Delaware Department of Education

Response to Intervention (RTI)
Frequently Asked Questions

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 child 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 child 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. Is RTI provided to all students?

RTI is a general education initiative. All students are involved in and supported by RTI, as needed. Each district must establish and implement procedures to determine whether a child responds to RTI procedures for reading and mathematics. However, students who participate in Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement standards are not required to participate in the RTI procedures.

Please refer to 14 DE Admin Code § 925.12.1 and 12.4.

3. What are the minimum requirements for RTI in the regulations?

This is a summary response. Refer to Delaware Code for full specifics related to RTI requirements. LINK – will be provided when website established.

Tier 1:
- All students participate in Tier 1 scientifically based general education core instruction delivered with fidelity in a general education setting by a general education teacher, based on state standards.
- Norm-referenced or curriculum-based instructional screenings for reading and mathematics must occur 3 times during the year for all elementary students and at-risk secondary students.
- First screening must occur within the first 2 weeks of the beginning of school year, or after student enters school for all elementary students and secondary at-risk students.
- Curriculum-based progress monitoring for reading and mathematics must occur every 2 weeks for students not meeting benchmark.
- Children scoring at or below 25th percentile on norm-referenced test or designated cut point on curriculum-based measure shall be provided Tier 2 interventions.

Tier 2:

- Scientific, research-based interventions are delivered for at least 6 weeks with fidelity, primarily in the general education setting by a general education teacher, at a minimum of 90 minutes per week (no less than 2 sessions) and are in addition to core instruction. If interventions are needed for both reading and mathematics, the instructional support team (IST) designs an intervention plan proportionate to need, not less than a minimum of 120 minutes per week.
- Curriculum-based progress monitoring for reading and mathematics must occur on a weekly basis.
- IST reviews student progress in 6-week intervals to determine trajectory toward meeting end-of-year benchmarks. Students needing additional interventions may move to Tier 3 (see IST and tier transition specifics in Delaware Code).

Tier 3:

- Scientific, research-based interventions are delivered for at least 6 weeks with fidelity, in the general education setting by a general education teacher or additional settings by other trained staff, as warranted by the intervention at a minimum of 150 minutes per week (no less than 4 sessions) and are in addition to core instruction. If interventions are needed for both reading and mathematics, the instructional support team (IST) designs an intervention plan proportionate to need, not less than a minimum of 180 minutes per week.
- Curriculum-based progress monitoring for reading and mathematics must occur on a weekly basis.
- IST reviews student progress in 6-week intervals to determine trajectory toward meeting end-of-year benchmarks. Student progress will be considered with possible initial evaluation for special education being considered after time, duration, frequency, and other contributing factors have been reviewed (see IST and tier transition specifics in Delaware Code).

Additional Requirements:

- RTI applies to all students, except those who participate in Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement standards. IEP team may personalize RTI procedures to address student need (see specifics in Delaware Code).
- Parent may request an initial evaluation for child (see specifics in Delaware Code).
- School will have a school-based team to go through data-driven, decision-making process (see specifics in Delaware Code).
- Building-level administrator and school-based team will meet to consider additional supports and strategies when 20% of students in a classroom are not meeting benchmark on any instructional screening.

4. What are the benefits of RTI?

First and foremost, RTI increases the likelihood that all students will be successful in school. RTI emphasizes quality instruction. The core curriculum and interventions must be based on scientific research, aligned with the state standards, and implemented with fidelity. RTI helps ensure a student's poor academic performance is not due to poor instruction or inappropriate curriculum. RTI emphasizes the importance of differentiating the curriculum so student needs are addressed during the core curriculum. The instruction and intervention must be matched to student need. The results of required universal screening and progress monitoring inform the teachers planning and instruction to improve their instructional practices and identify the interventions students need. RTI matches the level of support to each student's need. RTI provides instructional assistance in a timely fashion and serves students who require little intervention as well as students who require long-term intervention. The RTI process will help provide the necessary data for districts to make an informed decision concerning a child's need for 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. RTI can also support students' exit from special education, when appropriate, based on ongoing measurement of progress and response to intervention.

5. What sources of funding are available to implement RTI?

As indicated in Delaware Administrative Code, "Districts are permitted to use up to 15% of Part B funds to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services for students in kindergarten through grade twelve (12) (with a particular emphasis on 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. "

Please refer to 14 DE Admin Code §§ 924.8.0 through 8.2; 14 DE Admin Code § 924.26.

http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family/specialed/default.shtml

Also, please refer to Comments of Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 71 Fed. Reg. 46627-46628 (August 14, 2006).

http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cregs%2C

6. What professional development will support RTI implementation?

Each district must ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out instruction are appropriately and adequately prepared, subject to the requirements of 14 DE Admin Code § 923.56.0 and § 2122 of the No Child Left Behind Act.

When pursuing any professional development, the Department of Education (DOE) encourages districts, school administrators, and instructional staff to consider the individual strengths and needs of staff and programs. With respect to professional development and RTI, the implementation of a strong response to intervention process requires that instructional staff are provided quality professional development on any core curriculum

being implemented in the district. Professional development may also include administrative monitoring of the fidelity of curriculum delivery, such as administrative walk-throughs. Administrative teams may benefit from professional development around creative scheduling. In addition, staff who select curricular materials may need professional development as it relates to the selection criteria for scientifically research-based curriculum materials for the Common Core and interventions as well as the development of knowledge around validity and reliability of instructional materials and assessment.

Additional professional development considerations may include those relating to:

- Universal and diagnostic assessment;
- Collection and interpretation of data for ongoing progress monitoring at the classroom, school, and district levels;
- Development of collaborative team problem solving (such as the Instructional Support Team model);
- Development of skills in identifying instructional needs;
- 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.

Depending upon staff and program needs, other considerations may include:

- Classroom management;
- Schoolwide behavior management system (such as Positive Behavior Support);
- Differentiated instruction; and
- Co-teaching.

7. What is the timeline for implementation of RTI?

Districts are required to implement RTI for all elementary school children no later than the beginning of the 2008–2009 school year. For all other students, districts must implement RTI no later than the beginning of the 2009–2010 school year.

Please refer to 14 DE Admin Code §§ 925.6.11.3.1 through 6.11.3.2.

8. How are the highly-qualified teacher requirements linked to RTI?

All personnel serving Delaware children need to be appropriately and adequately prepared and trained with the content knowledge and skills necessary to educate our children as established by the highly-qualified teacher requirements associated with the DOE's certification regulations.

Please refer to the following Delaware code and federal regulations:

- 14 DE Admin Code § 922.3.0; § 923.56.
- 14 DE Admin Code §§ 1501-1529
- NCLB Public Law 107-110, Part A, Subpart 1 § 1119, NCLB Subpart 2, § 2122

- Comments of Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 71 Fed. Reg. 46652-46657 (August 14, 2006): http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cregs%2C

In reviewing best practices in the field of education, DOE recognizes that students who require interventions in order to successfully access the general curriculum also benefit from experienced highly-qualified teachers delivering instruction when possible and guiding the instruction for interventions. Districts and schools must ensure all students have equitable access to experienced highly-qualified teachers, including those students who fall into special education, low income, English language learner, and minority categories. Students who are receiving interventions in either Tier 2 or Tier 3 must continue to receive high-quality instruction from an experienced highly-qualified teacher during their Tier 1 instruction. During Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, students must receive high-quality, research-based instruction by the staff most qualified to meet the students' needs. Furthermore, districts and schools may find it beneficial to analyze intervention referral rates by classroom in order to guide appropriate placement of students (to ensure students with needs are equally assigned among classrooms and that a "best fit" exists between student and teacher). This would also help guide planning for teachers' professional development needs.

9. What is the difference between evaluation and assessment?

John L. Hosp, NCSP of The National Association of School Psychologists has answered this question as it relates to Response to Intervention in NASP Communiqué, Vol. 34, #7, May 2006, as follows:

> Often these terms are used interchangeably, but it can be helpful in navigating the implementation of RTI to think of how these terms are differentiated. If you think of *assessment* as the process of *collecting information,* it becomes easier to convey to teachers the need for standardization, reliability, validity, and using different assessments for different purposes. This leads to thinking about *evaluation* as the process of *using information to make decisions* (i.e., information collected through assessment). We often get caught up in the process of conducting an assessment because we had to or someone told us to do so. If we think about evaluation, it starts a dialogue about *why* we are conducting assessments. Teachers have a lot of different things to do every day. Having a reason to do something (or to not do it) can be very reinforcing as their time is valuable and at a premium. This can just be the starting point—other team members might begin to consider the purpose of their activities and find time for new by eliminating some of the old.

For full text on Assessment in Response to Intervention from this communiqué, please visit this website: http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/cq347rti.aspx.

10. What types of assessments will a district need to implement RTI?

In order to meet the instructional needs of all students, the United States Department of Education has charged schools with assessing all students. In order to effectively evaluate all students under the RTI model, the district must consider the data from assessments related to universal screening and progress monitoring. Diagnostic assessment data may also be used on a case-by-case basis 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.

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

For more information on assessment in RTI from NCRLD, please visit:
http://www.nrcld.org/rti_manual/pages/RTIManualSection2.pdf

Please also refer to 14 DE Admin Code § 925.12.6.1.

11. Do screenings have to be done at the same time for all students, i.e., can the teacher screen several children per day?

Elementary Level – Universal Tier 1 instructional screenings for reading and mathematics shall be conducted at least three times each regular school year at routine and fairly spaced intervals for all elementary students. The first screening shall be conducted within two weeks of the beginning of the regular school year or within two weeks of the child's entry into school.

Secondary Level – Universal Tier 1 instructional screenings for reading and mathematics shall be conducted for students at risk of academic failure at least three times each regular school year at routine and fairly spaced intervals. The first screening shall be conducted

within two weeks of the beginning of the regular school year or within two weeks of the child's entry into school.

Please refer to 14 DE Admin Code § 925.12.6.1.

The Delaware DOE recognizes that districts will need to follow the recommended administrative practices of the selected assessment. Certainly, fairness is a primary consideration in all aspects of testing. Careful standardization of tests and administration conditions helps to ensure that all test takers are given comparable opportunity to demonstrate what they know and how they can perform in the area being tested. Consequently, details of administration will be dependent upon the requirements of the assessment being utilized. Districts, where possible, should be cognizant of the issues surrounding measurement and timing with regard to data comparison and analysis.

The guidance provided in Joint Committee on Testing Practices (JCTP) Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education also provides guidance as it relates to testing in an educational setting. Click here to access full text.

12. **What commercial assessments and/or progress monitoring tools are currently available?**

Many publishing companies of curriculums offer curriculum-based assessment as part of the support materials sold to districts. With the changes to IDEA and the interest around Response to Intervention, many companies have developed universal screenings as well. The DOE is not recommending specific commercial assessments. While the literature around best practice recommends curriculum-based assessment, districts need to ensure any assessment utilized meets the standard of being scientifically research-based as set forth in the regulations of both NCLB and IDEA.

In the process of selecting assessments, districts may wish to refer to the following: http://www.studentprogress.org/chart/chart.asp.

The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring provides information on scientifically-based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

Research continues and claims are made by many publishers and programs. 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/rigorousevid/index.html.

13. **Is the Department recommending specific screenings?**

While DOE will not designate specific required screenings, DOE does require that districts screen students in reading and mathematics as set forth in Chapter 14 of the DE Administrative Code § 925 12.6.1: Elementary Tier 1 instructional screenings for reading and mathematics shall be conducted at least 3 times each regular school year at routine and fairly spaced intervals. The first screening shall be conducted within 2 weeks of the

beginning of the regular school year, or within 2 weeks of the child's entry into school. This stipulation also applies to at-risk secondary students.

Furthermore, DOE recommends districts consider screenings that meet the rigorous standards outlined in No Child Left Behind Act for being scientifically research-based in terms of validity and reliability of assessments. Districts implementing specific programs will use the screenings required to screen. Best practice for districts will include consideration of many factors, including but not limited to, the current district culture, practices, and curriculum; the sensitivity of instruments in identifying students at need for intervention; ongoing research and monitoring of development in the field of assessment and screening; in addition to ongoing analysis to determine if selected screenings are continuing to meet the needs of the district and its students.

14. Will the state have a form for weekly progress monitoring?

While DOE recognizes the importance of documenting data for monitoring student progress during the implementation of interventions, DOE will not supply a weekly progress monitoring form. The state dashboard may be used to capture this data.

DOE recognizes that best practices around data collection and analysis have four components as outlined below.

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

- Target skill or behavior defined clearly addressing what it looks like, how often it happens, for how long and to what degree of intensity or proficiency.
- Setting where the target behavior will be observed and recorded is described; if using multiple settings then codes to identify settings are created.
- Data recording procedures and materials are developed to specify
  - Who will collect data
  - Where data will be recorded
  - When data will be recorded
  - How data will be recorded
  - Access to and availability of needed materials
- Analysis and interpretation of data collected to determine whether desired outcomes were achieved and/or to revise, increase, decrease or discontinue the intervention.

Furthermore, in analyzing data to further plan for a student's needs, all available and pertinent data on the student should be collected and considered. This may include, but is not limited to, summative data such as state assessment results, results of universal screenings, progress monitoring, other formative assessments as well as anecdotal information collected from parents and other team members.

15. Is RTI going to result in more testing for students, with less time for teaching? How time consuming is RTI?

When compared with the 10 or more hours often estimated to go into each individualized evaluation conducted for special education eligibility, RTI procedures are really not time-consuming at all. While the research steps necessary to review potential Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions may take several hours, the benchmark testing is very brief, taking about 10 minutes per student at the longest. If CBM is used as the benchmark data collection tool, the only measures requiring individualized testing are DIBELS and oral reading fluency. In the areas of math, spelling, and writing, the assessment items can be administered to entire classes at a time. Similarly, CBM progress-monitoring procedures are very fast, involving weekly testing of 2 minutes or less per student.

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

16. Has the Delaware Department of Education approved rubrics to evaluate intervention programs for RTI?

In 14 DE Admin Code § 925.12.2 : "Public agencies shall use rubrics approved by DOE to evaluate and select programs of instruction, and Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for reading and mathematics."

Rubrics DOE recommends for schools in reading are available at http://www.fcrr.org/ and http://reading.uoregon.edu/.

Websites exist that have evaluated interventions and provide detailed information regarding their findings as to which are evidence based. Some of these are:

- http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/ The What Works Clearinghouse established by the U.S. Department of Educations' Institute of Education Sciences.
- http://www.promisingpractices.net/ The Promising Practices Network highlights programs and practices that credible research indicates are effective.
- http://www.evidencebasedprograms.org/ The Coalition for Evidence Based Policy Social Programs that Work lists programs and practices and their effectiveness.
- http://www.studentprogress.org/chart/chart.asp The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring provides information on scientifically-based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.
- Research continues and claims are made by many publishers and programs. The U.S. Department of Education has set the criteria with regard to what constitutes the standards. The recommendations in *Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide* include guidance and a rubric outlining the criteria recommended in choosing scientifically researched based materials for instruction and intervention.

Please refer to http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousevid/index.html.

17. When does a parent's right to an independent educational evaluation arise when a district is evaluating a child through the RTI process?

As mentioned, districts must eventually use the RTI standards and procedures to determine a child's eligibility for special education services under the learning disability and educable mental disability categories. A district may also use the RTI process as part of the district's evaluation to determine the educational needs of a child. A district may decide its evaluation is not complete until the district is able to collect and examine all the data it needs to evaluate a child's response to the intervention process. A parent is generally not entitled to an independent educational evaluation until the district fully completes its own evaluation.

If a parent then disagrees with the results of the district's completed evaluation (which includes a review of the results of the child's response to intervention process), the parent has a right to an independent educational evaluation at public expense, subject to the conditions in 14 DE Admin Code §§ 926.2.4.1 through 2.5.

However, a parent does not have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation at public expense before the district completes its evaluation because the parent disagrees with the district's decision to collect and examine data from the child's response to the intervention process as part of its evaluation.

Refer to Comments of Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 71 Fed. Reg. 46689-46690 (August 14, 2006): http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cregs%2C.

See also 14 DE Admin Code § 926.20; 14 DE Admin Code §§ 925.7.0 through 12.0: http://www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/specialed/default.shtml

18. What must the independent educational evaluation contain?

As a general rule, an independent educational evaluation must meet the same criteria the district used when the district initiated its evaluation. If, for example, the district's evaluation included a review of data to determine a child's response to scientific, research-based intervention, so too should the independent educational evaluation. Since the review of existing evaluation data and input from the child's parents must be part of the district's evaluation, they are also appropriate elements of an independent educational evaluation. In addition, since the district's evaluation must include a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, these elements should also be included in an independent educational evaluation conducted by an independent evaluator.

Refer to Comments of Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 71 Fed. Reg. 46689-46690 (August 14, 2006): http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cregs%2C

See also 14 DE Admin Code § 926.2.9.

19. Is there a required timeline for the start of interventions?

While the Delaware Administrative Code specifies the requirement that universal screenings for all students at the elementary level and for secondary students at risk for academic failure must be conducted within two weeks of the beginning of the school year (or entry into school), the regulations do not specify a timeline for the start of interventions. Once students have been screened, it is important that teams spend time in precise problem identification and analysis so that the appropriate interventions and instructional goals can be determined. This problem-solving process is key to the Response to Intervention process, however, should move quickly to allow for the intervention process to begin.

20. How long should the problem-solving process take?

Although finding time to pull together the team can be challenging, it is essential to completing the problem-solving process. It may be necessary to creatively structure the schedule to provide consistent, frequent times for teachers to meet with member(s) of the problem-solving team to complete the steps of problem identification and analysis as well as establishing students' baseline performance. The timeline will depend on the time necessary for assessment and analysis, the skills of the teacher and consultant/problem-solving team member(s), the complexity of the student's needs, and the consistency of meetings during the problem analysis process. Once the problem-solving team identifies the area(s) of concern, there is a professional responsibility to take appropriate action and provide interventions to meet students' identified needs.