

# Response to Intervention – RtI

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## What is Response to Intervention (RtI)?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a process by which schools use data to identify the academic and behavioral supports each and every student needs to be successful in school and leave school ready for life.

RtI is driven by general education, though it has been demonstrated to be effective for students served in special programs (e.g., Special Education, English Language Learners Gifted/Talented, etc.). Based on a three-tiered model of prevention (Universal, Targeted and Intensive) RtI provides students with evidence-based instruction and interventions matched to their needs, and monitors student progress to improve their educational outcomes.

RtI also allows educators to evaluate the overall health of their system and target resources by providing the necessary data to determine which elements of the education system are performing adequately and which require further development.

RtI is a decision-making framework composed of evidence-based practices in assessment and instruction. RtI *is not* a packaged program, set of assessments or curriculum that can be purchased.

## How does RtI connect with the Governor’s Blueprint?

RtI is a process for providing evidence-based instruction matched to students’ needs. It is not an independent initiative, but an **evidence-based delivery system** for the provision of the content outlined in the Iowa Core, and, more recently, Iowa’s (1) ESEA waiver request and (2) legislative blueprint.

- (1) The **ESEA waiver** outlines Iowa’s plan to provide college and career ready expectations for all students; provide Iowa’s schools with differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and support effective instruction and leadership in Iowa’s education system. RtI is the evidence-based delivery system for all of these pieces. In an effective RtI system, clear, rigorous expectations are set for all students, and the assessment and instruction needed to reach those goals are provided through a statewide system of supports. RtI indicators can be used to help identify schools engaging in effective practice, and those in need of additional support. When schools do need additional support, implementing RtI with fidelity will improve their system to meet the needs of all students.
- (2) The **legislative blueprint** outlines an education system built around the principles of great teachers and leaders, fair measures, and innovation. An effective RtI system gives education professionals the support they need to help students achieve, measures student achievement using only technically adequate tools as needed, and supports the use of innovative strategies.

The blueprint specifically addresses the need for all students to be proficient readers by the time they complete third grade. This is a critical earmark as the research shows success in reading proficiency has lifelong implications and becomes more challenging the longer we wait. The Governor’s blueprint outlines the focus and support on this critical component – the **what** we need to do as an educational system. Response to Intervention is **how** we need to coalesce as a system to achieve this end. RtI provides the supports that kids need to learn to read in a system of early

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warning, giving students the help they need before they are too far behind to catch up. If kids are taught in an RtI system from early childhood, the need for retention at the end of third grade should be minimal. Florida’s model – which includes third grade retention – is also heavily based on RtI.

## **How is this different from any other Iowa education initiative proposed in the last 20 years?**

- Our target is to significantly improve reading instruction in EVERY early literacy classroom in Iowa, not just some.
- Non-negotiables will be established such as the use of (a) valid and reliable universal screening and progress monitoring tools, (b) evidence-based practices at the universal, targeted and intensive levels of support, and (c) data-based decision-making.
- We are laying the groundwork so that all levels of the system (DE, LEA, DE, Professional Organizations etc.) will support the same result – Every learner. Proficient reader. End of third grade. Period!

## **What is our timeline to address reading proficiency in the state?**

RtI will be scaled using an evidence-based model in four phases: consensus building, infrastructure development, implementation, and sustainability. The statewide implementation plan is built around these four areas. In 2012-13, the following will be accomplished:

- (1) Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring tools identified for K-6 reading;
- (2) Evidence-based Universal, Targeted, and Intensive programs/strategies identified;
- (3) Implementing RtI in Iowa will begin as a partnership between the SEA, AEA and LEAs in the area of reading, with mathematics and social-emotional-behavioral to follow.

## **What are the roles of the SEA, AEA and LEA?**

### *Primary Role of the SEA*

The primary role of the SEA is to set statewide outcomes/accountability measures, and to establish the structure, policy and guidance necessary to support Iowa’s educational system. To support implementation of RtI, the SEA is responsible to develop outcomes that indicate effective implementation and change, and the structure, policy and guidance to support essential program components (e.g., identify specific evidence practices), and phases of implementation (Consensus, Infrastructure, Implementation and Sustainability).

### *Primary Role of the AEA*

The primary role of the AEA is to develop and implement quality professional development (PD) based on state guidance to support schools and teachers. To support RtI, each AEA will implement a research-based infrastructure (called an innovation zone) and deliver consistent, high quality Professional Development for schools and teachers to implement essential RtI components across the phases of implementation (consensus/commitment building).

### *Primary Role of the LEA*

The primary role of the LEA is to provide the frameworks and instruction necessary to ensure all children and youth reach and exceed grade-level expectations across academic and behavioral areas. To support implementation of RtI, the LEA is responsible to work in collaboration with their AEA in PD/coaching to enhance practice, and structure the system to accommodate new learning, resources and staff needs.