What is Response to Intervention (RTI)?
RTI is a multi-tiered, collaborative approach to providing academic and behavioral supports to struggling learners at increasing levels of intensity. RTI can be used for making decisions about general, compensatory, and special education, resulting in a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention directed by student outcome data and matched to student needs. It has the potential to limit the amount of academic failure that any student experiences and to increase the accuracy and relevance of special education evaluations.

What is the goal of RTI?
To ensure that all children have access to high quality instruction and learning opportunities and that struggling learners are identified, supported, and served early and effectively.

What is the impact of RTI on Schools and Students?
RTI engages educators and families in an effective and ongoing collaborative partnership, enhances communication, and pools expertise and resources that benefit schools and students. Effective implementation of RTI will require some fundamental changes in the way many educators currently engage in assessment, instruction, and intervention activities, and the way school leaders assign staff and allocate resources.
**Essential Components**

**There are several essential components to RTI:**
- All students receive high quality, scientifically-based instruction provided by qualified personnel, to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction.
- All students are screened to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional support.
- Increasingly intensive instruction is provided in a multi-tiered approach to struggling students. This instruction is matched to student needs based on levels of performance and rates of student progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention.
- Student progress is monitored frequently to examine student achievement and monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- Data-based decisions are made regarding students’ instructional needs based on multiple data points taken in context over time.

**Factors essential to the success of an RTI approach are:**
- Teachers must implement instruction and intervention with fidelity, i.e., as intended and with appropriate consistency.
- Schools must implement essential components of RTI with fidelity, i.e., consistent with critical program design features.

**LD Identification**

RTI provides useful information as part of a comprehensive assessment for accurately determining if a student has a specific learning disability (SLD). Including student performance and rates of student progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention.

**Scope**

RTI can enhance student achievement across age ranges and domains. Although the majority of research in RTI implementation has been conducted on reading interventions at kindergarten-third grade, there is evidence of promising practices across a much broader scope, including:
- Preschool through secondary
- Academic and behavioral domains
- Across content areas (e.g., reading, writing, math, social studies)
- Diverse and disadvantaged student populations

**Supportive Contexts**

Leadership is vital to build the internal capacity and sustainability for successful implementation of RTI. Building and district administrators must create educational environments that support educators and families in their various roles within RTI. In addition, features of an RTI model need to be responsive to the characteristics of each school community, thus resulting in customized approaches in the ways that individual schools and districts institute and implement the essential components of RTI.

**Steps that schools must take to create effective RTI programs include:**
- Build consensus across all stakeholders (general and special education, support and administrative personnel, families, and students).
- Evaluate the current status and readiness to embrace the various essential components of RTI.
- Provide ongoing professional development that is matched to the needs of staff and the greater school community.
- Schedule common planning time to allow for successful collaboration.
- Reallocate staff to provide supports within the general education classroom.
- Assign coaches or mentors to support educators in their new roles and responsibilities in order to ensure fidelity of implementation at both the teacher and school levels.
- Build in ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the RTI process.

**The Role of Families**

Families are critical partners in effective implementation of RTI. They can provide important information about the student’s academic and behavioral struggles, and can support the instructional program put in place for their child. Schools should inform families when their child has been identified as needing additional supports, engage the families in planning and implementing these supports, and update them on a regular basis regarding the instructional strategies being used and the progress that the student is making.

Consistent with federal legislation, for those students for whom RTI is part of the SLD identification process, parents must be notified about (a) the State’s policies regarding student performance that will be collected and the services that will be provided in general education; (b) the strategies used for improving the child’s achievement; and (c) the parents’ right to request an evaluation.

**Professional Preparation and Development**

Colleges and universities need to include training in the components of RTI at the pre-service level to prepare future teachers to engage in responsible and effective implementation of RTI. Especially important is the need for higher education to make certain that general education teachers are proficient in differentiating instruction to meet student needs.

School districts need to provide ongoing professional development for educators as they begin to implement RTI and as new staff are hired. Training across school personnel is essential to ensure that all educators have the skills and knowledge needed to implement RTI with fidelity.

**Research**

There is a substantial and expanding evidence base to support the efficacy and benefits of RTI implementation at this time. There are also many unanswered questions that still need to be addressed.

Ongoing research is critical not only to “fine-tune” RTI across age ranges and content areas, but also to identify conditions in schools that enable RTI programs to be successful. It is especially important to devote resources to studies that will help distinguish among and better clarify established evidence, emerging evidence, and promising practices related to RTI.

**Conclusion**

RTI holds the promise of systemic education reform ensuring that all children have access to high quality instruction and learning opportunities, and that struggling learners - including those with learning disabilities - are identified, supported, and served early and effectively. Through collaborative partnerships among educators and families, quality instruction, progress monitoring to match instruction and interventions with student needs, and improved accuracy of disability determination, RTI can serve as a means for systems change that will improve educational outcomes for all students. The realization of this promise depends upon careful implementation to ensure that all components are in place.

**RTI ACTION NETWORK**

Helping All Students Succeed