

1034 – Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) Procedures

The purpose of this document is to provide procedural information regarding the implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) in Commission authorized charter schools.

School Responsibilities

Schools shall follow all state requirements, including State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03-.03(6), and State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03-.15 when facilitating the RTI² framework.

Leadership

Each authorized charter school shall designate an RTI² team that meets regularly to ensure the fidelity of the instruction and interventions and make data-based decisions regarding appropriate student placement in interventions. These teams may include the principal or his/her designee, classroom teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, school psychologists, school counselors, English Learner (“EL”) teachers, special education teachers, and other staff, as necessary. The school level RTI² team shall meet at least quarterly, following the close of each universal screening window if applicable.

Assessment

Assessment is the collection of data from multiple sources for use during data-based decision making. Assessment aligned to grade-level standards may include:

- Formative assessment, such as interim and benchmark assessments, teacher-made tests, and school made common assessments. Formative assessment may also include informal assessment (e.g., bell ringers, exit tickets, item analysis from benchmark tests, rubrics, oral response, anecdotal evidence, etc.).
- Summative assessments, such as state-level assessments or end of unit and/or module culminating tasks.

Additional data may also be used to inform changes to teachers’ instructional strategies for students who may need more support and greater scaffolding of instruction in Tier I. These potential data sources are described in the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

Universal Screening

Authorized charter schools shall establish a universal screening process that best meets the needs of their students and shall conduct screening for reading, written expression, and mathematics.

- In grades K-8, the selected universal screener shall be a skills-based, nationally normed screener which produces a composite score. Please reference K-3 TN Universal Reading Screener Administration Guidelines for more information related to K-3 universal reading screening.

In grades 9-12, schools shall collect multiple sources of data that can be incorporated into an early warning system (“EWS”). The EWS may include data from universal screeners, achievement tests, End-of-Course (“EOC”) exams, student records (e.g., grades, behavioral patterns, attendance, retention, and past RTI² interventions), Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (“TVAAS”) student score projections, and the ACT/SAT or other nationally normed assessments. The EWS shall include an attendance indicator, a behavior indicator, and an academic competency indicator. See RTI² Resources: Educator for EWS resources.

The universal reading screener (“URS”) for all grades must be administered following established guidelines. However, the administration of the universal reading screener for grades K-3 must meet the guidelines specified in the K-3 TN Universal Reading Screener Administration Guidelines regarding fidelity of administration, accurate data collection/reporting, testing windows, and probe and assessment alignment.

- In grades K-12, RTI² teams shall use and analyze the results of the skills-based universal screener or EWS compared to other classroom-based assessments to identify students “at-risk”. These may include, but are not limited to, standards-based assessments, grades, formative assessments, summative assessments, classroom performance, teacher observations, etc.
- In grades K-12, students identified as “at-risk” shall be administered survey-level and/or diagnostic assessments to determine student intervention needs. In accordance with the Commission’s Dyslexia Monitoring Procedures, reading survey-level assessments must explicitly measure characteristics of dyslexia.

Universal Screening Tools and Administration

Seven universal reading screeners have been approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) for kindergarten through grade 3. The selection of a universal reading screener for grades 4-12 and universal mathematics screeners and a universal screener for written expression for all grades is left to school discretion; however, the universal screening tools shall meet the criteria for selection found in the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

Universal Reading Screening Administration

Grade Level	Universal Screening Tool	Times of Administration
Grades K-3	One of seven approved screeners	Three times a year (fall, winter, spring)
Grades 4-6	School choice based on established criteria	Three times a year (fall, winter, spring)
Grades 7-8	School choice based on established criteria	Annually or three times a year for students determined "at risk"
Grades 9-12	Early Warning System	Annually or three times a year for students determined "at risk"

Universal Mathematics and Written Expression Screening Administration

Grade Level	Universal Screening Tool	Times of Administration
Grades K-3	School choice based on established criteria	Three times a year (fall, winter, spring)
Grades 4-6	School choice based on established criteria	Three times a year (fall, winter, spring)
Grades 7-8	School choice based on established criteria	Annually or three times a year for students determined "at risk"
Grades 9-12	Early Warning System	Annually or three times a year for students determined "at risk"

As outlined in the Commission's Dyslexia Monitoring Procedures, the universal reading screening process in kindergarten through grade 12 will be the tool for identifying students with the unique learning need of characteristics of dyslexia who will receive an Individualized Learning Plan for Characteristics of Dyslexia ("ILP-D").

Progress Monitoring

Once a student is receiving targeted intervention, progress monitoring shall be utilized to assess the student's academic performance, to quantify the students' rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. Progress monitoring shall be completed according to the deficit area using an instrument that is sensitive to change.

Progress monitoring shall be conducted with measures that are at a student's skill/instructional level, which can be determined through a survey-level assessment. Progress monitoring shall take place at a frequency of at least every other week. Students shall also be progress monitored at grade level to monitor the students' progress toward grade level expectations at least once a month in addition to instructional level progress monitoring.

Results of progress monitoring probes should be recorded and regularly reviewed in comparison to a student's previous performance and progress toward his/her goal. Progress monitoring tools shall meet criteria outlined in the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

Fidelity Monitoring

The goal of fidelity monitoring is to ensure that the intervention is being implemented with integrity and to the specifications of the intervention methodology or program being utilized. Commission authorized charter schools shall have a process for monitoring fidelity. This process shall include a description of who is responsible for fidelity monitoring and how often fidelity in Tier II and Tier III interventions will be monitored. Fidelity monitoring may be conducted by school administrators, instructional coaches, or other qualified personnel as determined by the school. If interventions are not implemented with integrity, interventionists should be supported with training. Guidance for fidelity checks can be found in the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

Data-Based Decision Making

School teams shall have a process in place for analyzing student performance according to data to determine the most appropriate instructional pathway for each student. Multiple sources of data shall be used to identify individual student strengths and areas of need and provide school teams with accurate information for making informed decisions about skills-specific interventions, re-teaching, and enrichment for each child.

If a school has a large number of students falling below or above national norms, a school data team may use "relative norms" instead of national norms to guide the identification of at-risk

students. Schools shall continue to use national comparisons for overall program evaluation to determine whether Tier I instructional practices are successful in improving student performance.

- **Tier I Instruction.** All data, including data derived from the universal screening process, shall be considered when making instructional decisions for students in Tier I core instruction. No single source of data should override or supersede another.
- **Tier II and Tier III Intervention.** For students receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention, data from multiple sources, including progress monitoring, shall be utilized to make instructional decisions for intervention. Schools shall show how students are progressing toward expected growth goals using a Rate of Improvement ("ROI") to determine adequate progress.

Teams should consider multiple pieces of data including teacher and parent input, classroom assessments and work samples, and other benchmark assessments when determining if a student has not responded to researched-based interventions. A plan shall be in place for responding when students are and are not making adequate progress within Tier II or Tier III. If a team believes a student has not made adequate progress and suspects a disability, the team shall refer the student for an initial evaluation for special education. There is nothing preventing a school team from referring a student in any tiered intervention for a special education evaluation at any time.

Implementation of Instruction and Intervention

Commission authorized charter schools shall have a written plan describing systems for documenting student progress in intervention, monitoring intervention attendance, communicating with families regarding Tier II and Tier III intervention, and meeting exit criteria. Guidance may be found in the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

School RTI² teams will meet quarterly at minimum to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions, and check student progress toward goals. The school level RTI² support team will determine which students will be placed in Tier II or Tier III.

A student who is receiving special education services shall not be excluded from tiered intervention in reading, math, or written expression if their data indicates a need. School RTI² teams working with Individualized Education Program ("IEP") teams shall decide the most appropriate placement for that student's individual service needs, which could include tiered intervention support within the general education RTI² framework, in addition to other special education services.

RTI² and Child Find

RTI² is used as a component of the process to determine whether a child has a Specific Learning Disability (“SLD”) in basic reading skills, reading comprehension, reading fluency, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression for students in grades K-12. Other areas of deficit, including listening comprehension and oral language, may fall under speech and language impairment or specific learning disability, depending on the student’s learning profile.

A student suspected of having a specific learning disability shall be referred for an initial evaluation for special education. A referral for special education evaluation may happen at any time, regardless of the student’s current tier of intervention, number of current data points, or the number of weeks a student has received interventions. A Special Education teacher shall be a participating member of the school-level RTI² data team if a student with a disability is being discussed.

RTI² and English Learners

A student who is receiving EL services shall not be excluded from tiered interventions. A student’s EL services shall not overlap with RTI² supports. An EL teacher shall be a participating member of the school-level RTI² data team if an EL student is being discussed. For more information, please see the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) Instructional Decision-Making Guide K-12.

RTI² and Characteristics of Dyslexia

Schools shall implement procedures for identifying characteristics of dyslexia through the universal screening process required by the RTI² framework. For more information, please see the Commission’s Dyslexia Monitoring Procedures, the Dyslexia Resource Guide, and the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

Tier 1 Instruction (Core Instruction)

The entire range of learners, including students who are identified with disabilities, students who are identified as gifted, and English Learners, are included and shall actively participate in Tier I instruction. Tier I instruction should be scaffolded and responsive to students’ growth. Implementing effective Tier I instruction includes:

- Knowledge and deep understanding of Tennessee State Standards;
- High quality instructional materials in accordance with standards and grade-level expectations;

- Assessment of student progress toward mastery of content/standards and appropriate response; and
- Communication of student progress toward mastery of grade level standards with students' parents/guardians.

Tier I Interventions may include flexible grouping, high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring, and summer programming.

Tier II and Tier III Intervention

Tier II and Tier III interventions shall be systematic, research-based interventions that target the student's identified area of deficit: basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression. Implementing effective Tier II or Tier III intervention includes:

- Delivery by highly qualified, trained personnel;
- Implementation with fidelity and confirmed with measurement;
- Progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met; and
- Limited in group size.

Tier II intervention shall be in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I and should meet the needs of students "at risk." The implications of Tier II intervention are to support the student's need and better equip the student for success in Tier I instruction.

Tier III intervention shall be in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I and should meet the needs of students identified as "at risk" for the greatest challenges with Tier I instruction. Tier III shall differ from Tier II in intensity of intervention by increased length, frequency, or duration of implementation, as well as by instructional design. Tier II and Tier III intervention time and group size guidance can be found in the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.

Students who exceed grade-level expectations may be considered "advanced." These students may require additional enrichment opportunities.

Tier II, Tier III, and Early Warning Systems in High School

Students who flag for risk through a school's EWS shall be considered for additional screeners, survey-level assessments, necessary classroom supports, and interventions as determined by the school RTI² team. The provision of Tier II and Tier III intervention shall be built into the high school master schedule to ensure students are not prevented from acquiring the needed credits for high school graduation. The Tennessee Department of Education ("TDOE") offers high school course codes for Tier II and Tier III intervention. For more information on scheduling options,

consult the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual. Intervention programming shall match the area of deficit and be delivered with high fidelity.

Special Education Referral Procedures

RTI² shall not be used to delay or deny an evaluation for special education. If a school suspects that a student may have a disability that adversely affects the student's educational performance, the school shall refer the student for an initial evaluation and should not require the student to participate in all tiers of intervention, to participate in any tier of intervention for a pre-defined number of weeks, or to score below an assessment cutoff. Eligibility for special education and related services must be determined based on all data about the student available to the school and whether the student meets standards associated with a Specific Learning Disability. The intervention must have empirical evidence supporting its use in addressing the area of suspected disability (i.e., basic reading skills), and the progress monitoring tool selected must be able to provide evidence that the student did not make progress in the area of suspected disability.

Students may be screened by a specialist (e.g., school psychologist) at any time within the tiers to provide instructional and/or program planning information. If a student fails to make adequate progress, the information obtained from any screenings completed during the intervention process may be used as a part of the eligibility determination following informed written parent consent.

If, within the RTI² process, the team suspects that a student may be evidencing a disability other than SLD, then the referral process for that disability must be followed. For example, a student who is suspected of having an intellectual disability may be referred prior to the completion of the RTI² process.

If interventions have been provided and a gap analysis indicates a student's progress is not sufficient for making adequate growth within the current intervention, then the team may obtain consent to conduct an initial evaluation for special education and related services. The student shall remain in intervention and continue monitoring while the requested evaluations are completed. All data collected during the initial evaluation process, including the student's responsiveness to intervention, shall be reviewed to determine eligibility. For more guidance on Special Education Referrals and SLD Eligibility Criteria, including evaluation participants and exclusionary factors, please refer to the Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual.



Parent Request for Evaluation

If a parent or legal guardian requests an evaluation within the RTI² process, the team shall complete the agreed upon components of the evaluation within the initial evaluation timeline that begins with the school's receipt of informed parent consent, unless the charter school does not suspect a disability and refuses the parents' request for an evaluation formally via a prior written notice.

If a parent requests an evaluation, the school shall include for consideration all intervention and progress monitoring data available at the time of referral, including any additional progress monitoring data that can be collected during the evaluation process. The student shall continue to receive intervention in the specific area of deficit and continue to be progress monitored.

Additionally, should a parent or legal guardian present the school with "outside evaluation(s)" or "medical prescriptions" in which a recommendation has been made for a student to receive an IEP, the team shall convene to consider those recommendations. However, the team's determination on how to address the needs of the student may or may not include a recommendation for evaluation, and if the team decides not to assess, then the refusal to evaluate should be documented formally within a prior written notice.

LEA Responsibilities

RTI² Monitoring

The Commission shall monitor compliance with state law requirements through an annual review of authorized charter school RTI² procedures. Schools may document specific RTI² service times through the Student Service Schedule Template submitted annually through the reporting calendar to demonstrate that RTI² interventions do not conflict with special education, EL, or ILP-D services and supports.

RTI² team meetings must be held at least quarterly to ensure the fidelity of the instruction and interventions and make data-based decisions regarding appropriate student placement in interventions.

Each school shall retain copies of all sign-in sheets, agendas, and presentations (if applicable) for school RTI² team meetings and shall submit evidence of meetings each semester by the assigned deadline on the reporting calendar.



RTI² Support

The Exceptional Education Coordinator shall communicate with the school leader and/or designee in charge of the RTI² team meeting process to serve as a resource for any questions and to ensure that the RTI² process is taking place with fidelity.