



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

### 1. What Is Response To Intervention (“RTI”)?

“RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying student response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be used for making decisions about general, compensatory, and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by student outcome data.”

(Source: National Association of State Directors of Special Education and the Council of Administrators of Special Education, White Paper on RTI, May 2006.)

### 2. What is RTI’s legislative basis?

Before the reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 2004, most models of identification of struggling students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) used an approach described as the “Discrepancy Model” in which an IQ and an achievement test were administered to identify the difference between intelligence and achievement in order to identify special education students. This became known, in some circles, as a “Wait-to-Fail” approach. A growing body of scientific research supports Early Intervention Services (EIS) methods, including RTI, which have been developed to ensure that all students receive and benefit from ongoing assessments and high-quality instruction to target individualized intervention.

Neither the Discrepancy Model nor RTI is federally mandated. Each State Education Agency (SEA) determines and regulates its own RTI blueprint for adoption at the district level.

### 3. How Are States Complying with Specific Learning Disabilities Regulations?

The most significant change in the 2006 regulations is the requirement that a state “must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.” The regulations also provide that a state “must permit the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention,” and “may permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.”

The OSEP explained further in a policy letter that, “while a state cannot require the use of a severe discrepancy model, a state may prohibit, or make optional, the use of a severe discrepancy model.” In addition, under the IDEA 2006 regulations for all evaluations [§300.304], a public agency must “not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate education program for the child.”

A recent report from the NASDSE provides a summary and analyses of what 49 states are doing to comply with final regulations on SLD.

## Key Findings

- An analysis of the responses suggests that all 49 responding states have made, or are in the process of making, changes in their regulations and/or policy to comply with the changes in the 2006 IDEA regulations on SLD eligibility.
- The majority of states have decided to allow the use of either response to scientific, research-based intervention or a severe discrepancy model in establishing eligibility for SLD.
- Summary of responses:

Options in Revised Regulations	Number	States
Regulations <b>require</b> the use of response to scientific, research-based intervention and do <b>not</b> allow use of severe discrepancy in establishing eligibility for SLD.	6	<i>Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, West Virginia</i>
Regulations allow the use of <b>either</b> response to scientific, research-based intervention <b>or</b> severe discrepancy in establishing eligibility for SLD (i.e., the LEA chooses which approach to use for all such determinations)	26	<i>Alaska, California, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming</i>
Regulations allow response to scientific, research-based intervention, severe discrepancy <b>or</b> any other research-based alternative to be used in establishing eligibility for SLD.	10	<i>Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina</i>

- The remaining seven responding states have not yet completed action on their regulations. *Connecticut* and *Louisiana* will adopt the first option in the table, while *Maryland* and *Massachusetts* have issued guidance indicating their regulatory decision falls into the second choice in the table. A decision was not indicated by *Hawaii, Louisiana, and Wisconsin*.

Source: NASDSE, State Eligibility Requirements for Specific Learning Disabilities, July 2008

## 4. How Is RTI Funded?

Districts within a state are permitted to use up to 15% of IDEA, Part B funds to develop and implement coordinated Early Intervening Services (EIS), of which a RTI Model program is one example, for students in kindergarten through grade twelve (12). RTI emphasizes students in kindergarten through grade three (3) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. States also have the discretion to define the term "significant disproportionality," which is based on the number of minority students in special educational programs. If the number of minority students is not proportional to the number of total students, a school district must set aside 15% of IDEA funding to EIS.

(Source: C. Blascke, Targeting Federally-Funded Niche Markets When Overall Budgets Are Tight, 3/7/08)

### Funding highlights:

- In 2007-08, the total amount of EIS funds is estimated at \$1.5B.

## 5. What types of assessments are recommended as part of an RTI model?

In order to meet the instructional needs of students, the United States Department of Education (USDE) has charged schools with assessing all students including the economically disadvantaged, those who are English language learners, and others who are struggling to learn. To effectively evaluate all students under the RTI model, a school or district must consider the data related to universal screening or school-wide screening within a general education environment.

In addition, educators might also consider diagnostic or progress monitoring assessments to assess additional instructional needs. The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD) outlines these assessments by table including the purposes of each type of assessment within the RTI process.

Table 2.1. Purposes of Three Types of Assessment

	<b>Screening</b>	<b>Progress Monitoring</b>	<b>Diagnostic Tests</b>
<b>Population</b>	School-wide	Class/small group/student	Individual student
<b>Uses</b>	Broad Index	Specific academic skill or behavioral target	Specific academic domains of knowledge, skills, or abilities
<b>Frequency</b>	Yearly/3x/monthly	< 3 weeks/weekly/daily	Yearly
<b>Purpose</b>	Identify students who are at risk	Regroup students	Identify specific student deficits
<b>Focus</b>	School focus	Student/class focus	Student focus
<b>Instruction</b>	Class/school instruction and curriculum decisions	Within intervention (curriculum/instruction)	Selecting curriculum and instructional methods
<b>Implications</b>	As first step for intervention planning	Continue or revise placement	Planning or specifying intervention

For more information on assessment in RTI from NCRLD, see National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD), RTI Manual, Section 2, August 2006 ([http://www.nrclد.org/rti\\_manual/pages/RTIManualSection2.pdf](http://www.nrclد.org/rti_manual/pages/RTIManualSection2.pdf))

## 6. What are important considerations to keep in mind when selecting and/or developing assessments?

RTI requires that students be assessed according to the state proficiency requirements. Thus, the assessments used for universal screening and progress monitoring need to be aligned with state standards. Further, the assessments should mirror the test blueprint in use within the state. Additionally, the assessments should provide diagnostic information pertaining to the skills requiring additional instruction and remediation. Finally, and many consider this most critical, if important decisions are being made from the results of assessments about curriculum, professional development requirements, and student instructional needs; then, those assessments must be of the highest quality. Assessment items should be developed in such a way as to assess student's full knowledge and take into account questions of bias and fairness review. They must discriminate appropriately between high and low performers and data should be captured to evaluate item and test validity and reliability.

## 7. What are the features of an effective RTI model as related to assessments?

RTI increases the likelihood that all students will be successful in school through high-quality classroom instruction. The model consists of a cycle of initial assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring. Essential features include:

- Universal screening and classroom intervention:
  - Applies to all students in general education, including struggling students
  - Helps teachers to improve their instructional practices and to identify additional intervention that may be required
  - Allows translation of data into easy-to-understand formats
- Continuous progress monitoring:
  - Helps ensure a student is not struggling due to low-quality instruction or inappropriate curriculum
  - Matches the level of support to each student need through a multi-tiered approach; from general screening to highly individualized and targeted needs-based intervention
  - Provides research-based interventions through instructional assistance in a timely fashion and serves students who require little intervention, as well as students who require long-term intervention
- Utilizes scientific, research-based instruction and intervention, aligned with state standards, and implemented with fidelity. In the process of selecting assessments, districts may be referred to The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring which provides information on scientifically-based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. CTB's Yearly ProgressPro™ ranks very high in all defined categories.
- Ongoing data analytics and informative reporting:
  - Provide individualized guidance based on a data-driven approach to instruction
  - The RTI process provides the necessary data for districts to make an informed evaluation concerning a child's need for further evaluation, and possibly require special education services.
  - If a child is identified in need of special education services, the data collected from the RTI process will assist districts in identifying the instructional needs of the child and the appropriate special education services or additional SLD evaluations. RTI allows for exit from special education when appropriate and based on ongoing measurement of progress and response to intervention.
- Fidelity of implementation:
  - Interventions are designed, implemented, and assessed for their learner effectiveness
  - Focuses on whether those individuals providing the intervention follow the process as prescribed to ensure that the intervention was implemented as intended and with consistency
  - Ensures ongoing evaluation of the interventions to ascertain that students are progressing toward achievement or determining if there is a need to change the intervention approach

## 8. How Do CTB Products Complement the RTI model?

RTI programs are designed around a multi-tiered approach to instructional intervention from universal screening to highly intensive and targeted needs-based interventions. Some states have adopted a 3-tier system; others have 4, 5, or more tiers.

CTB solutions complement the RTI model as examples of the type of assessment and progress monitoring that can be utilized to fulfill the RTI requirements. CTB products deliver total solutions and provide the “value-added” benefit of satisfying multiple assessment needs, including RTI.

**Tier 1:** Universal screening for all students—*TerraNova*,™ *Third Edition*, *Acuity*™ and *Writing Roadmap*™

- Deliver age- and grade-appropriate assessments of student achievement for universal screening options, diagnostic and formative assessments, instructional resources, and opportunities for highly targeted needs-based intervention
- Provide resources to support differentiated, high-quality instructional activities for all learners, at all levels
- Support delivery of high-quality instruction
- Writing Roadmap helps students in need of targeted writing assistance

**Tier 2:** Progress Monitoring and Instructional Resources—*Acuity*, *Yearly ProgressPro*, *Writing Roadmap*

- Help educators further uncover strengths and areas of instructional need, assess whether the interventions are working, and determine whether the student is making progress
- Provide a data-driven, systematic approach to improving instructional decision making and student performance
- Yearly ProgressPro utilizes Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) research to provide ongoing and frequent progress monitoring
- Supply actionable reports that allow educators to closely monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions
- Help educators at all levels know whether interventions and progress monitoring efforts are tracking toward success

**Tier 3:** Individualized Programs – *Yearly ProgressPro*

- Provide tools to complement highly intensive and individualized instructional intervention through research-based progress monitoring (CBM).
- Move beyond traditional summative tests with ongoing “out-of-the-box” assessment solutions with built-in customization opportunities.

(See CTB/McGraw-Hill’s *Response to Intervention* brochure for further discussion of RTI tiers and how CTB solutions fit.)

## 9. How does Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) progress monitoring apply to RTI?

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is used to find out how students are progressing in basic academic areas such as math, reading, writing, and spelling. CBM monitors the effectiveness of instruction and tracks both mastery and retention of grade-level skills. If a student’s performance is not meeting expectations, the teacher then changes the way of teaching to find the type and amount of instruction needed to make sufficient progress toward meeting the academic goals.

CTB's Yearly ProgressPro is based on CBM methodology and can be strategically positioned for RTI. The data management and reporting capabilities allow educators to trend and track student performance, and the system measures individual students or the whole-class by skills.

For more detailed and technical information about using CBM, see the following articles:

- What is Scientifically-Based Research on Progress Monitoring? by Lynne S. Fuchs and Douglas Fuchs, Educational Publishing Research center, Columbus, OH, 2002. [CTB.com/YearlyProgressPro](http://CTB.com/YearlyProgressPro)
- Monitoring Student Progress in Individualized Educational Programs Using Curriculum-Based Measurement, by Pamela M. Stecker at the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring website: [www.studentprogress.org](http://www.studentprogress.org).
- Brown-Chidsey, Rachel and Steege, Mark W., Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice, 2005, Guilford Press.

## **10. How does CTB's data-driven approach to student achievement relate to RTI?**

- Supports RTI models with a continuous process for collecting, sharing, and reporting ongoing student progress
- Conveys opportunities for differentiated instruction at the student, small, or whole-group levels
- Streamlines data presentations to support team-based instruction and collaboration—majority of districts report RTI efforts initiated as a “unified effort”

## **11. How do CTB products support fidelity of implementation requirements?**

- Align reporting data with curriculum to help educators monitor and analyze fidelity of implementation; robust report portfolios available with all CTB solutions
- Allow educators to monitor student progress relative to state standards
- Help determine success of interventions

See Q.3 for further definition of fidelity of implementation

The U.S. Department of Education has set the criteria with regard to what constitutes the standards in Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: a User Friendly Guide. <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorous/vid/index.html>

## **12. What professional development supports RTI implementation?**

Each district must ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out instruction are appropriately and adequately prepared, subject to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and individual state administrative codes.

Additional professional development considerations may include:

“...those relating to the area of universal and diagnostic assessment, the collection and interpretation of data for ongoing progress monitoring at the classroom, school, and district levels, the development of collaborative team problem solving (such as the Instructional Support Team model) and the development of skills in identifying instructional needs, as well as linking appropriate interventions to individual instructional needs, and specific professional development as it may relate to the implementation of district selected scientifically research based instructional interventions to support students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports.”

**13. General Education vs. Special Education—Is a child with a disability who is already receiving special education and related services also eligible to receive services using response to intervention (RTI) strategies?**

Response to intervention (RTI) strategies are tools that enable educators to target instructional interventions to children's areas of specific need as soon as those needs become apparent. There is nothing in IDEA that prohibits children with disabilities who are receiving special education and related services under IDEA from receiving instruction using RTI strategies unless the use of such strategies is inconsistent with their individualized education programs (IEPs).

Early intervening services are for children in kindergarten through grade 12, with a particular emphasis on children in kindergarten through grade 3. Thus, the Local Education Authority (LEA) may not use Part B funds to provide Early Intervening Services (EIS) to non-disabled preschool children.

**14. Does each Local Education Authority (LEA) have to select either RTI or a Discrepancy Model to determine if a child has a specific learning disability (SLD)?**

No. The State agency must adopt criteria regarding the determination of SLD eligibility. A variety of assessment tools must be used. No single measure or assessment can be used as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability.

## Sources and Resources

Blascke, Charles, Special Reports, Suggestions for Approaching Districts with Increased Title I Funding, May 8, 2008 and Targeting Federally-Funded Niche Markets When Overall Budgets Are Tight, March 7, 2008.

Brown-Chidsey, Rachel and Steege, Mark W. **Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice**, 2005, Guilford Press.

Council of Administrators of Special Education. CASE National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004.

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Mellard, Daryl, NRCLD Principal, Understanding Responsiveness to Intervention in Learning Disabilities Determination, September, 2004). Retrieved from <http://www.nrclid.org/about/publications/papers/mellard.html>.

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National Center on Response to Intervention, <http://www.rti4success.org>.

National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, see website: <http://www.nrclid.org>.

National Center for Learning Disabilities, see website: <http://www.rtinetwork.org>.

**National Center on Student Progress Monitoring**—<http://www.studentprogress.org>.

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