



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

JACK O'CONNELL
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

November 14, 2008

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION

Response to Intervention (RtI) is emerging nationally as an effective strategy to support every student. The California Department of Education (CDE) is squaring the term RtI to Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) to define a general education approach of high quality instruction, early intervention, and prevention and behavioral strategies. Attached are the CDE's definition, philosophy, and core components of RtI². RtI² offers a way to eliminate achievement gaps through a school-wide process that provides assistance to every student, both high achieving and struggling learners. It is a process that utilizes all resources within a school and district in a collaborative manner to create a single, well-integrated system of instruction and interventions informed by student outcome data. RtI² is fully aligned with the research on the effectiveness of early intervention and the recommendations of the California P-16 Council's themes of access, culture and climate, expectations, and strategies.

RtI is cited in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 related to the determination of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and 34 *Code of Federal Regulations* sections 300.307, 300.309, and 300.311. The IDEA regulations allow for the use of a process, based on a child's response to scientific, research-based intervention, as a component to determine if a child has a specific learning disability. Thus, the data gained during the implementation of an effective RtI² system can be part of the process to identify students with learning disabilities. Research shows that implementation of RtI² in general education reduces the disproportionate representation of certain groups of students identified as needing special education services.

Together, we can close the achievement gap and open the door to a better future for every student, without exception. I look forward to continuing our work together.

If you have any questions regarding RtI², please contact Anthony Monreal, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Branch, at 916-319-0806 or by e-mail at amonreal@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack O'Connell".

JACK O'CONNELL

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Attachment

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Response to Instruction and Intervention

Definition

In California, Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) is a systematic, data-driven approach to instruction that benefits every student. California has expanded the notion of Response to Intervention to RtI². RtI² is meant to communicate the full spectrum of instruction, from general core, to supplemental or intensive, to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students. RtI² integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education through a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student.

Philosophy

As embodied in the core purpose of the California Department of Education, "We believe that the public school system must meet the comprehensive learning needs of each student to reach high expectations. Equity of access to quality public education is the right of every student and the responsibility of the State of California."¹

In addition, according to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, "Real, measurable progress has been made since the institution of standards-based education. But, while improvement in our schools has been nearly universal, our across-the-board success has still failed to close an achievement gap that threatens the future of our diverse state. Recognizing this is important. Addressing it is imperative. Too often, the struggles of the African American student, the English learner and the learning disabled student were hidden by overall school achievement gains. That day is past. Today we are holding ourselves accountable for the results of all children. And when we see significant groups of students falling far short of the goal of proficiency that we hold for all students we must act. Today, equipped with specific knowledge of those gaps, we must focus as never before on solutions."²

¹ California Department of Education. *Belief and Purpose*. 18 January 2008. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/mn/mv/> (accessed August 25, 2008).

² Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, "State of Education Address." Address given before educational leaders, Sacramento, California, February 6, 2007.

Of the many solution strategies that have been employed nationwide, the RtI² model hopes to create in California's schools and districts the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap. RtI² focuses on the individual student and provides a vehicle to strengthen performance for struggling students before educational problems increase in intensity and special education seems the only viable option. Leadership is critical to the implementation of RtI². To be effective, RtI² must harness and coordinate the full resources of the school, district, and community. Administrators and their leadership teams, in collaboration with all teachers, have central roles in the planning, implementation, and successful day to day use of the RtI² approach. Analyzing how students respond to instruction and interventions is an organizing principle for structures and programs that already exist in our schools. An education system implementing RtI² promotes collaboration and shared responsibility for the learning of all students across all personnel and programs located in any given school.

Core Components

1. **High-quality classroom instruction.** Students receive high-quality and culturally relevant, standards-based instruction in their classroom setting by highly qualified teachers.
2. **Research-based instruction.** The instruction that is provided within the classroom is culturally responsive and has been demonstrated to be effective through scientific research.
3. **Universal screening.** School staff assess all students to determine students' needs. Based on the collected data, school staff determine which students require close progress monitoring, differentiated instruction, additional targeted assessment, a specific research based intervention, or acceleration.
4. **Continuous classroom progress monitoring.** Classroom performance of all students is monitored continually within the classroom. In this way, teachers can identify those learners who need more depth and complexity in daily work and those who are not meeting benchmarks or other expected standards and adjust instruction accordingly.
5. **Research-based interventions.** When monitoring data indicate a lack of progress, an appropriate research-based intervention is implemented. The interventions are designed to increase the intensity of the students' instructional experience.

6. **Progress monitoring during instruction and interventions.** School staff use progress monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of the acceleration or intervention and to make any modifications, as needed. Carefully defined data are collected on a frequent basis to provide a cumulative record of the students' progress, acceleration and/or response to instruction and intervention.
7. **Fidelity of program implementation.** Student success in the RtI² model requires fidelity of implementation in the delivery of content and instructional strategies specific to the learning and/or behavioral needs of the student.
8. **Staff development and collaboration.** All school staff are trained in assessments, data analysis, programs, and research-based instructional practices and strategies. Site grade level or interdisciplinary teams use a collaborative approach to analyze student data and work together in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.
9. **Parent involvement.** The involvement and active participation of parents at all stages of the instructional and intervention process is essential to improving the educational outcomes of their students. Parents are kept informed of the progress of their students in their native language or other mode of communication, and their input is valued in making appropriate decisions.
10. **Specific Learning Disability Determination.** The RtI² approach may be one component of Specific Learning Disability determination as addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 statute and regulations. As part of determining eligibility, the data from the RTI² process may be used to ensure that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions.