_kid/103012/Learning_Difficulties_Response_to

4/9/10

State Performance Plan, Indicator 3/4/5 Brief – The Bureau's state-level team engaged in problem-solving to improve Florida's performance related to students with disabilities and Assessment (Indicator 3), Suspension and Expulsion (Indicator 4), and Least Restrictive Environment (Indicator 5); and has created a "Brief" that covers the following topics:

- What is the 3/4/5 Cluster?
- Why are these Indicators clustered?
- Lessons Learned
- General Supervision Web site
- Timelines
- The Role of Projects

To view the "Brief,"

<http://www.florida-rti.org/weekly/attachments/040810.pdf>

- Filename: 3-4-5 cluster brief March 31, 2010.pdf
- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or Martha Murray, at martha.murray@fldoe.org

3/19/10

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), a project of the U.S. Department of Education, will review Research on Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities – Students with learning disabilities often need different instructional approaches. By utilizing research-based programs, products, and practices, educators can help these students succeed in school. A new topic area from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) will review research related to improving academic performance for students with learning disabilities. With this information, educators can make important decisions about curriculums, supplemental products, and classroom

methods. Visit the Students with Learning Disabilities topic area today to see which intervention reports in this topic area are coming out soon. For more information about the WWC, visit <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov>.

- Link: <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov>
- Link: <https://www.livemeeting.com/cc/airorg/join?id=RTIforELL&role=attend> to join the webinar
- Link: <http://www.rti4success.org>
- Contact: rtiwebinars@air.org to submit questions before and after the webinar
- Contact: Microsoft Office Live Meeting customer support, at lmhelp@microsoft.com or (866) 493-2825 for technical support

Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) eBulletin, Note from the Director on RtI and Secondary School Improvement – “As I write this note, I am on a flight back from our High School Tiered Intervention Summit where for the last 2 days I have joined many of you as we learned about work being done in and with high schools across the country as they strive to meet the needs of every student through a variety of strategies and interventions addressing academics, behavior, and social issues. Our presenters were from both high- and low-performing schools, and each of them talked about the struggles they face with meeting state assessment and accountability requirements. However, they also all possessed the same qualities of passion and commitment to ensuring student success. They talked of doing what’s best for kids or whatever it takes to ensure that students learn. They were focused on students as individuals and were concerned about meeting the needs of each and every student. I was encouraged to hear principals who were willing to make tough decisions to put their best teachers with the students who need the most help, to replace a basketball coach with a reading teacher who was needed to provide additional instruction for students who were struggling, and to confront teachers who were not willing to change and let them know that unless they changed, they would need to look elsewhere for a job. I was encouraged by the teachers who shared about the successes of their common planning time and professional learning communities as well as the instructional strategies and approaches they are using to help students improve their reading and writing skills and to be successful in algebra. All of these educators possessed an unrelenting focus on using data to identify and meet the needs of each and every student in their school. These are the behaviors and attitudes that research and practice have both demonstrated are necessary to turn around low-performing schools. As we focus on turning around low-performing schools in this issue of the eBulletin, it is refreshing to have seen such tremendous examples of leaders and teachers who are doing this work daily and seeing success for their efforts.” ~ **Robin Jarvis, PhD**, Director, SECC

You can view/download the full [eBulletin: v4n3 newsletter](#) from the [SECC Web site](#).

- Link: [eBulletin: v4n3 newsletter](#)
- Link: [SECC Web site](#)

3/12/10

SLD UPDATE

How do we gather comparative data on private school students who have been referred for an initial evaluation? We have state and district data (FCAT, FAIR, etc.) for public school students, but don't have that information for private school students. – The relevant answer in the SLD TAP, accessible in full at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>, reads as follows:

For some students only minimal information may be available, and some or all of this information will be gathered after the referral for evaluation has been made. The school district will work with the current educators of the student to gather as much of this information through the intervention and assessment process as possible, recommend any additional assessments as necessary, and make the eligibility decision to the best of the team’s ability. In the event that collaboration with the private or virtual school staff or the parent of a home education student is minimal, despite multiple attempts, the team may simply not have the evidence required to determine eligibility.

In expansion on the underlined sentence above, the team members may determine what criterion or norm-reference measures might provide relevant information. The school-based team has responsibility and flexibility to decide what additional assessment data are needed and what measures to use in order to get that information. Various experts on the school-based team may assist in determining what additional assessments are necessary such as the school psychologist, curriculum specialist, or speech/language pathologist on the team. All of the relevant and obtainable data sources are required by the SLD Rule, so in each individual case the team should ask, “Do we have all the information that is relevant and obtainable? If not, what more do we need to know and how can we get it?”

- Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>

3/5/10

SLD UPDATE

Recently Asked Question: Who is responsible for writing the Comprehensive Evaluation; for putting all the existing information on the student to include the graphic representations, observations, reports, parent input, assessments, etc., together so that the team may determine whether the student is a student with a disability and to determine the educational needs of the student?

Response: Because finding solutions for students is an on-going process resulting in an ever-growing accumulation of information, graphic representation of the student’s response and related comparisons, observations, reports, parent input, assessment data, etc., it should already be kept in one place as generated or submitted by various team members over time (both pre- and post-referral in most cases). If this documentation is being produced specifically for an eligibility decision rather than to guide and inform the problem-solving process, it appears that there is a breakdown in the problem-solving process and the schoolwide RtI framework.

The comprehensive evaluation is not a report that someone writes, rather, it is the group’s analysis of the available body of evidence. (For a more extensive and formal definition of the comprehensive evaluation, see the BEESS Weekly Memorandum dated January 29, 2010.) A summary of the group’s analysis in writing is required by the SLD Rule as part of making eligibility decisions. This written summary should simply be the recording of the group’s overall discussion and decision. The documentation collected over time substantiates the discussion and the decision. This collection of information will continue to grow and be used by the team engaged in problem-solving (whether the student was determined eligible for services through IDEA or not) for on-going data-based decision making related to the student’s instructional needs. A particular format or directive that this be completed by a particular person should remain a local decision. “Form” should become secondary to “function” so that the district and school are able to make authentic and functional use of this information.

Appendix C of the SLD Q&A TAP, accessible at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>, is a suggested coversheet for organizing the collected documentation, but it is not required.

You may access the Rule in full and other resources related to SLD at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>.

- Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>
- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478 or David Wheeler, at wheeler@coedu.usf.edu or (850) 245-7851

2/19/10

RtI: Applicability to Assessment and Accommodations

There have been concerns regarding the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) and accommodations being provided exclusively for students who are receiving services through an individual educational plan (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan. Currently FL statutes only allow FCAT accommodations for students with disabilities (IEP or 504 Plan) and students with limited English proficiency [1008.22(3)(c)6, F.A.C.]. The statewide resource often referred to for information about FCAT accommodations is available at

<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/fcatteam.pdf>. Relevant laws cited in this document prevent students not identified with a disability from receiving accommodations on the FCAT. Excerpts of some of these policies that clarify this requirement include the following:

Section 1008.22(3)(c)6, *Statewide assessment program for public schools*, Florida Statutes states, “The State Board of Education shall adopt rules, based upon recommendations of the commissioner, for the provision of test accommodations and modifications of procedures as necessary for students in exceptional education programs and for students who have limited English proficiency. Accommodations that negate the validity of a statewide assessment are not allowable.”

Rule 6A-1.0943(2), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), *State Assessment for Students with Disabilities*, states, “Statewide assessment accommodations may be used only if they do not alter the underlying content that is being measured by the assessment or negatively affect the assessment’s reliability or validity. Accommodations shall be identified for each eligible student and recorded on the student’s IEP or plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Allowable accommodations are those that have been used by the student in classroom instruction as long as the accommodations are within the limits specified in this rule.”

For a student with a disability, the student’s performance when provided accommodations can be used to determine whether the accommodation improves performance and to justify (or not) the requested accommodations. Because the most commonly sought after accommodation on the FCAT is extended time, comparison of a student’s performance on timed and untimed assessment conditions might help provide evidence of whether the accommodation actually allows for the student to demonstrate his ability/knowledge/skill/proficiency level more accurately (i.e., “need”). Testing accommodations should be provided to students with disabilities based on “need” not simply because they have a disability. Data on student performance should be used when making determinations of “need” for accommodation. Considerations by the IEP team should include: accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do, accommodations should not provide the student with an unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test, accommodations for the FCAT must be the same or nearly the same as those used by the student in classroom instruction and assessment activities, and accommodations must be necessary for enabling the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery.

Implementing problem-solving within the response to intervention (RtI) framework involves the persistent effort of school-based teams to provide the instruction and interventions necessary for each student to meet grade level expectations through general education resources. Many individuals have raised concerns that if accommodations on statewide tests are only available to students who have been identified as meeting eligibility for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504, then school teams and parents may be motivated to obtain eligibility status for a child, primarily so that he or she can access accommodations on the FCAT.

It is inappropriate to pursue eligibility for special education through IDEA solely for the purpose of FCAT accommodations or in circumstances when the student is able to maintain success through the general education resources. We recognize the interest in expanding access to accommodations on statewide assessments to those students who are receiving the help they need through an RtI process without having to be identified as a student with a disability. However, there are no plans to pursue a change in statute.

Measuring student response to the implementation of interventions that include specific accommodations through a systematic problem-solving process certainly could be used to determine whether the accommodations improve student performance. As teams progress monitor a student’s use of accommodations, they should consider any differences or similarities between accommodations that students need instructionally and accommodations that allow students to demonstrate levels of proficiency on standardized assessments. If you need further clarification, you may contact Heather Diamond via e-mail at heather.diamond@fldoe.org.

- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org

2/12/10

How does RtI impact eligibility and services for students entering kindergarten who were previously identified as developmentally delayed? – Students identified as developmentally delayed (DD) must be evaluated by the student’s sixth birthday to determine whether the student meets the initial eligibility criteria under another ESE program. If initial eligibility criteria are not met, the student must be dismissed from ESE services. It is unlikely that transitioning DD students would have sufficient documentation to establish eligibility as a student with a specific learning disability. SLD requires ruling out lack of appropriate instruction and collecting data identifying the student’s level of performance and rate of progress in comparison to peers when provided general education interventions and supports (RtI). This is difficult to establish for students entering kindergarten, because they typically have not had access to the general education curriculum and instruction nor sufficient opportunity to benefit from a problem-solving/RtI process. However, the expectation is that all students be provided effective instruction that meets their individual needs, whether they are eligible for ESE services or not.

Most students entering kindergarten who were previously identified as developmentally delayed have received structured educational services through the school district’s ESE program. If so, some amount of progress-monitoring, observational data, and other relevant information will be available from those sources. The problem-solving team should consider data from previous educational settings when developing and implementing instructional strategies and supports that foster success in the general education setting. The general education interventions should match the level of support the student received through ESE. If a student responds positively to general education resources, continue to provide the effective instruction/interventions and monitor the student’s progress. If a student is not making adequate progress, the supports should be reviewed and intensified using a problem-solving approach.

If the IEP team elects to maintain the DD eligibility for part of kindergarten, the student should have access to grade-level instruction in the least restrictive environment. This is most often the general education setting with the support necessary for the student to progress toward grade level benchmarks. A student previously identified as DD and dismissed from ESE services at age six (or upon entering kindergarten) may subsequently be determined eligible through the problem-solving/RtI process after providing general education instruction, interventions, and supports.

The related answer (D-13) in the TAP is accessible at <http://www.fl DOE.org/ese/sldr.asp>. Please see the attached PPT for an expansion on this technical assistance.

- Filename: RtI, SLD, and DD.pdf
- Link: <http://www.fl DOE.org/ese/sldr.asp>

2/5/10

SLD UPDATE

- **When is written, parental consent required?** – Written, parental consent is required any time assessment instruments or procedures are administered for determining eligibility for exceptional education and related services. It is the purpose of the assessment, not the type of the assessment instrument that determines whether written parental consent is required. Consent is not required if the purpose of assessment is to inform instructional or intervention decisions. The IDEA requirement for written parental consent when conducting an initial evaluation [34 CFR §300.300 (a)] does not apply to regular education interventions implemented in an RtI system of support.

Although Rule 6A-6.0331(1)(a), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), does not require written, parental consent for screenings and diagnostic assessments unless the purpose is to determine eligibility for exceptional student education, the rule does require that parents be afforded opportunities for involvement in the process to address their child’s difficulties. Therefore, parents should be informed and aware of the nature

and purpose of assessment procedures conducted in general education each time data-based decisions concerning the child's instruction/interventions are made.

- **When should formal consent for evaluation be obtained from the parent(s) if a student is suspected of having a specific learning disability?** – In accordance with Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C., the school district must promptly request parental or guardian consent to conduct an evaluation to determine if the student needs specially designed instruction in the following circumstances:
 1. Prior to a referral, the student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided appropriate instruction and intense, individualized interventions; or
 2. Prior to referral, intensive interventions are demonstrated to be effective but require sustained and substantial effort that may include the provision of specially designed instruction and related services; and
 3. Whenever a referral is made to conduct an evaluation to determine the student's need for specially designed instruction and the existence of a disability.

Therefore, the school-based team engaged in the problem-solving process may refer the student for an evaluation and obtain consent from the parent at such time that they collectively determine item #1 or #2 above. Additionally, the school must obtain consent to conduct an evaluation, and the 60-day timeline for completing the evaluation begins when a parent requests an evaluation as is described above in Item #3. Any assessments conducted prior to referral for evaluation, as determined necessary by the school team engaged in problem-solving for the purpose of informing interventions, *do not* require formal consent. Any assessments conducted after a referral for evaluation has been made, as determined necessary by the school team engaged in problem-solving for the purpose of contributing to the body of evidence analyzed during a comprehensive evaluation, *do* require formal consent.

- **If schools are to continue problem-solving efforts until the student successfully responds to instruction/interventions, how is the school to respond when a parent requests an evaluation?** – Parents continue to have the right to request an evaluation but may not be clear about what that means. School personnel should explain that a comprehensive evaluation is not a set of tests given on a scheduled date; rather, it is the evaluation of the team's analysis of evidence collected over time which considers how best to meet their child's educational needs. School personnel should also emphasize that they will continue to pursue effective instruction/interventions for the child and provide "help," whether the child is determined eligible for resources through special education or not. If a parent requests an evaluation, schools should obtain consent to evaluate. However, the problem-solving/response to intervention process should continue concurrently with the 60-day timeline for evaluation. If, at the end of the 60-day evaluation timeline, the group of qualified professionals conducts the analysis of available evidence and does not have enough evidence to determine eligibility, the group can propose an extension of the evaluation timeline or conclude that the eligibility decision must be made with the currently available information. The school's responsibility is to meet the student's instructional/intervention needs as informed by the student's on-going response to what is being implemented and adjusted accordingly. Thus, the problem-solving/response to intervention cycle continues with or without an eligibility determination.

You may access the Rule in full and other resources related to SLD, including the Technical Assistance Paper, at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>.

- Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>
- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478 or David Wheeler, at wheeler@usf.edu or (850) 245-7851

1/29/10

SLD UPDATE

- **SLD Rule** – On January 21, 2009, the program Rule for specific learning disabilities (SLD) was adopted by the State Board of Education. The Rule, in its entirety, became effective March 23, 2009. The Rule requires

the use of RtI data as part of the comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility. Districts are encouraged to provide clarification to relevant staff members on the following points:

- Following the effective date of March 23, 2009, a District's Special Programs and Procedures (SP&P) Document was amended to identify one of the following processes school-by-school:
 1. RtI Process within Comprehensive Evaluation OR
 2. RtI Process and relevant pattern of strengths and weaknesses within Comprehensive Evaluation
- The process identified in #2 above will be phased out on July 1, 2010. This creates a PHASE-OUT period for the "discrepancy model" and other patterns of strengths and weaknesses so that, beginning in July, 2010, schools are prohibited from REQUIRING pattern of strengths and weaknesses such as an ability/achievement discrepancy or a pattern on psychological processes in order to find a student eligible for SLD.
- In addition to the RtI process, the process identified in option #2 above allows schools to simultaneously require a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, such as a significant discrepancy between a student's ability and achievement, in order to be found eligible until July 1, 2010. This allows schools to scale up problem solving/RtI practices, while continuing to employ previously utilized assessments district-wide, if specified within the district SP&P document.
- *All components of the rule have been required since March 23, 2009.*

As a reminder, the general application of problem-solving/response to intervention (RtI) for school-wide practices has been increasingly supported since the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004. The components of IDEA that require the application of RtI to eligibility decisions for special education programs have been in effect since 2006. Since then, several program Rules have been revised to reflect those requirements, such as the general education intervention Rule and the eligibility rules for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities and intellectual disabilities.

- ❖ **What is a "Comprehensive" Evaluation?** – A comprehensive evaluation is an evaluation conducted in accordance with the evaluation procedures in Rule 6A-6.0331(5), F.A.C. A comprehensive evaluation uses a variety of assessment tools and strategies, does not rely on a single measure or assessment, assesses the student in all areas related to the suspected disability, and identifies the student's individual educational needs. For a student suspected of having a specific learning disability, a comprehensive evaluation includes all the existing information on the student (e.g., graphic representations of the student's rate of progress and level of performance using progress-monitoring tools; observations; reports; parent input; local, state, and district assessments; etc.) as well as any additional assessments that the group of qualified professionals determines necessary to identify the special education needs of the student and determine whether a student is a student with a disability.
- ❖ **IDEA does not prescribe that specific types of evaluation procedures or state that specific tests be administered to all students.** The only direct reference to "comprehensive" in IDEA is the requirement that an evaluation be "sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related services needs." This is reinforced in Rule 6A-6.0331(5)(g), F.A.C., which requires that an evaluation be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of a student's ESE needs. A complex evaluation that only identifies a disability without determining need does not meet the IDEA standard of a "comprehensive" evaluation. Many types of evaluation procedures can contribute to a comprehensive evaluation. The type of additional information needed to establish the presence of a disability and the special education needs of a student beyond what is prescribed by the eligibility criteria is determined by the group of qualified professionals on a student-by-student basis.

You may access the Rule in full and other resources related to SLD at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>.

- Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>
- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478 or David Wheeler, at wheeler@coedu.usf.edu or (850) 245-7851

1/15/10

Winter 2010 Florida RtI Update Newsletter – The *Florida RtI Update* is the newsletter published by Florida’s Problem-solving/Response to Intervention Project based at the University of South Florida. The Winter 2010 publication is now available for download at <http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/newsletters/2010/winter2010.pdf>. To access the project’s Web site, go to <http://floridarti.usf.edu>. If you have difficulty downloading the newsletter, please contact Judi Hyde, Communications Coordinator, Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project at jhyde@tempest.coedu.usf.edu.

- Link: <http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/newsletters/2010/winter2010.pdf>
- Link: <http://floridarti.usf.edu>
- Contact: Judi Hyde, at jhyde@tempest.coedu.usf.edu

12/18/09

Visit National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI)’s RTI State Database –This Database provides resources that were developed by states and districts in the U.S. on a number of topics related to RTI. You can search by state, by topic, or by resource type to help you find information of interest. The database can be accessed through the NCRTI homepage (www.rti4success.org) by clicking on the “Search the RTI State Database” button.

- Link: www.rti4success.org

12/4/09

Available Resources – The RtI Teaching Learning Connections (RtITLC) project provides professional development in the areas of literacy and mathematics to support the instructional components needed to intensify instruction for all learners. Web-based products and events related to RtI awareness, literacy, mathematics, diverse learners, and differentiated instruction are available for access and/or download through RtITLC at <http://rtitlc.ucf.edu/index.html>. You may contact RtITLC via e-mail at RtITLC@mail.ucf.edu.

- Link: <http://rtitlc.ucf.edu/index.html>
- Contact: RtITLC@mail.ucf.edu

Resource from The National Center on Response to Intervention – Access the Updated [Screening Tools Chart](#). This chart represents the results of the second annual review of screening tools by the Center’s Technical Review Committee. The chart provides ratings on the technical adequacy of screening tools used within an RTI context. The tools were rated against five technical standards: (1) classification accuracy; (2) generalizability; (3) reliability; (4) validity; and (5) disaggregated reliability, validity, and classification data for diverse populations. Additional information on the efficiency of the tools and how to implement them can be found on the chart as well. The National Center on RTI publishes this tools chart to assist educators and families in becoming informed consumers who can select screening tools that best meet their individual needs. Please note that the Center does not endorse or recommend the tools included in the chart. For more information, visit www.rti4success.org.

- Link: www.rti4success.org

11/20/09

Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) - Questions and Answers: State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03018, Florida Administrative Code, Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities – The purpose of this TAP is to provide technical assistance regarding the revision of State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03018, Florida Administrative Code, Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities, including changes in the definition, general education intervention procedures and activities, evaluation requirements, eligibility criteria, documentation of determination of eligibility, and implementation requirements.

- Link: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5586/dps-2009-177.pdf>
- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478

10/23/09

Response to Intervention: Select State Programs – ([click here to link to document](#)) This brief policy analysis gives a concise background to RTI, a definition, and describes the U. S. Department of Education’s role in RTI. The data on states (Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island) were gathered based on a document search protocol. The areas described include the state RTI frameworks; RTI administration including rules, guidance, and funding mechanisms; implementation; data and outcomes; and challenges.

- Filename: RTI-SelectStatePrograms-final.pdf
- Link: ([click here to link to document](#)) <http://projectforum.org/docs/RTI-SelectStatePrograms-final.pdf>

9/25/09

Florida Response to Intervention (RtI) Parent Resource in English (Information for Parents) and Spanish (Spanish Version) – This brochure is provided by the Florida Department of Education in collaboration with Bureau of Family and Community Outreach, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Pasco County School District, and Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project. The publication has a focus on “Ensuring a Strong Start, Promoting a Bright Future” through an overview of RtI, how parents can be involved, key questions for parents to ask, and recommendations for parents if they believe their child is struggling. Visit <http://www.florida-rti.org/> for additional resources related to RtI in Florida.

- Link: [Information for Parents](#)
- Link: [\(Spanish Version\)](#)
- Link: <http://www.florida-rti.org/>

Four Part Video Series: RtI Overview, Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 – Dr. George Batsche, co-director of the Problem-solving/Response to Intervention Project at the University of South Florida, has recorded a series of videos titled *Understanding RtI*. The videos are posted on the new *Florida on iTunes* Usite. If you do not already have the free iTunes application installed on your computer, you will need to download it first. To download iTunes for Windows or Mac, go to <http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>. Once you have installed iTunes, there are three ways to find "Understanding RTI":

1. DIRECT: Here's a direct link that will open the "Understanding RTI" collection in iTunes.
<http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/inFlorida.edu.2478246379.02478246385>
2. BROWSE: Go to <http://floridaitunesu.com/> and click the "Visit Us on iTunes U" button, then click on the "Understanding RtI" link on the main page.
3. SEARCH: Open the iTunes application. Click on the iTunes store. Use the search box in the upper right corner to search either "RTI" or "Batsche" and the collection comes right up.

For questions, please contact James Welsh, Florida Center for Instructional Technology, jlwelsh@coedu.usf.edu.

- Link: <http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>
- Link: <http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/inFlorida.edu.2478246379.02478246385>
- Link: <http://floridaitunesu.com/>
- Contact: James Welsh, Florida Center for Instructional Technology, at jlwelsh@coedu.usf.edu

9/10/09

National Response to Intervention Resource – RtI Responder is the monthly online newsletter from the National Center on Response to Intervention. To subscribe, go to <http://www.rti4success.org>, scroll to the subscription window at the bottom left of the screen, and enter your e-mail address to sign up. Monthly features include quick links, center highlights, resources, and news from the US Department of Education.

- Link: <http://www.rti4success.org>

Fall 2009 Florida RtI Update Newsletter – The *Florida RtI Update* is the newsletter published by Florida’s Problem-solving/Response to Intervention Project based at the University of South Florida. The Fall 2009 publication is now available for download at <http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/newsletters/2009/fall2009.pdf>. To

access the project's Web site, go to <http://floridarti.usf.edu>. If you have difficulty downloading the newsletter, please contact Judi Hyde, Communications Coordinator Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project at jhyde@tempest.coedu.usf.edu.

- Link: <http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/newsletters/2009/fall2009.pdf>
- Link: <http://floridarti.usf.edu>
- Contact: Judi Hyde, at jhyde@tempest.coedu.usf.edu

8/21/09

New! [Specific Learning Disabilities Resources](#) Page on BEESS Web Site – Resources disseminated by BEESS related to SLD are now listed in one location. This page will be updated frequently for quick access to related State Board Rules, Technical Assistance Papers (TAPS), helpful Web links, and other documents. Visit the BEESS Homepage at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>, then click on Resources in the left column. Or, mark the page directly at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>.

- Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>
- Link: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/sldr.asp>
- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478

8/14/09

NEW! Revised On-line Introductory RtI Course – The online introductory RtI Course, originally developed and hosted by the University of South Florida has been updated and revised in collaboration with the Florida Center for Interactive Media (FCIM) based on user feedback and the on-going development of Florida's RtI efforts. It can now be accessed by anyone at <http://www.florida-rti.org/introCourse/>. This professional development tool is excellent for independent or group study, particularly to build initial awareness, understanding, and practice with case studies. For questions related to content, please contact Heather Diamond at heather.diamond@fldoe.org. For technical questions, please call (800) 357-1072 or email your question(s) to support@fcim.org.

- Link: <http://www.florida-rti.org/introCourse/>
- Contact: For questions related to content, contact Heather Diamond at heather.diamond@fldoe.org; for technical questions, contact (800) 357-1072 or support@fcim.org.

7/31/09

National RtI Resources and Events (General) – American Institutes for Research and researchers from Vanderbilt University and the University of Kansas -- through funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) -- have established the National Center on response to intervention (NCRTI). The Center's mission is to provide technical assistance to states and districts. The final webinar in the CBM Summer Series, [Using CBM to Determine RTI](#) (click to access directions for joining), will be held on **August 11, 2009 from 12:00 – 1:00pm EST**. This is the third webinar in the series. If you missed either of the first two, you can view the webinar and material on-line:

- [Introduction to Curriculum Based Measurement](#) (click to access the archived webinar)
- [Intro to CBM in Reading](#) (click to access the archived webinar)

This training, **Using CBM to Determine RTI**, is free to all participants. Participants need not have attended previous webinars in the series to benefit from the last one, but if you are new to CBM we recommend that you view the first two webinars prior to participating in the third. District or school administrators, teachers, related service providers, and parents who are interested in learning about CBM and how to utilize CBM data in an RTI framework are encouraged to participate. You can view the content of this webinar by [clicking here](#) and accessing the PowerPoint and training manual.

- Link: [Using CBM to Determine RTI](#)
- Link: [Introduction to Curriculum Based Measurement](#)
- Link: [Intro to CBM in Reading](#)

7/10/09

Results from First Year of RtI Pilots – The Statewide Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) Project has made available an evaluation report that summarizes first year findings from 40 pilot schools across the state. The report contains information on consensus building, infrastructure development, and implementation activities engaged in by the PS/RtI Project and pilot schools. Findings regarding how well those activities resulted in changes in educator beliefs and skills as well as PS/RtI implementation outcomes are discussed. The findings from this report may be useful to districts as they begin to address implementing PS/RtI practices in their schools. To download a copy of the evaluation report, click on the following link:

http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/yr1_eval_report.pdf.

- Link: http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/yr1_eval_report.pdf
- Contact: Clark Dorman, at dorman@coedu.usf.edu or Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org

6/19/09

Florida's Problem-solving and Response to Instruction/Intervention Information for Parents – A new brochure is provided by the Florida Department of Education in collaboration with Bureau of Family and Community Outreach, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Pasco County School District, and Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project. This publication has a focus on "Ensuring a Strong Start, Promoting a Bright Future" through an overview of RtI, how parents can be involved, key questions for parents to ask, and recommendations for parents if they believe their child is struggling. This brochure is available for download and is posted under *RtI News* at <http://www.florida-rti.org/>. It can also be accessed directly at <http://www.florida-rti.org/RtI-Parent-Brochure.pdf>.

- Link: <http://www.florida-rti.org/>
- Link: <http://www.florida-rti.org/RtI-Parent-Brochure.pdf>

6/21/09

Problem-solving/Response to Intervention (RtI) Resources – The National Center on Response to Intervention (http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1) has announced the release of the [Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#). This chart represents the results of the first annual review of reading and math progress monitoring tools by the Center's Technical Review Committee (TRC). The chart provides ratings on the technical adequacy of progress monitoring tools used within an RTI context. The tools were rated against criteria for general outcome measures, or mastery measures. Additional information on how to implement them can be found on the chart as well. The information in the chart is intended to assist educators and families in becoming informed consumers who can select progress monitoring tools that best meet their individual needs. The Center's TRC will review progress monitoring tools annually, with the next call for tools being issued in fall 2009. View the [Progress Monitoring tools chart](#).

The National Center Response to Intervention is hosting a series of free webinars on Curriculum Based Measurement. Learn what CBM is, how to administer it, and how to use the data you collect in a response to intervention framework. The presenter, Dr. Michelle K. Hosp, is a Research Associate at the University of Utah. Her research focus is on using curriculum based measurement (CBM) to inform instruction in the area of reading. To join the upcoming webinars, link on the following dates **from 12:00 – 1:00pm Eastern Time**. Pre-registration is not required for these free events.

July 14, 2009 [How to Administer CBM in Reading](#)

August 11, 2009 [Other Ways to Use CBM Data](#)

This series of modules provides information about how student progress monitoring, specifically Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM), can be used to determine a student's response to an intervention. The six modules include Introduction to CBM, Using CBM in Reading, Using CBM in Math, Using CBM in Written Expression and Spelling, Other ways to use CBM Data, Using CBM to Determine RTI. These modules have been developed for use in conducting professional development, course offerings, or individual study. Each module includes a PowerPoint presentation with notes, a manual, and handouts. The modules are intended to be used as a series in

the order listed above. However, each can stand on its own so you can study the module that best fits your needs. View the [CBM Modules](#).

- Link: http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1
- Link: [Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#)
- Link: [How to Administer CBM in Reading](#) (Webinar on July 14, 2009)
- Link: [Other Ways to Use CBM Data](#) (Webinar on August 11, 2009)
- Link: [CBM Modules](#)

5/29/09

RtI-Related Resources - The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) is a central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education. As an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the WWC produces user-friendly [practice guides](#) for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms; assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of [interventions](#) (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions; develops and implements [standards](#) for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and provides a public and easily accessible [registry of education evaluation researchers](#) to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Practice guides provide practical recommendations for educators to help them address the everyday challenges they face in their classrooms and schools. Developed by a panel of nationally recognized experts, practice guides consist of actionable recommendations, strategies for overcoming potential roadblocks, and an indication of the strength of evidence supporting each recommendation. These guides are subjected to rigorous external peer review. The following practice guides are now available:

- **Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools**
Taking early action may be key to helping students struggling with mathematics. The eight recommendations in this guide are designed to help teachers, principals, and administrators use Response to Intervention for the early detection, prevention, and support of students struggling with mathematics. [View, download, and print the full report as a PDF file](#) (1.98 MB) Released: April 2009
- **Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades**
This guide offers five specific recommendations to help educators identify struggling readers and implement evidence-based strategies to promote their reading achievement. Teachers and reading specialists can utilize these strategies to implement RtI and multi-tier intervention methods and frameworks at the classroom or school level. Recommendations cover how to screen students for reading problems, design a multi-tier intervention program, adjust instruction to help struggling readers, and monitor student progress. [View, download, and print the full report as a PDF file](#) (1.30 MB) Released: February 2009
- Contact: Heather Diamond at Heather.Diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478

4/30/09

DPS:2009-057 Compilation of Stakeholder Concerns and Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Responses regarding the Revised Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) Rule – The Department of Education has issued the following memorandum regarding the DPS:2009-057 Compilation of Stakeholder Concerns and Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Responses regarding the Revised Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) Rule. The memorandum may be viewed at: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5372/dps-2009-057.pdf>

- Link: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5372/dps-2009-057.pdf>

3/27/09

SLD Rule Reminder – As a reminder, the Rule entitled *Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* is **effective beginning March 23, 2009**, and is accessible at the following link: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?ID=6A-6.03018>. You can double click the Word file icon to download the official rule language. Technical assistance is still in the approval and publishing process. Also, we have begun the planning process for five state-wide regional SLD workshops to take place this summer and will inform you of dates and locations as soon as they are established.

Meanwhile, we will be hosting monthly open discussion conference calls as a forum specifically for SLD contacts to pose questions and exchange perspectives. Based on the featured discussion topics as listed below, please consider involving appropriate team members. These topics have been chosen based on the types of questions submitted and are meant only as a guide to target the discussions. The format of these calls will remain informal and will hopefully result in discussions that shape future technical assistance, including the content for the SLD workshops to be scheduled for this summer. Our goal is to support your efforts toward implementation quality related to the new rule, both during the transition period and in the long-term. Due to the desired informal nature of these calls, they will not be recorded and agenda items will remain flexible. The dates, topics, and call details are as follows:

- **April 2, 2009 10:00-11:00**
 - Topic: Evaluations and Assessments
- **May 7, 2009 10:00-11:00**
 - Topic: Documentation Requirements
- **June 4, 2009 10:00-11:00**
 - Topic: Evidence Based Interventions
- **July 2, 2009 10:00-11:00**
 - Topic: Progress Monitoring, Data Collection, Graphing, Decision Making, and Reporting
- **August 6, 2009 10:00-11:00**
 - Topic: Problem-solving and Response to Intervention for Students with Disabilities

Participants Directions

1. At the specified time, dial your Reservation less-Plus Dial-In Number **(888) 808-6959**
2. When prompted, enter your Conference Code **(3239900)** followed by #
 - Link: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?ID=6A-6.03018>
 - Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478

3/5/09

Reminder and Clarification of SLD Rule Timeline – On January 21, 2009, the program rule for specific learning disabilities (SLD) was adopted by the State Board of Education. It will become effective March 23, 2009. The Rule requires the use of RtI data as part of the comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility.

Districts are encouraged to provide clarification to relevant staff members on the following points:

- Following the effective date of March 23, 2009, a District's Special Programs and Procedures (SP&P) Document shall be developed to identify one of the following processes school-by-school:
 1. RtI Process within Comprehensive Evaluation **OR**
 2. RtI Process *and* relevant pattern of strengths and weaknesses within Comprehensive Evaluation
- The process identified in #2 above will be phased out on July 1, 2010. This creates a PHASE-OUT period for the "discrepancy model" so that, beginning in July, 2010, schools are prohibited from REQUIRING pattern of strengths and weaknesses such as an ability/achievement discrepancy in order to find a student eligible for SLD.
- In addition to the RtI process, the process identified in option #2 above allows schools to *simultaneously* require a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, such as a significant discrepancy between a student's ability and achievement, in order to be found eligible until July 1, 2010. This allows schools to refine their problem solving/RtI practices, while also relying on the previous model if needed.

- All components of the rule will be implemented on March 23, 2009.

As a reminder, the general application of problem-solving/response to intervention (RtI) for school-wide practices has been increasingly supported since the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004. The components of IDEA that require the application of RtI to eligibility decisions for special education programs have been in effect since 2006. Since then, several program rules have been revised to reflect those requirements, such as the general education intervention rule and the eligibility rules for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities and intellectual disabilities.

Note: The SP&P template will be provided to districts no later than the last week in March 2009.

- Contact: Heather Diamond, at heather.diamond@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0478 for questions regarding the content of the SLD Rule
- Contact: Trish Howell, at patricia.howell@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0475 for questions regarding the SP&P

Comprehensive Early Intervention Services (CEIS) and Response to Intervention (RtI) – Recent guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) emphasizes that if a district either opts to use the CEIS funds (up to 15%) or is required to because of disproportionality rates, the funds must be used for students receiving intervention beyond core instruction. This means that CEIS funds are to be used to benefit individual students receiving targeted (tier 2) and intensive (tier 3) interventions within the RtI continuum.

- Contact: Karen Denbroeder, at karen.denbroeder@fldoe.org or (850) 245-0475