PUTNAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

2017-18

RTI² Framework
Response to Instruction & Intervention Framework
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Introduction

We, the Putnam County School System, strive to educate students and assist them in realizing their full potential as responsible, productive, contributing members of society by providing an educational environment in which students are challenged, excellence is expected, and differences are valued. The Putnam County School System’s mission is “To produce individuals who serve and participate productively in society”. It is our goal for all students to have the resources and instruction necessary to reach their full potential while receiving a free and appropriate education.

In compliance with No Child Left Behind, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, the Putnam County School System is dedicated to meeting the needs and services for all students to receive the highest quality education through programming for the individual student. The school system adheres to a policy of non-discrimination in educational programs and activities while striving to provide equal educational opportunity for all students as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination based on disability.

The school system embraces the Response to Intervention Framework model, now part of educational law, as a system of service delivery focused on prevention and early intervention that uses assessment data for instruction, research-based intervention, and transitions between tiers. This framework allows for a culture of collaboration that is focused on student achievement, for both struggling and advancing students, educators, families and communities. Each school is dedicated to meeting the requirements of the Response to Intervention Framework Model through the oversight of the District and the School Intervention Teams’ oversight of procedures and fidelity of implementation.
Overview

Definition of Response to Intervention: (RTI)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as reauthorized in 2004, states that a process that determines whether the child responds to scientific, research-based interventions may be used to determine if a child has a specific learning disability. IDEA also requires that an evaluation include a variety of assessment tools and strategies and cannot rely on any single procedure as the sole criterion for determining eligibility.

A Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI\textsuperscript{2}) method will now be used 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 SLD including listening comprehension and oral language, in addition to behavioral concerns, may be added in the future.

The RTI\textsuperscript{2} Framework is a model that promotes recommended practices for an integrated system connecting general and special education by the use of high-quality, scientifically research-based instruction and intervention.

The RTI\textsuperscript{2} framework is a 3-Tier model that provides an ongoing process of instruction and interventions that allow students to make progress at all levels, particularly those students who are struggling or advancing.

This framework provides:

- High quality instruction aligned to Tennessee State Standards (TSS)
- Instructional decisions driven by ongoing formative assessment
- Additional time beyond the allotted core instruction for more explicit and intensive research-based intervention provided by highly trained personnel
The Ready Student Model

Strong Positive Culture in a High Expectations Environment

Planning Toward Goals
Lesson activities, materials, assessments, and student work are planned explicitly to match rigor of state and district goals while accounting for students' individual needs.

Effective Instruction
Lessons are standards based, differentiated, and anchored in contextual problems and authentic complex texts to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills in addition to strong academic and technical content knowledge.

Data-Driven Analysis
Systematic and consistent use of multiple forms of assessment evidence to uncover students' strengths and gaps while providing information for teachers' growth.

THE READY STUDENT

Academic & Technical Knowledge & Skills
Social & Personal Competencies
College & Career Readiness
RTI² and the Ready Student

The RTI² framework is critical to supporting children in becoming ready students. RTI² helps educators understand where students are and, through a multi-tiered system of support assists them in moving forward. The framework integrates Tennessee Academic Standards, assessment, early intervention, and accountability for all students. This constant system of support enables students to persist on the path to readiness and is a key measure in ensuring that more and more students are able to ultimately develop to knowledge, skills and abilities needed to be a positive member of society.

The foundation of the RTI² framework is twofold:
1. Effective instruction, and
2. A culture of high expectations for all students.

In order to achieve the vision of all students graduating K-12 education ready to be successful in their chosen path in life, educators must provide high-quality, data-driven, differentiated instruction for all students every day. This instruction must be based on knowledge of students, including their strengths and opportunities for growth, their goals, and their learning styles. In addition to the specific work in the classroom that students engage with on a daily basis, students must learn in an environment where all adults hold them to high expectations and where they are able to develop productive traits and habits. In a strong, positive culture, educators constantly ask questions: “What do my students need? And, how can I provide it?” The RTI² framework is a problem-solving methodology designed to answer these questions and ensure all students are able to benefit from strong instruction, receive support when they have a need, and thrive in a supportive environment that focuses on the whole child. The focus of RTI² should be founded on high-quality core instruction.

Tiered Systems of Support

In addition to strong core instruction in a high expectations environment, the RTI² framework includes supports for students who need it. Tiered interventions in the areas of reading, math, and/or writing occur in general education depending on the needs of the student. If a student fails to respond to intensive interventions and is suspected of having a specific learning disability, then the student may require special education interventions (i.e., the most intensive interventions and services). As always, parents reserve the right to request an evaluation at any time (see component 5OSEP memo 11/07).

Historically, the primary option available to students who were not successful in the general education classroom was a placement in special education. In the past educators used a
discrepancy model to look for gaps between student’s achievement and intellectual ability. Because these gaps often did not appear until later in elementary, this model was coined the “wait to fail model.”

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized to place an emphasis on early intervention services for at-risk children. **Schools can no longer wait for students to fail before providing intervention.** Instead, schools should employ a proactive, problem-solving model to identify and address areas of academic need. It is important to the that the **RTI² framework represents a continuum of intervention services in which general education and special populations work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students.** This includes shared knowledge and commitment to the RTI² framework, its function as a process of improving educational outcomes for all students, and its importance to the department to meeting requirements related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

**Guiding Principles**

The following are Guiding Principles for the Response to Instruction and Intervention Framework.

We believe…..

- Leadership at the state, district, and building level is essential for ensuring the success of ALL students throughout the RTI² Framework.

- A culture of collaboration that is focused on student achievement, for both struggling and advancing students, should include educators, families and communities.

- RTI² is a process focused on **prevention** and **early intervention** that uses assessment data for instruction, intervention and transitions between Tiers.

All three of these guiding principles provide the foundation for the RTI² Framework. They are integrated into every piece of the framework.
1.1 General RTI\textsuperscript{2} Information:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as reauthorized in 2004, states that a process that determines whether the child responds to scientific, research-based interventions may be used to determine if a child has a specific learning disability. IDEA also requires that an evaluation include a variety of assessment tools and strategies and cannot rely on any single procedure as the sole criterion for determining eligibility.

RTI\textsuperscript{2} will now be used 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 SLD, including listening comprehension and oral language, in addition to behavioral concerns may be added in the future.

The RTI\textsuperscript{2} framework is a model that promotes recommended practices for an integrated system connecting general and special education by the use of high-quality, scientifically research-based instruction and intervention.

The RTI\textsuperscript{2} framework is a three-tier model that provides an ongoing process of instruction and interventions that allow students to make progress at all levels, particularly those students who are struggling or advancing.

The RTI\textsuperscript{2} model, when functioning well, should meet the needs of 80-85\% of the student population. Only 10-15\% of the student population should need Tier II interventions and one 3-5\% should need Tier III interventions.

RTI integrates high-quality teaching and assessment methods in a systematic way so that students who are not successful when presented with one set of instructional methods can be given the chance to succeed with the use of other practices.

The Tennessee RTI\textsuperscript{2} Model (on the following page) is a pictorial view of the goal for a well-run RTI\textsuperscript{2} system.
**Tennessee RTI² Model**

**Response to Intervention and Instruction**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- Leadership
- Culture of Collaboration
- Prevention & Early Intervention

**TIER I**
All students receive research-based, high-quality, general education instruction. In general, 80-85 percent of students will have their needs met by Tier I instruction.

**TIER II**
In addition to Tier I, extra help is provided to students who have been identified as “at risk” in basic math and reading skills. In general, 10-15 percent of students will receive Tier II interventions.

**TIER III**
In addition to Tier I, extra help is provided to students who have not made significant progress in Tier II or who are significantly below grade level in basic math and reading skills. Tier III interventions are more explicit and more intensive than Tier II interventions.
1.2 District/School Team
As stated in the Guiding Principles, leadership and a culture of collaboration are essential to the success of the RTI² framework. **This is not a process led by special education. It is a joint effort led by general education.**

In order to have a strong RTI² program and to support a culture of collaboration, a Local Educational Agency (LEA) must have a district RTI² leadership team and school-level RTI² teams.

### The District RTI² Leadership Team

The Putnam County District RTI² Leadership team will monitor to ensure the fidelity of the RTI² process. The team will look at the district data to ensure that Tier I instruction is meeting the needs of 80-85% of students and that Tier II and Tier III interventions are meeting the needs of 15-20% of students. This team will work to organize professional development, set and monitor timelines for implementation, and guide the implementation of RTI².

The primary goal of the leadership team will be to ensure the success of all students through high quality instruction and intervention. The main responsibility of this team will be to communicate a shared vision and shared responsibility to establish and promote the leadership roles necessary to provide protocols for the efficient implementation of RTI² at the district-level. Communication from the leadership team and the school data analysis teams will be essential.

The Putnam County District RTI² Leadership team will have a designated chair or facilitator, and will be comprised of district level staff which may include curriculum supervisors, instructional coaches and others as appropriate. The District Leadership Team will meet to set the monthly guidelines for the school level data teams. A description of the responsibilities is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities of the Team</th>
<th>Role Responsibility Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish procedures for instruction and intervention practices</td>
<td>All Team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish procedures for monitoring and reporting assessment data and fidelity monitoring</td>
<td>All Team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish guidelines for planning, assessing and delivering appropriate professional development</td>
<td>All Team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish procedures for Identifying, evaluating, selecting and adopting materials and resources for high quality instruction and</td>
<td>All Team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The District Leadership Team will develop a schedule for visiting each school to provide support in their implementation.**

**The 2017-18 Putnam County District Leadership RTI\(^2\) Team will consist of:**
Sheri Roberson--Special Education Supervisor--Chairperson
Sharon Anderson--7-12 Curriculum Supervisor
Jill Ramsey--PreK-6 Curriculum Supervisor
Melanie Bussell--Student Services
District Reading Specialist
District Math Specialist

**The School RTI\(^2\) Leadership Team**

The primary goal of the School RTI\(^2\) Leadership Team will be to ensure the success of all students through high quality instruction and intervention. The team will meet a minimum of twice per 9 weeks to ensure the fidelity of the instruction and intervention, as well as make data based decisions regarding appropriate student placement in interventions. The Data Analysis Team will communicate a shared vision and shared responsibility to establish and promote the leadership roles necessary to provide protocols for the efficient implementation of RTI\(^2\) at the school-level. When placing students in interventions, it will require reviewing and discussing student data and student attendance with teachers providing interventions. Interventions must be matched to suspected areas(s) of deficit for each student.

The core School RTI\(^2\) Leadership Team will consist of a few members who attend all data analysis meetings. Additional personnel will be invited based on the specific needs of individual students. Professionals with relevant information may include the principal or his/her designee, school psychologists, speech pathologists, guidance counselors, ESL teachers, special education teachers, general education teachers, and other staff as necessary. The culture of collaboration at the school level requires an understanding that multiple staff members must share the responsibility for ensuring that all students are receiving appropriate instruction, intervention, and/or enrichment. A description of the possible members of the School Level RTI\(^2\) Team and their roles are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>intervention</th>
<th>All Team members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help parents understand purpose and strengthen parent involvement</td>
<td>All Team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish effective reporting of progress to parents</td>
<td>All Team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Role Responsibility Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor school-level procedures and timelines for instruction and interventions</td>
<td>All team members: Principal/Designee, School Counselor, Interventionist, School Psychologist, Special Ed. teacher, ESL Teacher, General Ed. teacher, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish guidelines for monitoring and assessing professional development participation and implementation</td>
<td>All team members: Principal/Designee, School Counselor, Interventionist, School Psychologist, Special Ed. teacher, ESL Teacher, General Ed. teacher, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish procedures for School-level fidelity monitoring</td>
<td>All team members: Principal/Designee, School Counselor, Interventionist, School Psychologist, Special Ed. teacher, ESL Teacher, General Ed. teacher, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish and maintain school-level procedures and timelines for assessment protocols</td>
<td>All team members: Principal/Designee, School Counselor, Interventionist, School Psychologist, Special Ed. teacher, ESL Teacher, General Ed. teacher, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop School Level RTI² timelines</td>
<td>All team members: Principal/Designee, School Counselor, Interventionist, School Psychologist, Special Ed. teacher, ESL Teacher, General Ed. teacher, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish procedures, forms, record-keeping methods, etc that will be used during the RTI process</td>
<td>All team members: Principal/Designee, School Counselor, Interventionist, School Psychologist, Special Ed. teacher, ESL Teacher, General Ed. teacher, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools will set their Data Analysis Teams and submit their teams to the District Leadership Team. Once the school has the Data Analysis Team set, they will meet and begin establishing the procedures and guidelines for the school-based implementation.

**The School RTI² Leadership Team will establish the following:**

1. **School Level RTI² Timeline**

   The timeline will include dates for universal screenings (this is set at the District Level), progress monitoring, fidelity checks of instruction and intervention, vision and hearing screenings, and Data Analysis Team meetings.
2. Procedures for record-keeping and examples of the forms that will be utilized:

Examples of forms are in the Implementation Guide for Schools to use in developing their procedures for record-keeping and progress monitoring.

3. Procedures for identifying at-risk students:

Every student will take the universal screener three times a year. Each student that scores at or below the 25th percentile will be considered at risk. These students will be tracked by the school data team who will make recommendations regarding interventions. Students scoring at or above the 92nd percentile may be considered academically advanced. These students will be tracked by the school data team who will make recommendations regarding the provision of enrichment.

4. Procedures for Universal Screening

Putnam County School District will follow the universal screening procedures as outlined in section 1.3.

5. Procedures for Parent Contact

Parents will be informed by letter if their child will receive Tier II or Tier III interventions.

Once schools have established their procedures and timelines, the school will submit to the District Data team chairperson the following: names of the school data team members, established timelines for data team meetings, procedure for notifying parents of intervention and progress, fidelity checks, and person responsible for receiving and transferring records. Form will be provided to submit to the District Data Team and should be submitted to the RTI chairperson by September 1.

1.3 Universal Screening Procedures

RTI² is a process focused on prevention and early intervention that uses assessment data for instruction, intervention, and transitions between tiers. Assessment is a major component of the RTI² Framework. Data derived from assessment informs the data-based decision making process. These screeners may not be used as student grades.

The Putnam County School System will administer a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener. A universal screener is a brief screening assessment of academic skills (i.e., basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression) administered to ALL students to determine whether students demonstrate the skills
necessary to achieve grade-level standards. Universal screening reveals which students are performing at or above the level considered necessary for achieving long-term success (general outcome measures). This data can also serve as a benchmark for measuring the improvement of a group, class, grade, school, or district. The Putnam County School System will ensure that the universal screener is appropriate for the function it serves. Furthermore, universal screening will be used to identify students in need of further intervention due to suspected skill deficits. Additional survey-level/diagnostic assessments may be needed to determine a student’s specific area(s) of deficit before beginning an intervention.

The Putnam County universal screening procedures are as follows:

**Putnam County Universal Screening Procedures--Make sure no changes needed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 times a year</td>
<td>Kindergarten-4th Grade</td>
<td>Kindergarten through 4th grade will use a universal screening tool to screen skills at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. The results will be used to monitor student growth and to help identify students at risk and who may be in need of further intervention. Kindergarten will utilize the PASS screening in the Fall for screening and MAP in the Winter and Spring so that student have time to acclimate to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th-6th grade--3 times a year</td>
<td>Grades 5-8</td>
<td>For 7th-8th grade the end of year Spring screener results will be used to place at risk students in intervention classes for the following year. For example: the 6th grade spring screening results will be used to place students in 7th grade intervention classes. The 4th-5th grade spring screener results can be used for initial placement in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Screener given to new students for placement, intervention students and sped students.</td>
<td>9th Grade Students</td>
<td>The 9th grade will use the 8th spring screener results and historical data to place students in 9th grade intervention classes. They will also begin to input student data into the Early Warning System which will include additional data points along with the Spring 8th grade screener. A spreadsheet would be started with at-risk students’ screener information, academic scores, attendance, behavior (discipline/expulsion), TCAP and any other information that would aid in helping to identify and track students whose risk status suggests they need further intervention to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Warning System</td>
<td>10th-12th Students</td>
<td>The Early Warning System would be used to track and identify students who continued to need interventions their 10th-12th grade years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Special Education Students in grades 9-12 need to continue to be Universally Screened at least 1 time per year at grade level to have an indicator of performance when compared to grade level peers. This is also used to see if the student’s achievement gap is closing. The test should be given only with accommodations that are allowable for everyone so that their true academic level of performance is not skewed by the accommodation or modification.

**High School Early Warning System**

Early warning system teams will be developed at the high school level. The primary function of an early warning system is to alert when a student falls off track. System indicators should therefore
include the strongest predictors of high school graduation. Student characteristics outside of the school’s control, such as family income, special education status, and new student status should not be used as indicators. Literature recommends starting with the ABCs as a base set of indicators.

**Attendance**—Research has shown a strong relationship between how often a student misses school and their probability of graduating in four years. **Behavior** incidents—As few as one suspension in grade 6 may predict whether a student graduates in four years. **Course** performance—number of course failures and overall grade point average obviously correlate with a student’s probability of graduating in four years.

Early Warning Systems process:

1. Academic data (include TCAP previous screening and progress monitoring data, sub group data and course grades) should be analyzed.
2. Behavioral data (include attendance, general behavior information-suspension and expulsion data, social and emotional information and juvenile court data) should be analyzed.
3. After entering the data into a spreadsheet, high school data teams need to analyze different at-risk flags and determine which students would be best served by Tier II and Tier III intervention.
4. High School data teams should meet every 4.5 weeks to analyze additional data and make appropriate placement decisions.

For the 2017-18 school year schools will utilize Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) as the Universal Screener in grades K-8 and Special Education. (took out STAR)

**1.4 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures**

Data-based decision making is the process of using appropriate data to inform and drive instructional decisions regarding prevention and early intervention. Cut scores must be established for the universal screening. These cut scores should be based on national norms at a minimum, and identify students who are at-risk. As a guideline, students **below the 25th percentile** would be considered “at-risk”. Students who exceed grade level expectations, 92th percentile or higher, may be considered “advanced” and will need appropriate interventions.

The Decision-Making Process is outlined below showing all three tiers. Below shows how instructional and intervention decisions are made based on data.

**Tier I-Core Instruction & Classroom Interventions**
All students are given the universal screener (K-8) or early warning system data collected (9-12).
Students at risk for academic failure are identified through the screening data. All students are provided high quality instruction aligned to Tennessee Standards (TSS) and monitored through formative assessments. Targeted interventions are provided to the “at-risk” and “advanced” students by the teacher within the classroom. Progress is monitored every two weeks and data is collected and considered when the School RTI Leadership Team meets to review student progress. At the School RTI Leadership Team meeting student progress is monitored, if progress has been made the team considers continuing Tier I interventions or if adequate gains have been made and interventions are no longer needed. If there has been no progress or limited progress, School RTI Leadership Team and parent consider the child for more intensive Tier II interventions. The team may also consider the need for other support staff and services such as screenings and request assistance as appropriate.

**Tier II—Secondary Interventions**
Students in Tier II continue to receive instruction in the Core Curriculum in Tier I. In addition, highly trained personnel will begin providing 30 minutes (20 min for K) of additional small group targeted intervention based on skill deficit area(s). Data is collected on student progress every two weeks and considered when the School RTI Leadership Team meets. At the School RTI Leadership Team meeting, a plan is developed for the child, determining whether to continue the intervention, alter the intervention, or move the child to a Tier III more intensive intervention.

**Tier III—More Intensive Tertiary Interventions**
Students in Tier III continue to receive instruction in the Core Curriculum in Tier I. In addition, highly trained personnel will begin providing 45-60 minutes of additional small group targeted intervention based on skill deficit area(s). Student progress is monitored at least every other week. Data is collected and considered when the School RTI Leadership Team meets. At the School RTI Leadership Team meeting, data is reviewed for progress and determination is made whether to continue with the intervention, alter the intervention, or if a referral for consideration for special education is needed.

**Tier IV Special Education**
If a special education evaluation is needed, then the state’s procedures for determining eligibility will be followed. Students receiving special education services are not bound by the RTI schedule. Their services are dictated by the IEP. The implementation of the IEP in the general education setting with regards to student accommodations/modifications are the responsibility of the general education teacher with help and guidance from special education. It is the intent of PCSS that every student is in their core instruction to the maximum intent possible and that is the first consideration made at every IEP team meeting when services and accommodations/modifications are discussed. Students are general education students that receive special education services. Special education is a continuum of services to help a student be successful in their learning not a placement.
The RTP decision-making process is outlined below in a flow chart showing all three tiers. This chart shows how instructional and intervention decisions are made based on data.

**Universal Screening Process**
- Using multiple sources of data
  - Student is at risk
  - Student is not at risk
  - Student is exceeding grade-level expectations

**Core Instruction for all students**
- High quality differentiated instruction aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards
- Instructional decisions driven by ongoing formative assessment
- High-quality professional development and support
- Fidelity of instruction and fidelity monitoring

**Ongoing Assessment**
- Required for data-based decision making
  - Student is at risk
  - Student is not at risk
  - Student is exceeding grade-level expectations

**Tier I**
- All students

**Progress Monitoring**
- Required for data-based decision making
  - Student does not make significant progress
  - Student is meeting grade-level expectations

**Tier II**
- 10-15% of students
- Targeted intervention for some students
  - Address the needs of struggling and advanced students
  - Additional time beyond time allotted for core instruction
  - High-quality intervention matched to student-targeted area of need
  - Provided by highly trained professionals

**Tier III**
- 3-5% of students
- Targeted intervention for some students
  - Address the needs of very few struggling students
  - More explicit and more intensive intervention targeting specific areas
  - Provided by highly trained professionals

**Progress Monitoring**
- Required for data-based decision making
  - Student does not make significant progress
  - Student makes significant progress

Consider possible need for special education referral after Tier II and Tier III intervention where student fails to make adequate progress based on gap analysis.
1.5 Students Entering Mid-Term

When a student enters mid-term, or any time after the universal screening is given, a process will be in place to gather assessment data on the student. School RTI Leadership Team will develop procedures for gathering the data and determine who is responsible for ensuring that it is completed. An example is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>School Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Register Student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enter student into Powerschool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Obtain school records. Contact previous school/ and/or previous teacher if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Read school records for history of intervention, including scores from the universal screener, early warning system, or any other pertinent information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Administer the full universal screener within 3-5 days for all out-of-county transfers. Administer the full universal screener if scores are not available for any reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collect “on-going” assessment data during Tier I instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>At next Data Analysis Team meeting, discuss assessment data and place student in interventions if needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School RTI Leadership Team should designate personnel responsible for steps 1-7 in chart.

The District Leadership Team will establish procedures for transferring RTI data within the district so that it can be implemented in each school. The RTI records are not part of the student’s permanent record. However, they should be sent with the student’s folder once the receiving school requests information about the student.
1.6 Contact with Parents/Guardians

Parent contact is an essential component of RTI² and reinforces the culture of collaboration. A variety of means to reach parents will be used, including electronic mail, postal service, phone communications, and student-delivered communications. School RTI² Leadership Team will develop procedures for parent contact which include designated personnel who are responsible for contacting parents at the school level. The team will also decide what forms, methods and procedures will be used for contact at each of the tiers (at the school level). Those forms are included in this document.

Parents should be contacted before initiating or discontinuing tiered interventions. The student’s intervention progress will be sent home with midterm progress reports and report cards. Parents will also be contacted if there is a need for a referral to special education.

Parent request for opting out of intervention:

Q: Do parents have the option to request their child not be placed in any intervention services? Is there a state form that a parent can sign to deny services? If not will one be provided for districts?

A: The Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) initiative will be the mandated methodology for delivery of instruction in the general education curriculum in all local education agencies in the state, effective July 1, 2014. Therefore, since RTI² is an instructional methodology mandated by policy of the state board of education via the criteria for determination of learning disabilities, it is therefore applicable to all students enrolled in a local education agency, and a parent has no legal standing to refuse the provision of instruction via a RTI² method to an individual student, just as a parent cannot refuse to allow an individual student to be instructed in mathematics, language arts, science, or any other component of the general education curriculum mandated by the state board of education.

RTI² is a general education instructional methodology, to be applied in the general curriculum, and applicable to all students enrolled in a local education agency. IDEA procedural rights, and potential entitlements, do not arise until a student is suspected of having a disability and the LEA begins the referral process. If an individual parent disagrees with the local education agency’s adherence to the state mandated method instructional delivery, he/she may exercise the multiplicity of school choice options available to the parents in our state, including private or home school instruction.

1.7 Procedures For English Language Learners

RTI² is a process focused on prevention and early intervention and designed to ensure success for ALL students, including English Language Learners (ELLs). The Putnam County School System will
administer the English Language Proficiency Assessment to students that are identified as having a language other than English on the home language survey. ELL students will also participate in the universal screener. Intervention placement should not be made until the results from the English Language Proficiency Assessment and the universal screener results can be compared and discussed. An ESL teacher will be part of the Data Analysis team when an ELL student is being discussed.

If students fall below the 25th percentile on the universal screener, and they have acquired intermediate fluency based on the English Language Proficiency Assessment, then ESL students will receive RTI interventions in their specific area (following the RTI guidelines). Intermediate and advanced language learners can access the language of academic interventions and can benefit from the interventions. ESL students may take longer to respond to interventions given their limited English Language proficiency.

An ESL teacher will be part of the School Data Analysis Team when an ELL student is being placed in or moved out of an intervention. Progress monitoring data should be presented and an ESL teacher should be present when discussing the need for a parent meeting. English Language Proficiency Assessment scores, proficiency in native language, multiple sources of data regarding their language acquisition, and progress may be discussed. School Data Analysis Teams will compare data with peers that have similar circumstances.

**ELL Considerations Prior to Interventions**

The following questions should be documented when an ELL is struggling in school:

- Is there evidence that the student is currently receiving appropriate ESL services?
- Have English language proficiency tests been administered and what are the results?
- Was the ESL instruction evidence based and how effective was the instruction?
- Is there evidence that the general education curriculum is being appropriately accommodated for ELLs?
- Are appropriate accommodations and modifications within the general education classroom being provided that address the specific cultural/language needs of the ELL?
- Is there evidence that the identified problem has been systematically addressed in the general education classroom?
- Has the student made adequate progress through the interventions and accommodations that have been provided?
- Is there evidence that the student’s behavior is significantly different from grade level peers with similar instruction time in English? Are we sure that this is not due to frustration over the target language?
- Has the student been observed in multiple settings to compare his/her behavior to grade level peers?
- Have parents been interviewed in a comfortable setting to determine behaviors at home? Is the home behavior appropriate in the student’s culture? Is the behavior appropriate for a typical classroom?
Component 2: Tier I Procedures

2.1 Description and Length of Core Curriculum

Introduction to Tier I Curriculum

Tier I instruction, also known as core instruction, provides rich learning opportunities for all students that are aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards and are responsive to students' strengths and needs through differentiation. The entire range of learners, including those identified with disabilities, students who are identified as gifted, and English Learners, are included and actively participate in Tier I instruction. Differentiation, based on multiple sources of data, is a hallmark of Tier I.

Strategic and intensive Tier II and III interventions occur in addition to Tier I instruction. Tier I provides a scaffolded model of grade-level rigor aligned to the standards; whereas, Tier II and Tier III interventions target and narrow learning gaps, making Tier I instruction increasingly accessible to all learners.

Section 2.1 of this manual focuses attention on effective Tier I practices and is divided into the following sub-sections:

○ K-12 ELA Instruction Overview
○ K-5 ELA Instruction
○ 6-12 ELA Instruction
○ K-12 Mathematics Instruction Overview
○ K-2 Math Instruction
○ 3-5 Math Instruction
○ 6-12 Math Instruction
○ 6-12 Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Career & Technical Education Instruction & Overview

K-12 ELA Instruction Overview

Tier I English language arts (ELA) instruction, aligned to the Tennessee Academic standards, is rooted in the following three instructional shifts:

● Regular practice with complex texts and their academic language
● Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational
● Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction

Students should practice the standards within the context of these shifts. That is, they should listen, speak, read, and write with the purpose of comprehending complex text, developing academic language, identifying and presenting evidence, and/or building knowledge.

The standards should be taught in a balanced and integrated manner that emphasized the
interconnectedness of the strands, and students should be given regular opportunities to apply and connect standards in a range of ways.

**ELA instruction should be student-focused and text-based.** That is, questioning, thinking, and discussion should be driven by students’ responses and interests, as well as the content and demands of the text. Instruction should support students in developing the necessary skills, including comprehension and stamina, to listen to, read, and write texts of increasing complexity and length.

To promote the integration of standards and the application of skills in context, ELA instruction should focus on:

- Listening to, reading, and comprehending appropriately complex texts;
- Close reading, including chunking and re-reading particularly difficult sections, to analyze ideas, information, and text structures;
- Vocabulary development through the text, with a focus on academic vocabulary;
- Volume of reading on one topic at a time in order to build knowledge and vocabulary;
- Speaking and writing to address text-dependent questions that promote textual analysis, reasoning, argumentation, and use of evidence to support claims;
- Explicit instruction in recognizing when to employ specific word analysis, fluency, and comprehension strategies that enhance understanding of text meaning;
- Analyzing, critiquing, and synthesizing text information for multiple purposes;
- Speaking and writing for multiple purposes that are authentic and purposeful (e.g.,
to answer questions or solve problems, to organize information, to pursue an area of interest, to share knowledge with an audience, etc.);

- Reading widely across literary genres in order to develop comprehension, intertextual connections, and vocabulary; and
- Reading widely across the content areas, including science, social studies, and fine arts, to build historical, cultural, and disciplinary knowledge that can be applied to other academic settings.

**K-5 ELA Instruction**

The goal of K-5 ELA instruction is to support all students in developing both skills-based literacy competencies and knowledge-based literacy competencies. Skills-based competencies include the procedural components necessary for accurate reading, including print concepts, word recognition, and fluency. Knowledge-based competencies are about comprehension or making meaning. They focus on the ability to understand and express complex ideas through knowledge of concepts, vocabulary, and reasoning. Both skills- and knowledge-based competencies are vitally important and neither serves as the foundation for the other. **In other words, in grades K-5, students must learn to read while reading to learn.**

ELA instruction in K-5 should engage students in multiple listening, speaking, reading, viewing, drawing, and writing activities that are hands on, concrete, and appropriate for developing children’s literacy capabilities. There should be an emphasis on reading with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression while attending to comprehension and the development of knowledge and vocabulary. ELA instruction should encourage students to express their understanding through frequent peer-to-peer discussion and interaction.

**A Balanced and Scaffolded Approach**

An effective K-5 ELA block takes a balanced, scaffolded, and integrated approach, providing students with opportunities to engage with texts in a range of ways. Through this approach, students are given opportunities to:

- Observe teacher-led models and demonstrations;
- Participate in shared reading and writing experiences where both teacher and
students take ownership for thinking; and
- Direct their own application of learning through independent practice.

This gradual release of responsibility supports students in working with texts at a range of levels, including above-grade-level texts, on-grade-level texts, leveled texts and texts for independent reading.

Additionally, a balanced approach emphasizes the integration of speaking, listening, reading and writing and provides students with opportunities to learn and apply various standards, skills and strategies. **Different modes of reading are integrated into the Tier I block, including interactive read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading.** These modes provide text access for all learners through a scaffolded approach. As students read text in different ways and for various purposes, they are given frequent opportunities to speak and write about their learning while listening to other share as well. Systematic and explicit teaching of foundational skills through connected text should be integrated within the various modes of reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Group</th>
<th>Small Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactive read alouds</td>
<td>Rereading familiar texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared reading</td>
<td>Guided reading of new texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-modeled mini-lessons</td>
<td>Literature circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word study</td>
<td>Extra text based skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discussion</td>
<td>Strategy work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Instructional Grouping**

Tier I ELA instruction should include time in both whole group and small group settings. Educators should make decisions about instructional groupings strategically, based on the goals of the lesson as well as students’ strengths and needs.

Whole group instruction is important for ensuring all students receive opportunities to observe teacher models and apply content strategies. Whole group lessons may include interactive read alouds, shared reading, teacher-modeled mini-lessons, word study, and student discussions.

Small group instruction is important for meeting the needs of individual students and student groups. Small group instruction allows educators to teach, review, or extend targeted objectives and provide students with additional opportunities for practice. Small group lessons may include rereading familiar texts, guided reading of new texts, literature circles, or extra text-based skill or strategy work. Student conferencing may occur during this time as well. All students should meet with the teacher in a small group setting a minimum of every other day; it is recommended that struggling readers meet with the teacher every day. Small groups should contain no more than six students. (More information about small group instruction is included in Section 2.2)
Purposeful Practice

Throughout the Tier I ELA block, students should be given opportunities to apply their literacy learning in purposeful and authentic ways. Purposeful practice also includes the strategic and differentiated development of literacy skills, either to strengthen an area of need or build on an area of expertise. Whole group instruction, small group instruction, and students’ independent work should focus on advancing student learning: educators should avoid one-size-fits-all assignments or giving students tasks they’ve already mastered.

During teacher-led small groups, students not meeting with the teacher should engage in purposeful practice that reinforces the standards and skills being taught in other lessons. Students can complete these activities independently or in small groups. These activities can include independent reading, partner reading, word study activities, independent writing, learning stations, book studies, listening to audio texts, reader responses, or vocabulary study.

Developmental Appropriateness

While effective instruction across K-5 grade band shares many similarities, there are important developmental distinctions between each grade level. **Educators should be mindful of selecting developmentally appropriate ELA practices, based on age, strengths, needs, and experiences of their students.** Students in lower grades should still engage with complex texts, practice close reading, read with the goal of building knowledge, etc.; however, they may do so by listening to a teacher read aloud or by working with shorter texts.

Timeframe Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Time Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-2 ELA</td>
<td>150 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 ELA</td>
<td>120-150 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In grades K-2, students should spend 150 minutes in Tier I instruction. In grades 3-5, students should spend between 120 and 150 minutes in Tier I instruction. It is strongly recommended that 90 minutes of Tier I instruction be uninterrupted, allowing adequate time for teacher modeling and student practice and the integration of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The entire ELA block should be taught by the same teacher in order to support continuity between whole and small group instruction as well as the integration of ELA standards.

The integration of science and social studies content within the ELA block can support time allocation for fully developing mastery of the ELA standards; however, the use of science and social studies text should not be substituted for content standards.
These time recommendations allow for:

- Deep meaningful, standards-based instruction;
- Adequate time for interactive read alouds and shared reading experiences;
- Approximately 60 minutes of small group instruction where teachers meet with 3-4 small groups daily for 15-20 minutes each;
- Opportunities for multiple, daily writing lessons, including on-demand writing in response to text as well as extended student-directed composition of narrative, opinion, and informational pieces;
- Daily independent reading and reading conferences; and
- Systematic and explicit instruction of foundational skills and frequent application of foundational skill to connected texts.

6-12 ELA Instruction

Tier I ELA instruction in grades 6-12 should focus on constant and critical engagement with text, where teachers guide students to construct their own insights from reading, rather than telling students what the text means. By sixth grade, students should actively and primarily read to gain knowledge, vocabulary, and increase comprehension--although some students may need additional skills-based instruction or intervention.

The majority of the ELA block should be spent reading and responding to grade-level, complex texts and applying grade-level standards. Students should engage in whole-class, small group, or partner discussions about the text and their interpretations. Discussion should provide numerous opportunities for expanding background knowledge, vocabulary, content knowledge, and shared language. Teacher facilitation should be limited during the discussion.

The majority of student writing should be based on text.

While students are expected to engage in rigorous reading and writing experiences during their ELA class, students should also read and write frequently in the majority of their other classes, including science, social studies, and mathematics.

Timeframe Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Grades 6-8 (traditional)</th>
<th>Grades 6-8 (block)</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 (traditional)</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 (block)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>55 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>55 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier I ELA instruction should consist of a 90-minute block or 55 minutes in a traditional schedule. It is strongly recommended that all schools move away from the practice of separating English language arts instruction into reading and language arts classes and instead move toward a single, coherent, integrated ELA course model, as the interconnected nature of the Tennessee Academic Standards requires students to work across multiple strands at once.
These time recommendations allow for:

- Deep, meaningful, standards-based instruction;
- Adequate time to both read and respond to text, including time for peer-to-peer discussion and writing;
- 30 minutes of whole group instruction, which may include practices such as shared reading, close reading, mini-lessons, and student discussion (this 30-minute whole group time may be non-consecutive); and
- Regular opportunities for small group instruction, where teachers monitor and interact with students during reading, speaking, and writing activities. Students should have teacher contact a minimum of every other day. Small groups can be teacher-led, transitioning to student-led as students learn to independently own their work. Each small group should contain no more than six students and should be flexible and differentiated to meet students’ needs,

**K-12 Mathematics Instruction Overview**

Mathematics instruction should provide students the opportunity to develop conceptual understanding, develop and solidify procedural fluency, and participate in meaningful problem solving application investigations. All three should be treated with equal intensity at each grade level. Emphasis should be placed on the major mathematical work within each grade as identified in the Tennessee Academic Standards. This allows students to move along a mathematical continuum preparing them for college and career expectations. Additionally, it is very important that teachers help students make connections across and between grades. **Students need to be exposed to the many connections that naturally exist within the structure of mathematics.** This coherence gives students the ability to make the necessary connections for them to build conceptual understanding not only within a grade but also from year to year.

Tier I mathematics instruction in all grade should incorporate the eight mathematical practices. Additionally, attention should be paid to literacy skills such as using multiple reading strategies, understanding and using appropriate mathematical academic vocabulary, discussing and articulating mathematical ideas, and effectively and efficiently writing mathematical arguments.

It is important to note that many mathematical concepts can be reinforced, practiced, and referenced in subjects outside of the mathematics discipline. Science courses, as well as career and technical education courses, are ideal places for students to discover the connections that exist between real life application and mathematics. Often this puts into perspective for students the connections existing between mathematics and potential career interests.

**K-2 Math Instruction**

The focus for K-2 mathematics instruction lies in four critical areas: developing and extending an understanding of the base-ten number system, building fluency with addition and subtraction, developing an understanding of measurement that culminates in students using standard units of measure, and describing and analyzing attributes of shapes.
**Timeframe Guidance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>60 minutes daily</td>
<td>60 minutes daily</td>
<td>75 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier I instruction in mathematics should be interrupted for 60 minutes in kindergarten and grade 1 and 75 minutes in grade 2. The teacher should help students develop mathematical vocabulary, understand models for different representations of mathematical concepts, and develop an understanding of multiple problem-solving strategies.

Students should participate in small groups of 3-5 students discussing and sharing ideas on a regular basis. Here, students can explore mathematical ideas together and listen to each other's ideas as they begin developing and sharing their reasoning. Additionally, students should also productively engage in whole class discussion facilitated by the teacher. Here, students can share ideas, as well as listen to and learn from others, in a respectful manner.

Small group time can also be stations set up for students to work individually or collectively on specific skills according to the needs of the students as determined by the teacher through frequent formative assessment data. It is recommended that the teacher have individual daily contact with as many students as possible either through explicit one-to-one instruction or as a part of small group instruction.

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**3-5 Math Instruction**

The focus of 3-5 mathematics instruction lies in four critical areas: building fluency with multiplication and division, developing an understanding of and computing with fractional numbers, developing a basic understanding of two-and three-dimensional geometry, and developing fluency with decimal operations.

**Timeframe Guidance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Fourth Grade</th>
<th>Fifth Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is strongly recommended that Tier I mathematics be 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction in grades 3-5. Diverse school-and grade-level structures may have an affect on scheduling. Extended time for mathematics allows students to develop conceptual understanding, develop procedural fluency, and participate in meaningful problem-solving investigations. Students should be participating in activities structured so that they can explore, explain, extend, and evaluate their progress (National Research Council, 1999).
The teacher should help students develop mathematical vocabulary, build conceptual understanding using models for different representations of mathematical concepts, build procedural fluency, and develop an understanding of multiple problem-solving strategies. Teachers should strive for a balance in the types of instruction (e.g., task based, small group, direct, group work, individual think time, etc.) present within the classroom. Each learning goal should be evaluated for which type of instruction best suits the desired outcome.

6-12 Math Instruction

In grades 6-12, the primary focus of mathematics instruction shifts from computational fluency in mathematics to the application of mathematics and to the development of strong algebraic reasoning skills culminating in students reaching college and career readiness.

Timeframe Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Grades 6-8 (traditional)</th>
<th>Grades 6-8 (block)</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 (traditional)</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 (block)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>55 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
<td>55 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier I instruction in mathematics should be 90 minutes (55 minutes if on traditional schedule) of uninterrupted instructional time. Diverse school-and grade-level structures may have an affect on scheduling.

Across 6-12 grade band, the teacher should help students continue to build mathematical vocabulary, build conceptual understanding using multiple representations of mathematical concepts, solidify procedural fluency, and solidify an understanding of multiple problem-solving strategies. Teachers should strive for a balance in the types of tasks and materials used. Additionally, time spent in direct instruction, small group or partner discussion, and whole class discussion should also be balanced.

As teachers shift toward a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application, they should engage students in a variety of tasks that address specific goals, always embedding the standards for mathematical practice and standards for mathematical literacy in all instruction. Problem solving should be at the heart of the mathematics classroom. Students should have the opportunity to make sense of mathematical concepts on their own and regularly discuss their ideas with peers. Teachers should be skilled in frequently assessing student understanding and pressing students toward the mathematical goals and essential understanding without telling students how to solve problems. Teachers should be skilled in orchestrating classroom discussions that promote students making connections between their ideas and multiple representations providing a lens for student to develop a deeper understanding of mathematics. Students should have the opportunity to apply problem-solving skills in new and unfamiliar contexts and situations.

6-12 Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Career & Technical Education Instruction Overview
Instruction in grades 6-12 should be student focused with opportunities for students to read and engage with complex text, complete tasks authentic to the discipline, and interact with each other. Teachers should guide students to gain their own insights from reading and practicing skills through relevant experiences. In social studies, science, and technical courses, students should primarily read to gain knowledge and build the necessary reading skills, including comprehension and stamina, to read, understand, and write about increasingly complex and lengthy texts. A student’s ability to master ELA standards in middle and high school is in part dependent on their engagement with complex texts in non-ELA classes. Engagement with texts that are both complex as well as interesting to students is key to developing specific content knowledge in a discipling and the ability to comprehend complex text overall.

In 6-12 science, social studies, fine arts, and technical education classes, the Tier I curriculum should address the needs of all students to develop academic and technical content knowledge in a particular discipline while also building literacy skills such as comprehension and stamina.

**Timeframe Guidance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I</th>
<th>Grades 6-8 (traditional)</th>
<th>Grades 6-8 (block)</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 (traditional)</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 (block)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, &amp; Technical Education Classes</td>
<td>55 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
<td>55 minutes daily</td>
<td>90 minutes daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Core instruction in the area of 6-12 science, social studies, fine arts, and career and technical education should consist of a 90-minute block or 55 minutes in a traditional schedule. The block should include study of complex texts or other appropriate grade-level material, as well as direct instruction, modeling, group work, and individual practice. Students should receive regular, systematic direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher should demonstrate problem-solving strategies, provide models for different representations of concepts, and develop students’ subject-specific vocabulary.
### 2.2 Instructional Practices

Tier I instruction should address all students’ strengths and instructional needs and prevent difficulties from developing. It should **focus on developing both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies and should align with grade-level standards for ELA, mathematics, and the content areas**. Effective instruction should include contextual problems paired with authentic and complex texts that support critical thinking, problem solving, and knowledge building.

Tier I instruction should be differentiated and responsive to students’ growth. Educators should proactively identify students needs through multiple sources of data and use this information to plan for differentiation. **Differentiation should be the primary response to supporting students during Tier I instruction.**

To support effective instruction, teachers should be provided with tools and training that include attention to:

- Core reading and mathematics materials and instructional methods that are
supported by evidence and research (ESSA, 2016) and are aligned to grade-level Tennessee Academic Standards;
● The universal screening process;
● Formative assessment data to determine instructional needs; and
● Ongoing, embedded support and professional learning.

Educators should also look to the TEAM rubric for descriptions of effective instructional practices that support student learning.

Section 2.2 seeks to highlight specific instructional practices that support high-quality Tier I instruction. In particular, 2.2 will discuss the following: planning, learning environment, questioning, feedback, thinking, problem solving, differentiation, small group instruction, and re-teaching. While not an exhaustive list, these nine practices stand out as being especially significant in ensuring all students receive rigorous Tier I instruction that promotes high-level thinking and achievement.

Planning

The first step in high-quality differentiated instruction is planning. The planning process includes defining a specific learning outcome and the development of lesson activities, materials, and assessments that align to Tennessee Academic Standards.

Educators should begin their planning with careful attention to the meaning and rigor of the standard(s) they are teaching while also clarifying what mastery of the standard or learning goal will look like. Starting with the end in mind allows educators to set a clear path for how they will support their students in reaching that end goal.

Planning decisions include:
● Using multiple sources of data to identify students' strengths and needs;
● Goal setting based on these multiple sources of data;
● Sequencing questions and activities from basic to complex;
● Building on prior student knowledge;
● Creating or adjusting small groups;
● Providing differentiated instruction based on students' strengths and needs;
● Ensuring the plan is appropriate for students' age, knowledge and interests;
● Deciding on approaches for the instruction of new content, skills, and strategies and providing appropriate time and opportunities for student practice; and
● Creating and updating instructional goals and planned instruction based on evidence from formative assessments.

Learning Environment

Culture, climate, behavioral expectations, and supports are needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students. Problem behaviors may be prevented with explicitly taught, clearly defined expectations, acknowledgement of positive behavior, and consistent consequences for problem behavior.

All educators should strive to create a strong and positive culture of high expectations. As
described in the Instruction Model for a Ready Student below, all adults should consistently model the belief that all students can succeed. The creation of a warm, positive-yet-challenging learning environment focused on prevention is critical to modeling this belief.

Educators and administrators should use the General Educator rubric Environment Domain from TEAM (or another evaluation tool with similar indicators) to inform the structure of the learning environment within the classroom and throughout the school.

The environmental indicators are:
- Expectations,
- Managing student behavior,
- Environment, and
- Respectful culture.

**Questioning**

Effective questioning prompts student thinking, guides students' attention to key concepts, and supports engagement with content. When teachers effectively utilize questions that are purposeful and coherent, students' responses can be taken as a valid source of formative assessment that can inform instructional decision making. Student responses to quality questions let teachers know if they should review, remediate, or advance instruction and are useful in making decisions about differentiation.

Effective questioning involves the following procedures:
- Asking a high frequency of questions;
- Consistently providing wait time that allows students sufficient time to consider and develop their responses;
- Calling on both volunteers and non-volunteers to answer questions and a balance of students based on ability and gender;
- Providing different ways for students to respond to questions, such as independent reflection, partner or small group discussion, or whole group dialog, as well as through different modes, including speaking, drawing, writing, and physical signals/gestures.

Additionally the content of high-quality questions should be:
- Varied (questions should represent a balanced mix of questions types),
- Purposeful,
- Coherent, and
- Sequenced with attention to the instructional goals of the lesson.
High quality questions should require students to justify their answers with evidence and should support students in monitoring their own levels of understanding. Also, teachers shouldn’t limit instruction to teacher-generated questions only but should guide students in generating their own questions as well.

**Academic Feedback**

Academic feedback is the way that teachers respond to students’ comments questions and work. Effective academic feedback should focus on supporting and advancing student learning, not just telling students if their responses are accurate. Teachers should also respond to academic feedback from students and use that feedback to make adjustments in instruction.

High-quality academic feedback should:
- Relate to the lesson objective,
- Prompt students to think,
- Be specific,
- Be timely, and
- Vary based on the unique needs of students and classes.

Teachers can provide both oral and written feedback to students. Additionally, it is also important for teachers to model for students how to provide each other with high-quality academic feedback.

**Thinking**

Effective instruction pushes students to think about ideas and content in different types of ways and requires students to use different types of thinking to solve problems or draw conclusions.

The four types of thinking are as follows:
- Analytical-students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information
- Practical-students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-world scenarios
- Creative-students create, design, imagine, and suppose
- Research-based-students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.

Teachers should create opportunities for students to think about problems from multiple perspective and viewpoints. Additionally, teachers should provide opportunities for students to monitor their own thinking and to help them become more aware of the strategies they’re using. **Teachers should explicitly model their own thinking by “thinking out loud” and should actively talk about different thinking strategies, when to use them, and explain or demonstrate how students can begin to use them on their own.**
Problem Solving

Developing diverse problem-solving skills enhances students' abilities to manage complex tasks and higher levels of learning. Teachers can support students in developing these valuable life skills by providing them with opportunities to practice different approaches to solving problems.

Teachers should teach and reinforce the following problem-solving types:

- **Abstraction**—Students isolate and analyze specific properties of an object or process; or, students take the key components or ideas from varied examples and use them to solve a new problem.
- **Categorization**—Students analyze, classify, and sort information into meaningful categories.
- **Draw Conclusions/Justify Solutions**—Students draw conclusions based on data from varied sources and viewpoints.
- **Predicting Outcomes**—Students make predictions and test the validity of their predictions.
- **Observing and Experimenting**—Students observe, record, code, and measure; they develop hypotheses, gather instruments, and collect and analyze data.
- **Improving Solutions**—Students critique solutions and outcomes and analyze how they could have been improved.
- **Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information**—Students are given mixed information about a problem and identify which information is most relevant and useful to solving the problem.
- **Generating Ideas**—Students are given ill-defined problems and are taught how to look for analogies, to brainstorm, to generate idea lists, to create representations, and to come up with viable solutions.
- **Creating and Designing**—Students are asked to create or design a product, an experiment, or a problem for another student to solve or evaluate.

Differentiation of Instruction

**Differentiated Instruction** is an instructional approach that encompasses several learning strategies, addresses individual student needs, and helps all students access core instruction. Differentiation takes place within the classroom environment, planning content, process, and product. The premise of differentiated instruction is having high expectations for all students, and through the practice of differentiation, all students can achieve those high expectations.

Differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products or the learning environment, the use of ongoing assessment and flexible grouping make this a successful approach to instruction.

**Differentiated instruction is a teacher's proactive response to a learner's individual needs; it is an instructional approach that simultaneously encompasses several learning strategies.**

Differentiated instruction helps the student access core instruction (Tier I). Differentiated instruction is guided by principles of differentiation: environment, quality curriculum, assessment that informs teaching and learning, instruction that responds to student variance, and leading students and managing routines.
Differentiation is based on the following:

- *Learning Profile*--preferred approaches to learning
- *Readiness*--a student’s proximity to specified learning goals
- *Interests*--passions, affinities, kinships that motivate learning

Successful differentiation is based on individual student strengths, needs, and areas of deficit. First, educators should determine what the student requires to access core instruction, and then effectively plan to meet their need(s).

Examples of deficits or areas of need a student may have are:

- Reading
- Mathematics
- Writing
- Extent of background knowledge
- English language proficiency
- Learning disabilities or other disabilities impacting learning

Determining a student’s needs may also include:

- Utilizing diagnostic instruments to assess skill level (e.g., inquire: “what do my students know?”);
- Universal screening and progress monitoring data;
- Pre-tests and post-tests;
- Surveying background knowledge (e.g., KWL charts, anticipation guides);
- Students self-assessments/checklists;
- Formal and/or informal assessments;
- Being aware of student previous data/schooling background (e.g., student cumulative files, student data profiles, language levels, levels of intervention, school supports provided);
- Determining student interest, preferred way of learning, and environmental comfort (e.g., specific topic, small group setting, partner work, visual instruction, interactive learning boards).

Differentiated instruction may include any of the following:

- Tiered assignments, scaffold to students need/understanding
- Compacting material: big idea
- Collaborative learning centers
- Collaborative learning groups/student seating
- Flexible grouping
- Learning contracts/student goal setting
- Choice of academic boards/classroom print
- Themed units/word walls
- Sentence frames
- Explicit outlined steps to procedures
Differentiation during Tier I uses assessment data to identify individual student needs. Instruction addresses individual needs and matches instructional materials to support specific skills. The small groups that are formed based on this assessment data are flexible, meaning group membership changes based on student progress, interests, and needs.

Differentiated core instruction is not:
- Using only whole-class instruction
- Using small groups that never change, or
- Using the same independent seat work assignments for the entire class.
Differentiation of Environment

The learning environment is the “climate” of a classroom and includes the classroom’s operation and tone. Class rules, furniture arrangement, lighting, procedures, and processes all affect the classroom’s mood.

The environment includes the conditions and interactions in the classroom that set the tone and expectations for learning. Differentiating classroom environment ensures that all students are held to high expectations. Understanding the learning environment has an impact on students’ needs and in turn plays a role in learning by creating conditions in which the student is able to demonstrate skills and feel comfortable asking questions.

An optimal environment is invitational or characterized by a transparent commitment to the learning of every student and a consideration of what each student brings to the lesson. Leaders and teachers in invitational environments demonstrate respect, trust, optimism and intentionality.

Teachers and Students in the Differentiated Environment
Students should feel welcomed and valued at their level of readiness. All students need a teacher who is confident of students’ capacity to learn what they need to learn and who supports them vigorously as they do so. The teacher and student should work together to enhance one another’s growth. Success and failures are inevitable in the learning process, and the classroom is a safe place for both. Hard work results in observable growth that is then celebrated by the teacher and student. Routines and process in the classroom should be designed in a way that all students are able to have access and a level of success (i.e., Universal Design for Learning). Classrooms with respectful environments exhibit more student engagement and fewer negative behaviors. There are clear expectations, and goal setting is taking place for students.

Leaders and Teachers in Differentiated Environment
Leaders create an environment in which each teacher feels valued, challenged, supported, and part of a team working together for success. The leader should be clear about what teachers should know, understand, and be able to do (KUDs) in order to differentiate instruction skillfully. Leaders must continually monitor teacher growth toward these KUDs, providing feedback and developing learning opportunities for teachers based on their varied readiness levels, interests, and approaches to teaching and learning. Structures should be designed to ensure that each teacher progresses in facility and comfort with addressing learner needs; this means they must sometimes work with faculty as a whole, sometimes work with the faculty in small groups, and sometimes work with individual members of the faculty.

Differentiation of Content

Differentiated content is what students should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the study, or how students will gain access to the knowledge. Differentiation can be done by pre-assessing student skills and understandings, then matching learners with appropriate activities. Allowing students to have choices and providing students with additional resources that match their levels of understanding adds depth to their learning. Differentiating content should not change what the student is expected to know, understand, or do; rather, it should change how a student accessed that content.
Examples of methods for differentiating:
- Multiple texts and supplementary print resources
- Modeling/demonstrations
- Interest-based materials
- Varied support mechanisms for reading
- Reduced number of high quality tasks/problems (if needed)

**Standards-based, grade-level expectations should remain the same for all students.**
However, the delivery and/or expected student response may be differentiated depending on individual students’ need.

Teachers should know their students and their students’ strengths and needs when presenting content in a lesson. Guiding questions for the beginning of planning a lesson may include:
- What do my students know about this unit of study?
- How might students best learn the concepts and skill of the unit?
- How can I provide each learner with appropriately challenging opportunities?
- How can I incorporate students’ interests and spark new ones?
- How might I provide students with meaningful choices of different ways to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives?

**Know, Understand, Do (KUD):**

- High-quality learning involves goals stated in the form of a KUD.
- Statements that divide learning standards into things students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do or accomplish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>UNDERSTAND</th>
<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facts, places, people, dates, definitions</td>
<td>Big ideas, expanding ideas that frame details, generalizations</td>
<td>Skills, behavior objectives, outcomes, overall access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Differentiation of Process**

These activities are designed to help students make sense of or “own” the content—changing the activity in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content.

Differentiating of process should not change what the student is expected to know, understand, or do; rather, it should change how a student engages in the process.

- Refers to how students make sense or understand the information, ideas, and skills being studied
- Reflects student learning styles and preferences
- Varies the learning process depending upon how students learn

Examples:
- Format presentations of material, if needed
- Learning centers
- Graphic organizers
- Varied models of exploration and expression (including movement/kinetics/multi-sensory)
- Models of student work at different degrees of complexity
- Break up long lessons into smaller meaningful sections

Setting clear learning targets/objective that tell the student what they need to know, understand, and do are critical to a learner's success in the classroom.

**Differentiation of End Product**

This is how the students may demonstrate and extend what they have come to know, understand, and are able to do. The end product is today's means of understand how to modify tomorrow's instruction.

- Small group instruction supports differentiating the product
- Tends to be tangible: reports, tests, brochures, speeches, skits
- Reflects student understanding
- Differentiates by providing challenge, variety, and choice

Examples:
- Provide assessment options
- Community based projects
- Independent study
- Create a visual response with key details outlined around
- Orally produce responses
- Record their responses
- Use class responders to input understanding

**Small Group Instruction**

Small group instruction is a method of instructional grouping where students are purposefully placed in small groups and receive targeted instruction related to a specific area of strength or need. Small groups support students in meeting instructional goals by providing one or more of the following supports:

- Additional modeling or demonstration by the teacher
- Additional practice with a specific skill, strategy, or standard
- Additional time for reading, thinking, or problem solving
- An alternative setting for work or discussion
- Differentiated content or process
- Support for completing a differentiated product

Small groups are most effective when they are limited to six students or fewer. While small groups can be used for review or remediation, they can also be used to extend learning for students who have already demonstrated strength in a particular area.
Flexible grouping is a strategy for differentiating instruction that allows students to work together in a variety of ways and in a number of arrangements. Groupings may be whole group, small group, partners, individual, teacher-led, or student-led, and depend on instructional changing needs of students, as shown in assessment data.

Students should be placed in small groups strategically, based on information gathered from a range of sources, including formal assessments, anecdotal observation, and student work. Groups may be homogenous, based on shared strengths or needs, or they may be heterogeneous, when a particular lesson objective is benefited by diverse abilities, ideas, or approaches to learning or problem solving.

During teacher-led small groups, other students should be engaged in purposeful practice activities. Purposeful practice may include:
- Independent or partner reading,
- Writing,
- Learning centers,
- Skill practice,
- Reader response activities,
- Book studies, and
- Independent problem solving.

Re-teaching for Mastery of the Standards

During Tier I instruction, students may need re-teaching and/or remediation of Tennessee Academic Standards. Using assessments that are aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards, teachers should determine which standards need re-teaching and/or remediation.

Re-teaching involves teaching content again to students who didn’t master it initially. Re-teaching provides students with additional demonstrations, opportunities to practice, and time. For re-teaching to be effective, teachers should use a different approach from the one they initially used. The new approach should build on previous activities, but should focus on the omissions or errors in student thinking that resulted from these activities.

Remediation is corrective and fills in gaps in understanding, skills, or knowledge. Students may need remediation of a pre-requisite skill before they are able to attempt a certain problem type or
may need remediation of specific vocabulary or concepts in order to analyze a new topic or argument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remediation</th>
<th>Reteaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Corrective</td>
<td>• Teaching content again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fills gaps in understanding,</td>
<td>• Additional demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills or knowledge</td>
<td>• Opportunities to practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May be needed</td>
<td>• Extra time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remediation of a pre-</td>
<td>• Using different methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requisite skill</td>
<td>that initially used, it should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be built on previous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Re-teaching and remediation can be done in a whole group setting if the majority of students need additional instruction, in a small group setting in which students are grouped according to like areas of need, or in an individual setting.

Re-teaching and remediation for mastery of the standards are different from intervention on skill deficits. Intervention on skill deficits is provided during Tier II and Tier III, or special education intervention and is provided in addition to Tier I instruction. The goal of intervention on skill deficits is to provide research-based intervention aligned to specific skill deficits as identified by multiple sources of data, including universal screening and progress monitoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do students need? How do you know?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Re-teaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier I - State Standards and</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differentiated Instructional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal is to reteach standards to ANY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and ALL students who are struggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with core concepts rather than specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skill deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards Based Assessment:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Benchmark Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summative Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formative Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Ongoing Assessment in Tier I

Ongoing assessment of student learning provides continuous feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and informs important changes to teachers’ instructional strategies. It is essential to providing engaging, tailored instruction that addresses students’ individual needs while maintaining grade-level expectations in Tier I. Ongoing assessment is essential to determine effectiveness of instructional programs.

Ongoing assessment is the collection of data from multiple sources for use during data-based decision making. It can help track and compare individual and/or group performance and help support differentiated instruction in Tier I. Ongoing assessment is a necessary component of both data-driven analysis and data-based decision making.

In Tier I, ongoing assessment is used for all students, aligned with grade-level instruction, and done continuously throughout the year. It is an important part of Tennessee’s Instructional Model for a Ready Student (shown on the following page), which is our state’s process for high quality instruction and strong positive cultures. The model states that data-driven analysis, including a systemic and consistent use of multiple forms of assessment evidence, is important to be able to plan towards goals and deliver differentiated lessons tailored to student need.

As stated in the guiding principles, a culture of collaboration and communication is an essential part of ongoing assessment. There should be collaboration and communication by all stakeholders around the data being collected through the data analysis process and throughout the data-based decision making process.
The charts on the next page provide some guidance and examples on the types of assessments and data that can be used for ongoing assessment. **There should be thorough understanding of what an assessment measures and how to interpret the data that assessment generates.** Even though the assessment below are labeled formative or summative, how results are used is what determines whether the assessment is formative or summative. Assessments are only formative if they are used to adjust instruction. The purpose of all formative assessments, regardless of type, is to use the results to improve learning.
Ongoing assessment, aligned to grade-level standards in Tier I may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples may include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Formative Assessment             | • Measure student learning throughout the year so teachers can determine if students are making progress and how best to adjust instruction.  
  • Typically, formative assessments complement the standards and highlight progress students are making toward annual goals as measured at various points during the school year.  
  • Teachers and school leaders primarily use formative tests to help them develop supports for students who are not making progress or to plan for re-teaching or acceleration of particular standards with groups of students. Educators may also use formative assessment to expose students to samples of state-test questions and the state-test platform or environment. | • Interim and benchmark assessments, teacher-made tests, and school-made common assessments.  
  • Informal formative assessments. These assessments are small-scale (i.e., a few seconds, a few minutes, certainly less than a class period) and short-cycle (i.e., they are often called “minute-by-minute” assessment). Examples may include: bell ringers, exit tickets, item analysis from benchmark tests, oral responses and student questioning, rubrics, performance assessments, anecdotal observations, portfolios showing growth over time, written assignments, journals, learning logs, etc. |
| Summative (annual) Assessment     | • Measure student learning at the end of the semester/year.  
  • Tennessee’s annual assessments provide district and school leaders, teachers, parents, and students specific information about student learning in order to improve the education of all students. Results from annual tests assist teachers and parents in understanding if students have met the learning expectations for the year. Additionally, Tennessee’s annual assessments provide feedback to all of the stakeholders who invest in our students to ensure that funds are being used well and that we are setting our students on a pathway to success. | • State-level assessments |

Source: https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/tsi_assessment_task_force_report.pdf

Additional data may also be used to inform important change to teachers’ instructional strategies for students who may need more support and/or differentiation of instruction in Tier I. These data may include:
2.4 Data-based Decision Making Procedures

**Data-based decision making** is the use of appropriate data gathered through ongoing assessment to inform and drive instructional decisions in Tier I. It also determines the need for skills-specific interventions, remediation, re-teaching, and enrichment.

Teachers should be knowledgeable about student performance and show evidence of setting goals for each child that are based on grade-level benchmarks or expectations, show how students are progressing toward these goals, and use the data from ongoing assessment to make instructional decisions in Tier I. The school team should have plans in place, based on the results of data, for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples may include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal Screeners</td>
<td>Brief, informative tools used to measure academic skills (i.e., basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, and written expression).</td>
<td>See chart in Component 1.3 for examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Level Assessment</td>
<td>A process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate rate of improvement and growth.</td>
<td>Phonological Awareness Skills Screener (PASS), and Phonics and Word Reading Survey (PWRS) can be found here - <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education/article/tdoe3-rtl-administrators-intervention-resources">http://www.tn.gov/education/article/tdoe3-rtl-administrators-intervention-resources</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Monitoring</td>
<td>Progress monitoring is used to assess student's academic performance, to quantify a student's rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction/intervention and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction/intervention.</td>
<td>See chart in Component 1.3 for examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Assessment</td>
<td>Often given at the beginning of the school year, this assessment allows teachers to know where each student is beginning in their understanding of the subject.</td>
<td>Placement tests, teacher-made tests, text book-based assessments, benchmark assessments, common assessments, running records, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Observations</td>
<td>Teacher observations and notes can provide contextual information useful for making decisions about students. Informal observation (&quot;kid watching&quot;) of students working alone, in groups, or during whole-group instruction can give valuable information about students' progress, understanding, strengths and challenges, cooperation, study habits, and attitude.</td>
<td>Anecdotal notes, interest surveys, learning styles, patterns in student responses, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Records Review</td>
<td>These data can include grades, attendance, and behavioral patterns, and they can provide important supplementary information about student learning and individual needs.</td>
<td>Grades, attendance, behavioral patterns, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students who are making adequate progress and for students who are making adequate progress.

Instructional Implications for Tier I

All data, including data derived from the universal screening process, should be considered when making instructional decisions for students in Tier I core instruction. Each type of data serves a purpose and provides useful information regarding students' strengths and weaknesses. No one source of data should override or supersede another. When deciding which assessment to give, the teacher should first determine what it is he/she wants to know.

For example, if a teacher wants to know how students are progressing in the mastery of grade-level standards and how instruction may need to be adjusted, he/she could administer a formative assessment, aligned with the rigor of the standard, to determine which students have mastered which learning targets. This information also informs how instruction might need to be differentiated. Based on the results from formative assessments, teachers are able to tailor small group instruction to the needs of the students. Teacher observations and non-academic information about students (such as attendance, behavior, and learning style) may be important for making instructional decisions on a daily basis.

At the end of a unit of student, if a teacher wants to know which standards or learning targets students have mastered, he/she would administer a summative assessment aligned to the rigor of the standards. This information is used to determine whether the instruction was effective, which students achieved mastery, and how successful instruction has been for a student. The results from ongoing assessment may also be used to inform the need for additional universal screening later in the year.

Educators should take the evidence collected from multiple forms of assessment and analyze the data for patterns, areas of need, and proof of mastery of content. From this analysis, educators will be able to create and adapt their daily lesson plans to ensure all students in their Tier I classroom are progressing toward mastery of the Tennessee Academic Standards and are supported individually along the way. Planning decisions may include:

- Creating or updating small groups,
- Providing differentiated instruction based on student need
- Deciding on approaches for the delivery of new content or student practice, or
- Updating the instructional scope and sequence based on student mastery or the decision to reteach.

Systems for data-based decisions pinpoint areas of strength and opportunities for growth for each learner within Tier I. In addition, a data-based assessment process allows educators to identify if a student is showing characteristics of learning difficulties that might require intensive supports in addition to Tier I instruction.

Developmentally-appropriate screening for all students through a skills-based screener provides an initial indication if certain deficit areas in phonological awareness, phonics, or other areas are presents. This is especially important since these characteristics might be consistent with reading-related learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. Deeper diagnostic instruments can offer greater depth for proactively addressing and monitoring progress in identified areas during Tier I differentiation or during intervention in Tiers II or III.
As areas of need are confirmed, such as in the areas of phonological awareness and phonics, **it is critical for educators to match explicit instruction with the area of need.** This explicit instruction should accompany opportunities for application with connected text and not be done in isolation. For example, a teacher who is working on consonant digraphs with a group of students would not just show flashcards that prompt students to pronounce the sound. The teachers might start there and then add opportunities for the students to write and read words and sentences with those digraphs to demonstrate how readers and writers use them in authentic contexts. **Skills should be taught in a balanced and integrated manner to promote the interconnectedness of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.**

**Informing the Need for Intervention in Tier II or Tier III**

If a student is not making adequate progress in Tier I, another data-based decision could include administering additional assessments that could determine if further support through Tier II or Tier III intervention is necessary. In particular, the results from the universal screening process can be used to determine the need for intervention in Tier II or Tier III. A **skills-based screener is a measure that can be used as an indicator that a student may be struggling due to underlying skills deficits.** The skill-based screener serves as a “temperature check” to identify areas where students may be struggling. **The skills-based screener is not diagnostic and does not prescribe intervention.** School teams should use the results of the skills-based screener to identify students that might need to be looked at a bit closer. Additional information, such as formative and summative assessments, survey-level assessments, diagnostic assessments, teacher observations, and classroom performance are all sources of data that should be used when determining intervention needs.

The universal screening process is used to identify students who may be considered “at risk”. As a guideline, educators should look at students scoring below the 25th percentile compared to national norms on a skills-based screener, corroborating their performance with additional sources of information (e.g., standards-based assessments, grades, formative assessments, summative assessments, classroom performance, teacher observations, etc.), to determine those who are at risk. Students who are considered “at risk” should receive appropriately aligned skills-based interventions in additions to Tier I instruction. Students who exceed grade-level expectations may be considered “advanced.” Students who are considered “advanced” should receive appropriate enrichment in addition to Tier I instruction.

The data-based decision making process in Tier I is shown on the following page in a flow chart that illustrate how instruction and intervention decisions are made based on data.
Screen all students using a skills-based screener

Consider additional sources of information

- Students are considered at-risk
  - Conduct survey-level/diagnostic assessments
  - Align interventions to student need
  - Provide interventions aligned to student need
  - Monitor progress using a skills-based monitoring tool

- Students are not considered at-risk
  - Provide remediation/reteaching as needed

- Students exceed grade-level expectations
  - Provide extension/enrichment
Screen all students using a standards-based assessment

Consider additional sources of information

- Students are considered at-risk
  - Conduct skills-based screener
  - Conduct survey-level/diagnostic assessment
  - Align interventions to student need
  - Provide interventions aligned to student need
  - Monitor progress using a skills-based monitoring tool

- Students are not considered at-risk
  - Provide remediation/reteaching as needed

- Students exceed grade-level expectations
  - Provide extension/enrichment
2.5 Professional Development in Tier I

Professional learning generally refers to ongoing learning opportunities available to teachers and other education personnel through their schools and districts. RTI² professional learning opportunities that address specific content pertaining to Tier I instruction, universal screening process, ongoing assessment, and data-based decision making should be available for novice teacher, experienced teacher and interventionist.

High-quality professional learning for RTI² at every level is content based, job embedded, student focused, differentiated to address teacher need, and includes an expectation for implementation and follow-up. Additionally, professional learning should be outcomes/competency based instead of compliance driven.

Job-embedded professional learning occurs during the workday in the workplace, is designed to support team learning, and has a clear focus on student achievement. Job-embedded learning is aligned with school and student learning goals, uses internal capacity, occurs on a regular schedule (weekly or bi-weekly), and is most successful when the team functions with a focused structure. Activities may include analyzing students data, sharing instructional strategies, developing lessons, designing common assessments, and reviewing student work. Peer observations and coaching are considered highly effective job-embedded practices.

Professional learning that is competency based focuses on demonstrating clearly defined levels of mastery of a topic including content knowledge, skills and deep understanding. Teacher choice and need identify the area for learning which may be delivered through classes, workshops, peer observation, mentoring, online learning, and teamwork. Competency is refined and iterated in a continuous-improvement cycle and is evaluated through assessments, observations, and/or portfolios. Micro-credentialing is a model of competency-based learning through which educators can earn subject-and skill-specific credentials indicating mastery.

Effective professional learning is not limited to a one-design model or a one-delivery method.

Essential questions to consider in design and delivery include:
- What are we trying to accomplish?
- What is it that we want learners to know, understand, and be able to do as a result?
- How do we design the learning opportunity in order to engage learners and move them to the desired outcome?
- How will we know if professional learning is resulting in the desired outcome (e.g., strengthening instructional practice and improving student learning)?

Examples of learning activities may include:
- Professional book or article study
- Case study
- Data collection and analysis
- Examining student work
- instructional /peer coaching
- Mentoring
2.6 Fidelity of Instruction and Fidelity Monitoring

This component is divided into two sections: (a) fidelity of instruction and (b) fidelity monitoring. Both of these processes are part of everyday, high-quality instruction. These are things that teachers are doing every day and comprise practices that instructional leaders look for during instruction. It is the responsibility of all instructional leaders to ensure that instruction is taking place daily with fidelity.

**Fidelity of Instruction**

Fidelity of instruction refers to providing instruction with integrity, aligning with instructional goals for student learning, and attending to the critical features of instructional best practices designed to meet those goals. To address the diverse range of students’ strengths and needs, schools need a comprehensive approach to instruction that reflects the fidelity of:

- Standards based instruction,
- Data-driven goals,
- Research-based best practices, and
- Support for teachers as they make data-informed decisions for adjusting instructional goals, methods, and programs.

Fidelity in implementation of instructional practices or programs does not inhibit responsive instruction, ongoing decision making, or differentiation.

Ways to measure fidelity of instruction may include:

- Walk through observations;
- Review lesson plans, curriculum maps, and IEPs; and/or
- Review student academic data, work, and outcome for student proficiency.

Measurement of fidelity of implementation of instructional practices or programs may be done by any of the following:

- Instructional leader
- Data team members
- Instructional coaches

**Fidelity Monitoring**

Fidelity monitoring is the systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (e.g., principal, assistant principal, district supervisor) to determine the extent to which the delivery of core instruction adheres to the expectations and goals set for student learning. In core instruction, fidelity is monitored using a state board-approved classroom observation...
instrument, along with a review of alignment between observation data and student growth data. The goal of fidelity monitoring is to ensure that the educator is implementing core instruction with integrity.

All students should receive high-quality, differentiated instruction from the general education teacher during Tier I. Effective Tier I instruction should meet the needs of 80-85% of the students as evidenced by multiple sources of data throughout the year. If at least 80% of the students are not meeting grade-level standards, the Tier I curriculum, as well as the delivery of instruction, should be evaluated and adjustments should be made.

The number fidelity checks through classroom observation will be determined by a teacher’s previous year’s individual growth score and/or final evaluation score based on the license type held by the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licensure Status</th>
<th>Previous Individual Growth Score or Overall Evaluation</th>
<th>Minimum Required Observations*</th>
<th>Minimum Required Observations* per domain</th>
<th>Minimum Number of Minutes per School Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner</td>
<td>Levels 1-4: Six (6) observations, with a minimum of three (3) domains observed in each semester.</td>
<td>3 Instruction 2 Planning 2 Environment</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 5</td>
<td>One (1) formal observation covering all domains first semester; two walk-throughs second semester.</td>
<td>1 Instruction 1 Planning 1 Environment</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 2-4</td>
<td>Four (4) observations with a minimum of two (2) domains observed in each semester.</td>
<td>2 Instruction 1 Planning 1 Environment</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 5</td>
<td>One (1) formal observation covering all domains first semester; two walk-throughs second semester.</td>
<td>1 Instruction 1 Planning 1 Environment</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Announced vs. Unannounced Visits**
At least half of the observed domains must be unannounced, but whether to have more than half of observed domains is at the district’s discretion.

If students are not making progress (as determined by formal and informal assessment measures), then fidelity checks may need to be more thorough. School leadership teams should ensure that a
minimum of two fidelity check through a review of observation/student achievement alignment occur within a school year. Alignment between observation data and student growth data simply means that teacher observation scores and student growth scores are aligned with in two data points. For example, an observation score of 4 would be aligned with student growth of 2, 3, 4, or 5, but it would be misaligned with a student growth of 1. An observation score of 4 would be closely aligned with a student growth score of 3, 4, or 5. Performance level discrepancies between student achievement data and observation scores of three or more will be considered outside the acceptable range of results.
Component 3: Tier II Procedures

3.1 Description Of Tier II Interventions

Tier II in K-2 Reading and Mathematics:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Tier II is in addition to Tier I. Those students who require additional assistance beyond the usual time allotted for core instruction (Tier I) should receive additional intensive small group attention daily in the specific area of need. Tier II requires high-quality intervention matched to students’ needs and provided by highly-trained personnel. Advanced students should receive targeted reinforcement and enrichment. Enrichment activities expand on students’ learning in ways that may differ from strategies used during Tier I instruction. They often are interactive and project-focused. They enhance a student’s education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways to deepen students’ understanding. These activities are designed to be interesting, challenging, and impart knowledge. They should allow students to apply knowledge and skill learned in Tier I to real-life experiences.

Tier II in 3-5 Reading and Mathematics:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students and occurs daily. Tier II is in addition to Tier I. Those students who require additional assistance beyond the usual time allotted for core instruction should receive additional intensive small group attention in the specific area of need. Tier II intervention is explicit and systematic. Instructional interventions are differentiated, scaffolded, and targeted based on the needs of individual students as determined by current assessment data. Advanced students should receive targeted reinforcement and enrichment. Enrichment activities expand on students’ learning in ways that may differ from strategies used during Tier I instruction. They often are interactive and project-focused. They enhance a student’s education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways to deepen students’ understanding. These activities are designed to be interesting, challenging, and impart knowledge. They should allow students to apply knowledge and skill learned in Tier I to real-life experiences.
Tier II in 6-12 ELA:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Those students who require assistance beyond the usual time allotted for core instruction should receive additional intensive small group attention. Tier II intervention is explicit and systematic. Advanced students should receive reinforcement and enrichment. Note that text complexity standards apply to all students. While leveled reading is useful in building confidence, stamina, fluency, and engagement, all students should be given the opportunity to encounter and productively struggle with on- or above-grade-level complex text. With struggling readers, teachers are encouraged to differentiate the level of scaffolding or support they provide students (e.g., different entry points to text, vocabulary support, modeling of comprehension strategies) rather than the level of text.

Intervention should include explicit instruction within the area of need for all struggling students. For example: If a student in sixth grade has phonics deficits, then this student requires intervention in the area of phonics. If computer programs are used, students should still have daily interaction with a teacher who can hold them accountable for what they have read and to ensure that they practice new skills.

Tier II in 6-12 Mathematics:

Tier II addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students. Advanced students should receive reinforcement and enrichment. Students who require assistance beyond the usual time allotted for Tier I instruction should receive additional intensive small group attention daily. Teachers should use the vertical coherence of the TSS to identify standards from previous grades that might be prohibiting a student from accessing grade-level standards. Research indicates that students’ struggles in mathematics are often attributed to a lack of conceptual understanding of number sense. It is important to diagnose specific student deficiencies through carefully designed assessments in order for the proper support to be given. Students who struggle with fluency can oftentimes continue to learn grade-level concepts. In this case, Tier II intervention should target the necessary fluencies to support conceptual understanding.

Tier II Description:

Tier II is in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I and should meet the needs of 10-15% of students. Students who score below the designated cut score on the universal screening will receive more intense intervention in Tier II. These cut scores should be based on national norms, at a minimum, and identify students who are at-risk and will receive more intense intervention in Tier II. As a guideline, students below the 25th percentile would be considered "at-risk." Students who exceed grade level expectations the 92nd percentile and above may be considered “advanced” and may receive more intense intervention.

When teachers and school level RTI² data teams are making placement decisions for Tier II interventions, it may be necessary to consider other assessments, data, and information on the student. Such examples may include past retention or performance on TCAP. (See Sections 1.3, 1.4
and 2.4 for more information on universal screening and data-based decision making.) When a student begins an intervention a more precise assessment may be needed to identify the specific area(s) of deficit.

**Tier II interventions are 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). Interventions will be developed based on the unique needs of students. Interventions that have been researched to have the greatest chance of addressing the area of need will be selected. There will be evidence that interventions are more intense than Tier I.

Scientifically research-based interventions are interventions that produce reliable and valid results. When these interventions are used properly, adequate gains are expected. To be considered research-based, they must have a clear record of success.

There will be a clear description as to whether a problem-solving, standard protocol, or hybrid intervention is being used for each of the areas (reading, math, or writing).

A problem-solving approach within an RTI model is used to tailor an intervention to an individual student. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluation.

A standard protocol approach within an RTI model relies on the same empirically-validated intervention for all students with similar academic needs. Standard protocol interventions facilitate quality control. For example: a standard protocol would be the use of Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org) Student Center Activities as interventions for Tier II students depending on the area of deficit.

A hybrid approach within an RTI model combines methods of problem-solving and standard protocol approaches.

School level data analysis teams will determine the most appropriate intervention approach based upon student needs, varying resources, and personal.

Scientifically-based researched interventions have the following characteristics according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi)]. Scientifically-based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:
• Employs **systematic**, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;

• Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

• Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide **reliable** and **valid** data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;

• Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;

• Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and

• Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

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An effective intervention is:

- implemented by highly-trained personnel,
- implemented with fidelity and confirmed with measurement, and
- progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met.
3.2 Tier II Time Configurations

The following charts illustrate the minimum instructional times for Tier II:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier II</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier II</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Fourth Grade</th>
<th>Fifth Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier II</th>
<th>Grades 6-8</th>
<th>Grades 6-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In K-4, 5-8, and 9-12, the interventions in Tier II should be provided daily. If students need interventions in more than one area (ELA and Mathematics), then the five days of interventions a week can be split in a two-day/three-day manner based on the area of greater need. For example, if a student needs intervention in ELA and Mathematics but is weaker in math, he/she should receive three days of Mathematics interventions and two days of ELA interventions each week.

The decision to provide a two-day/three-day split is a RTI team decision and may be appropriate for some students who need reading and math intervention. If a team chooses to split intervention, the team must watch the student’s progress closely and make intervention adjustments if the student is not progressing in this model. The team may also choose to provide intervention five days/week in area of greatest need or provide intervention five days/week in both areas of deficit. Student data should guide this decision.

A student who is receiving special education services should not be excluded from tiered interventions if their data indicates a need. For example, a student with Other Health Impairment (OHI) may receive special education services for his/her disability; however, he/she may also receive tiered interventions in reading, math or written expression. In this case, both special education services and tiered interventions would be provided.

Intervention groups should be small. Research supports small groups for interventions. The following are suggested ratios of highly-trained personnel to students during Tier II interventions:
Smaller groups are suggested for more individualized interventions

Fidelity may be achieved by reaching program ratio versus state target ratios.

The interventions need to be delivered by highly-trained personnel. Highly-trained personnel are people who are adequately trained to deliver the selected intervention as intended with fidelity to design. When possible, Tier II interventions should be taught by qualified, certified teachers. Research supports the most trained personnel working with the most at-risk students.

3.3 Progress Monitoring Procedures in Tier II

Progress monitoring is used to assess students’ academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier II, the effectiveness of the intervention should be progress monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through at least every other week (K-12) administration of probes that are parallel forms of the ones used in universal screening. Progress monitoring will be done in the area of deficit using an instrument that is sensitive to change.

While the universal screening tool measures student performance on grade level, progress monitoring must be conducted with measures that are at the student’s skill/instructional level. The skill/instructional level at which a student will be progress monitored is determined through a survey-level assessment. A survey-level assessment is a process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate rate of improvement and growth. Survey-level assessment is also necessary for students suspected of being 1.5 to 2 years behind or who fall below the 10th percentile.
Progress monitoring in Tier II may include:

- **Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes**, 

- **Assessments from intervention materials/kits** (Requirements: national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, sensitive to change, and specific to an area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, it must plot or give information so that **rate of improvement** (ROI) can be transferred to graph form, or

- Computer-based assessments (Requirements: national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, sensitive to change, and specific to an area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, it must plot or give information so that **rate of improvements** (ROI) can be transferred to graph form.

**Progress monitoring** in Tier II will take place at a **frequency** of at least every other week. **Highly-trained personnel** will administer the **progress monitoring** in Tier II and classroom teachers will continuously analyze the **progress monitoring** data.

### 3.4 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

Teachers will show knowledge and evidence of setting goals for each child. Expected growth can be determined by using measures provided by or created through the progress-monitoring instrument. It should be related to each specific area of need.

For example, if the student has high error rates in **reading fluency**, additional assessment is completed that includes phonics assessments. If the student has phonics skills deficits, the teacher would intervene first in phonics before addressing fluency. If the student is in third grade, he/she may need measures on first grade fluency **probes** or phonics **probes** to determine an accurate **rate of improvement** (ROI). This would be determined through **survey-level assessments**.

Teachers will show how students are progressing toward these goals using a **rate of improvement** (ROI) to determine adequate progress. Teachers must use the data from **progress monitoring** to make instructional decisions. **A student’s rate of improvement** (ROI) on **progress monitoring** is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. The **rate of improvement** (ROI) is compared to the **rate of improvement** of a typical peer and is one of the factors considered in determining whether a student has made adequate progress. The at-risk student’s **rate of improvement** must be greater than the **rate of improvement** of a typical student in order to “close the gap” and return to grade level functioning. Many **intervention materials** and/or **progress monitoring** materials/assessments calculate the **rate of**
improvement.

School RTI² teams will meet to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions and check student progress toward goals. A plan will be in place for when students are and are not making adequate progress within Tier II. If students are not making adequate progress in Tier II, the intervention may need to be changed. Students should have at least four data points during Tier II interventions before a change is considered. Only one or two variables should be changed at a time to measure effectiveness of the change. A change in intervention will be considered within each tier before moving to the next tier of intervention. Changes may include:

- Increasing frequency of intervention sessions;
- Changing interventions;
- Changing intervention provider; and
- Changing time of day intervention is delivered.

A minimum of 8-10 data points (if progress monitoring every other week) OR 10-15 data points (if progress monitoring weekly) are required in order to make a data-based decision to change to Tier III. School RTI² teams will decide the best placement for students in Tier III. Tier III interventions must be more intense than Tier interventions.
Universal Screening Process

- Student is at risk
- Student is not at risk
- Student is exceeding grade-level expectations

Core Instruction for all students
- High quality, differentiated instruction aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards
- Instructional decisions driven by ongoing formative assessment
- High-quality professional development and support
- Fidelity of instruction and fidelity monitoring

Ongoing Assessment

- Student is at risk
- Student is not at risk
- Student is exceeding grade-level expectations

Tier I: All students

- Targeted intervention for some students
  - Address the needs of struggling and advanced students
  - Additional time beyond time allotted for core instruction
  - High-quality intervention matched to student-targeted area of need
  - Provided by highly trained professional

Progress Monitoring

- Student does not make significant progress
- Student is meeting grade-level expectations

Tier II: 10-15% of students

- Targeted intervention for some students
  - Address the needs of very few struggling students
  - More explicit and more intensive intervention targeting specific areas
  - Provided by highly trained professionals

Progress Monitoring

- Student does not make significant progress
- Student makes significant progress

Tier III: 3-5% of students

Consider possible need for special education referral after Tier II and Tier III intervention where student fails to make adequate progress based on gap analysis.
3.5 Professional Learning

Professional development will cover specific content pertaining to Tier II interventions, Tier II progress monitoring, Tier II data-based decision making, and Tier II fidelity monitoring. All personnel involved in Tier II interventions, including administrators, will receive professional development.

3.6 Fidelity Monitoring

**Fidelity is the accuracy or extent to which Tier II materials and other curricula are used as intended by the author/publisher.** Fidelity monitoring is the systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (e.g. principal, instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models as originally developed. The goal of fidelity monitoring is to ensure that the intervention is being implemented with integrity. In Tier II, fidelity will be monitored at least three times within the period of time that 8-10 data points are collected. Therefore a data team should review three fidelity checks and 8-10 data points when reviewing the effectiveness of an intervention.

**Students may remain in Tier II for varying amounts of time.** The purpose of monitoring fidelity is to provide ongoing information about the effectiveness of the intervention being provided. Many students will receive Tier II interventions for an extended period of time. These students will receive more than the minimum required fidelity checks. Student attendance should be collected and documented reasons for absence should be taken to determine the student access to the Tier II intervention.

Instead of determining fidelity checks by marking period, a data team should ensure that three fidelity checks occur within the period of time that 8-10 data points are collected if progress monitoring every other week or 10-15 data points if progress monitoring weekly. Therefore, when reviewing the effectiveness of an intervention, a data team should review three fidelity checks and 8-10 data points if progress monitoring every other week or 10-15 data points if progress monitoring weekly.

**Student attendance and documented reasons for absence will be taken during interventions in Tier II.**

At least two of the three fidelity checks must be a direct observation while interventions are taking place. These direct observations should be unannounced.
If the intervention is effective and students are making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), the fidelity checks do not need to be as thorough. For example, the fidelity check might be a walk through or a short observation.

If the students are not making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), then fidelity checks need to be more thorough. A fidelity check might be a 30-minute direct observation.

### Tier II: Three fidelity checks (at minimum)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Fidelity Check</th>
<th>Indirect Fidelity Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Direct</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Options for Direct Checks:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Options for Indirect Checks:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Walk through observation</td>
<td>- Review of intervention lesson plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Short observations (partial intervention session)</td>
<td>- Review of progress monitoring data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Full observation</td>
<td>- Review of schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct observations may vary in length depending on the intensity of the observation needed.</td>
<td>- Review of attendance (including reasons for absense)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Documentation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidelity checks can be done for an entire group at the same time; however, the information they provide should be looked at from the student level because the team will be making decisions about each student's needs.</td>
<td>The data team should conduct reviews of student data. When analyzing one student's progress, the team should consider the group and/or student rate of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example personnel to include:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Example personnel to include:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Principals, administrators, or other appointed designees;</td>
<td>- Data team (as a regular component of data team meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Instructional coaches: literacy/numeracy coaches;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School psychologists; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Special education teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier II fidelity monitoring must be focused on individual students to ensure that each student is receiving interventions as prescribed. **Interventions must be implemented with integrity.** If the intervention is not implemented with integrity of at least 80% or greater, the interventionist should be supported with training until integrity reaches 80%.
Component 4: Tier III Procedures

4.1 Description of Tier III Interventions

Tier III in K-2 ELA & Mathematics:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II interventions and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual intervention targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more intense than interventions received in Tier II. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency and duration of implementation.

Tier III in 3-5 ELA & Mathematics:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual intervention targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more intense than interventions received in Tier II. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency and duration of implementation.

Tier III in 6-12 ELA:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual intervention targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more intense than interventions received in Tier II. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency and duration of implementation.

Tier III in 6-12 Mathematics:

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary mathematics skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10th percentile and
require the most intensive interventions immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group, or individual interventions targeting specific area(s) of deficit, which are more intense than interventions received in Tier II. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency and duration of implementation.

**Tier III Description:**

Tier III is in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I. Tier III interventions should meet the needs of 3-5% of students. School RTI leadership team will decide the best placement for students in Tier III. Tier III interventions must be more intense than Tier II interventions. Intensity can be increased through length, frequency and duration of implementation. **Students who have not made adequate progress with Tier II interventions or who score below the designated cut score on the universal screening will receive more intense intervention in Tier III.** These cut scores should be based on national norms, at a minimum, and identify students who are at-risk.

As a guideline, students below 10th percentile would be considered the most "at-risk" and in possible need of Tier III intervention. When teachers and school level RTI support teams are making placement decisions for Tier III interventions, it may be necessary to consider other assessments, data, and information on the student. Such examples may include past retention or performance on TCAP. (See Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 3.4 for more information on universal screening and data-based decision making.)

Tier III interventions will 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). Interventions will be developed based on the unique needs of students. Interventions that have been researched to have the greatest chance of addressing the area of need should be selected. There will be evidence that interventions are more intense than Tier II.

There will be a clear description of the problem-solving approach to intervention being used for each of the areas (reading, math, or writing). A problem-solving approach within an RTI model is used to tailor an intervention to an individual student. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluation.

Scientifically research-based interventions are interventions that produce reliable and valid results. When these interventions are used properly, adequate gains should be expected. To be considered research-based, they must have a clear record of success.

Scientifically research-based interventions have the following characteristics according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi)]. Scientifically-based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic,
and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;
- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;
- Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

An effective intervention is:
- Implemented by highly-trained personnel;
- Implemented with fidelity and confirmed by measurement; and
- Progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met.

The school level RTI² leadership team will determine which students will be placed in Tier III. See section 4.5 on data-based decision making for more information.
4.2 Tier III Configuration

In grades K-8, the interventions in Tier III should be provided daily. The following charts illustrate the recommended minimum intervention times for Tier III in grades K-8:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier III</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>40-45 minutes</td>
<td>40-60 minutes</td>
<td>40-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>40-45 minutes</td>
<td>40-60 minutes</td>
<td>40-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier III</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
<th>Fourth Grade</th>
<th>Fifth Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is recommended that students in grades 9-12 receive Tier III interventions for 45-60 minutes daily, in some instances this may not be possible. However, students in need of Tier III interventions should receive a minimum of 225 minutes each week. The following charts illustrate the weekly minimum intervention times for Tier III in grades 9-12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier III</th>
<th>9-12 (traditional)</th>
<th>9-12 (block)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Weekly Minimums</td>
<td>225-275 minutes</td>
<td>225-300 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier III</th>
<th>9-12 (traditional)</th>
<th>9-12 (block)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Weekly Minimums</td>
<td>225-275 minutes</td>
<td>225-300 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A student who is receiving special education services should not be excluded from tiered interventions if their data indicates a need. For example, a student with Other Health Impairment (OHI) may receive special education services for his/her disability; however, he/she may also
receive tiered interventions in reading, math or written expression. In this case, both special education services and tiered interventions would be provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1:12*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Component 4.8 regarding High School Tier III Intervention Courses
**Fidelity may be achieved by reaching program ratio versus state target ratio.

The interventions need to be delivered by highly-trained personnel. Highly-trained personnel are people who are adequately trained to deliver the selected intervention as intended with fidelity to design. When possible, Tier III interventions should be taught by qualified, certified teachers. Research supports the most trained personnel working with the most at-risk students.

4.3 Progress Monitoring Procedures in Tier III

Progress monitoring is used to assess students’ academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier III, the effectiveness of the instructional intervention should be monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through administration of probes that are parallel forms of the ones used in universal screening. Students in Tier III should be progress monitored at least every other week in grades K-12. Progress monitoring will be done in the area of deficit using an instrument that is sensitive to change.

While the universal screening tools measure student performance, progress monitoring must be conducted with measures that are at the students’ skill/instructional level. The skill/instructional level at which a student will be progress monitored is determined through a survey-level assessment. A survey-level assessment is a process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate rate of improvement and growth. Survey-level assessment is also necessary for students suspected of being 1.5 to 2 years behind or who fall below the 10th percentile.

Progress monitoring in Tier III may include:

- Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes;
● Assessments from intervention materials/kits (Requirements: national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, sensitive to change, specific to an area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, it must plot or give information so that rate of improvements (ROI) can be transferred to graph form;

● Computer-based assessments (Requirements: national percentiles, allow for repeated measures, sensitive to change, and specific to an area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, it must plot or give information so that rate of improvements (ROI) can be transferred to graph form.

Progress monitoring in Tier III will take place at a frequency of at least every other week. Highly-trained personnel should administer the progress monitoring in Tier III and classroom teachers should continuously analyze the progress monitoring data.

### 4.4 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

**Teachers must show knowledge and evidence of setting goals for each child.** Expected growth can be determined by using measures provided by or created through the progress monitoring instrument. It should be related to each area of need.

For example, if the student has high error rates in reading fluency, additional assessment is completed that includes phonics assessments. If the student has phonics skills deficits, the teacher would intervene first in phonics before addressing fluency. If the student is in third grade, he/she may need measures on first grade fluency probes or phonics probes to determine an accurate rate of improvement (ROI). This would be determined through survey-level assessments (see section 4.3).

Teachers must show how students are progressing toward these goals using a rate of improvement (ROI) to determine adequate progress. **Teachers must use the data from progress monitoring to make instructional decisions.**

A student’s rate of improvement (ROI) on progress monitoring is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. The rate of improvement (ROI) is compared to the rate of improvement of a typical peer and is one of the factors considered in determining whether a student has made adequate progress. **The at-risk student’s rate of improvement must be greater than the rate of improvement of a typical student in order to “close the gap” and return to grade level functioning.** Many intervention materials and/or progress monitoring materials/assessments calculate the rate of improvement.
School RTI\textsuperscript{2} leadership teams will meet to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions and check student progress toward goals. A plan will be in place for when students are and are not making adequate progress within Tier III. If students are not making adequate progress in Tier III, the intervention may need to be changed. Students should have at least four to six data points during Tier III interventions before a change is considered. Only one or two variables should be changed at a time to measure effectiveness of the change. A change in intervention will be considered within each tier before moving to the next tier of intervention. Changes may include:

- Increasing frequency of intervention sessions;
- Changing interventions;
- Changing intervention provider; and
- Changing time of day intervention is delivered.

In order to make a data-based decision to refer for special education consideration, a minimum of 8-10 data points is required if progress monitoring every other week or 10-15 data points if progress monitoring weekly are required.

Students who were immediately placed in Tier III interventions must receive the total number of minutes for intervention as reflected in section 4.2. Furthermore, students who are immediately placed in Tier III interventions will be given adequate time to respond to prescribed intervention before a referral to special education is made. These students typically demonstrate a higher need and therefore may require Tier III intervention for a longer period of time before student growth meets expectation. During this extended support in Tier III intervention, a student’s progress should be monitored closely so that changes to the intervention can be made. The student’s progress should guide the data team in making these changes to the intervention. The purpose of immediately placing a student in Tier III intervention is to increase the intensity of the intervention, not to shorten the duration of the intervention period. The student will be given the same amount of time to respond to the intervention as a student who first received Tier II interventions.
Universal Screening Process
using multiple sources of data

Student is at risk
Student is not at risk
Student is exceeding grade-level expectations

Core Instruction for all students
- High-quality, differentiated instruction aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards
- Instructional decisions driven by ongoing formative assessment
- High-quality professional development and support
- Fidelity of instruction and fidelity monitoring

Ongoing Assessment
required for data-based decision making

Student is at risk
Student is not at risk
Student is exceeding grade-level expectations

Tier I
all students

Targeted intervention for some students
- Address the needs of struggling and advanced students
- Additional time beyond time allotted for core instruction
- High-quality intervention matched to student-targeted area of need
- Provided by highly trained professionals

Progress Monitoring
required for data-based decision making

Student does not make significant progress
Student is meeting grade-level expectations

Tier II
10-15% of students

Student is significantly below grade level, he or she may need Tier III

Consider possible need for special education referral after Tier II and Tier III Intervention where student fails to make adequate progress based on gap analysis.
4.5 Professional Development for Tier III

Professional development will cover specific content pertaining to Tier III interventions, Tier III progress monitoring, Tier III data-based decision making, and Tier III fidelity monitoring. All personnel involved in Tier III interventions, including administrators, will receive professional development.

4.6 Fidelity Monitoring

Fidelity is the accuracy or extent to which Tier III materials and other curricula are used as intended by the author/publisher. Fidelity monitoring is the systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (e.g. principal, instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models as originally developed. In Tier III, fidelity monitoring will focus on the intervention specific to each student and will use reliable and valid measures. The goal of fidelity monitoring is to ensure that the intervention is being implemented with integrity.

In Tier III, fidelity will be monitored at least five times before making a data-based decision to increase the intensity of the intervention. For students receiving Tier III intervention, an increase in intensity would be a referral to special education.

Students may remain in Tier III for varying amounts of time. This variability is determined by the student’s progress in Tier III. The RTI team will review ROI data and fidelity monitoring data to determine the student’s ongoing intervention needs.

Instead of determining fidelity checks by marking period, a data team should ensure that five fidelity checks occur within the period of time that 8-10 data points are collected if progress monitoring every other week or 10-15 data points if progress monitoring weekly. Therefore, when reviewing the effectiveness of an intervention, a data team should review three fidelity checks and 8-10 data points if progress monitoring every other week or 10-15 data points if progress monitoring weekly.

The fidelity of implementation per intervention will be assessed throughout the process; however,
the minimum requirement is a combined total of 8 checks:

- 3 checks in Tier II where 2 must be a direct observation; and
- 5 checks in Tier III where 3 must be direct observations and two must be a review of implementation data (i.e., student attendance, lesson plans, progress monitoring results, and program specific fidelity checklist). The 5 fidelity checks occur within with the period of time that the 8-10 data point are collected.
- Therefore a data team should review the 3 fidelity checks from Tier II and the 5 fidelity checks from Tier III along with the 8-10 data points from Tier II and 8-10 data points from Tier III when reviewing the effectiveness of the interventions.

Ongoing fidelity documentation of intervention should include:

- Interventions used;
- Evidence of implementation at 80% or greater;
- Student attendance;
- Progress monitoring results; and
- Any other anecdotal information that might account for the student's progress or a lack thereof.

The direct observations should be unannounced. Tier III fidelity monitoring must be focused on individual students to ensure that each student is receiving interventions as prescribed. Interventions must be implemented with integrity.

If the intervention is effective and students are making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), the fidelity checks do not need to be as thorough. For example, the fidelity check might be a walk through or a short observation.

If the students are not making progress (as determined by their rate of improvement), then fidelity checks need to be more thorough. For example, a thorough fidelity check might be a 30-minute direct observation.

Fidelity monitoring is not a threat to the formal evaluation process. Rather, it is a way to build a culture of collaboration to ensure that Tier III interventions are taking place with a high level of fidelity. The samples provided in this component are only examples of the types of fidelity monitoring that can be done for Tier III.

A program specific fidelity checklist or generic checklist can be used and/or developed by the LEA. This component includes some sample program specific fidelity checklists. These are just examples and should not be seen as an endorsement of any specific intervention.
If the intervention is not implemented with integrity of at least 80% or greater, the interventionist should be supported with training until integrity reaches 80%.

### 4.7 Consideration for Special Education

A referral for special education for a specific learning disability (SLD) in basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression will be determined **when the data indicate that Tier III is ineffective**. Information obtained from any screenings completed during the intervention process may be used as part of the eligibility determination following informed written parental consent. Consent for an evaluation may be requested or received during Tier III interventions, **but evidence from Tier III must be a part of determination, and a lack of response to Tier III interventions may not be predetermined**. An evaluation for SLD may be in conjunction with the second half of Tier III but may not be concluded before Tier III interventions are proven ineffective at the end of Tier III.

The fidelity of implementation per intervention will be assessed throughout the process; however the minimum requirement is a combined total of eight checks:

- Three checks in Tier II where two must be a direct observation
- Five checks in Tier III where three must be direct observations and two must be a review of implementation data (i.e., student attendance, lesson plans, progress monitoring results).
Team members involved in making a decision to refer for special education may include

- School psychologist
- Principal or other designee
- Intervention/RTI leadership team members

Parents must be invited to a meeting to discuss a referral for special education evaluation. See Component 5 for more information.

### Tennessee SLD Definition Made Easy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition 1</th>
<th>Condition 2</th>
<th>Condition 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Underachievment in:**  
  - Basic Reading Skills  
  - Reading Fluency  
  - Reading Comprehension  
  - Written Expression  
  - Mathematics Calculation  
  - Mathematics Reasoning | **RTI:** Insufficient responses to scientific, research-based intervention. | **Exclusionary Factors:** Conditions 1 and 2 are not primarily due to:  
  - Visual, Hearing, or Motor Disability;  
  - Intellectual Disability;  
  - Emotional Disturbance;  
  - Cultural Factors;  
  - Environmental or Economic Disadvantage;  
  - Limited English Proficiency; or  
  - Excessive Absenteeism |

4.8 High School Tier III Intervention Courses

The Department of Education offers high school course codes for Tier III intervention. **There are two courses offered for credit: Tier III ELA Intervention and Tier III Mathematics Intervention.** Using progress monitoring data to make data-based decisions, students may repeat the intervention courses as needed and move in and out of the intervention courses as needed. These data-based decisions should be made by the School RTI2 Data Analysis Team. These are elective courses beyond the required ELA and Mathematics classes needed for graduation; however, these can be used to count toward an elective focus. These courses will be offered daily (or as described in Component 4.2) and will be taught by a certified teacher. These courses will use research-based interventions and follow the guidelines within Component 4.1 for Tier III intervention. The majority of the course should be direct intervention provided by a certified teacher; however, computer-based and/or technology assisted interventions can be used a portion of the time. The intervention program should match the area of deficit and be delivered with high
fidelity. It is recommended that class size should not exceed a 1:12 ratio. Any **certified** teacher may teach the high school Tier III ELA or Tier III Math intervention course.

**Component 4: Tier III Procedures**

**Forms**

4.4 ROI Worksheet
4.4 GAP Analysis Worksheet
4.4 Referral Decision Tree
4.6 Tier III Fidelity Checklist
4.6 Tier III Generic Intervention Walkthrough
5.1 Special Education Referral Procedures.

A special education referral for a student suspected of a Specific Learning Disability may only be deemed necessary after the student has received tiered interventions, and the intervention(s) provided were not successful in closing the achievement gap. A student may be referred during Tier III, but eligibility will not be determined until interventions have been implemented with fidelity at all levels. Data based decisions will be made at each tier using a minimum of 8-10 data points (if progress monitoring every other week) OR 10-15 data points (if progress monitoring weekly). Furthermore, a change in intervention will be considered within each tier before moving to the next tier of intervention (as referenced in sections 3.4 and 4.4). Number of data points reflects empirical research required to make an informed data based decision. The intervention must have empirical evidence supporting its use in remediating 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 a sufficient amount of progress in the area of suspected disability. It is the LEA's responsibility to document that the student received intervention and was progress monitored as outlined by the Tier II and Tier III guidelines.

**Student screening:** Students may be screened by a specialist (e.g., school psychologist or reading specialist) at any time within the Tiers to provide instructional and/or program planning information. For example, the student’s phonological processing or academic skills may be screened to provide additional information to inform instruction and/or intervention. All screenings will be conducted in accordance with the examiner’s manual with regard to standardization and examiner qualifications. Prior to a special education referral, this screening information may only be used to help identify the needs of the student and to assist with instructional program planning. Furthermore, this information will not be used to predetermine the student’s ability or lack thereof to make progress.

If a student fails to make adequate progress after receiving intervention at all levels, the information obtained from any screenings completed during the intervention process may be used as part of the eligibility determination following informed written parental consent. Screenings conducted for instructional programming may be necessary but are not sufficient to document underachievement in the event a special education referral is made (See section 5.2).
If, within the RTI² process, the team suspects that a student may be evidencing a disability other than a Specific Learning Disability, then the referral process for that disability must be followed. It is important to note that the RTI² process is not required or appropriate for all areas of suspected disability. For example, a Kindergarten age student who enters school with developmental delays as indicated by multiple sources of information would not necessarily need to go through all tiers of intervention before being evaluated for a Developmental Delay. Similarly, a student who is suspected of having an Intellectual Disability may also be referred prior to the completion of the RTI² process. Any information collected through the screening/progress monitoring process will be vitally important when making these decisions. None of these procedures will conflict with the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs Memorandum 11-07.

Progress Monitoring Requirements:

A lack of sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more areas (i.e., Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Mathematics Calculation, Mathematics Problem Solving) based on the student’s responsiveness to scientific, research-based intervention shall be documented using the following criteria:
**Rate of Improvement (ROI)**

*If a student is 1.5 grade levels or more behind then the student may immediately require Tier III intensive intervention. Refer to the guidelines for all grade levels in Components 3 or 4. Students who are immediately placed in Tier III level intervention must receive the minimum number of recommended minutes of intervention as reflected in the tables in Sections 3.2 and 4.2. Furthermore, students who are immediately placed in Tier III intervention will be given adequate time to respond to prescribed intervention before a referral to special education is made. The purpose of immediately placing a student in Tier III intervention is to increase the intensity of the intervention, not to shorten the duration of the intervention period. The student
will be given the same amount of time to respond to the intervention as a student who first received Tier II interventions. This allows school teams time to make the necessary changes to Tier II interventions in order to establish that all possible options have been considered. If all options have been exhausted at Tier III and the team has data to indicate that the interventions were not effective, a referral to special education may be considered.

If Tier III interventions have been provided and a gap analysis indicates that a student’s progress is not sufficient for making adequate growth with the current interventions, then the team may obtain Notice and Consent for Initial Evaluation. The team must complete all evaluations and establish the student’s eligibility for service within the initial evaluation timeline. The student will remain in intervention and will continue to be monitored while the requested evaluations are being completed. All information collected including the student’s responsiveness to intervention will be a part of the student’s eligibility determination.

Special Education Referral Information:
A referral to special education will include (at a minimum):

- **Parent Input** to include any pertinent familial information, family/student medical history, and etc.;
- **Teacher Input** to include an indirect observation, work samples, documentation of differentiated instruction, etc.;
- **Documentation of the Problem** to include classroom-based performance assessments, standardized testing results, and other relevant assessment data;
- **A Detailed Description of the Intervention Process** to include interventions used, attendance, frequency of implementation, duration of implementation, and fidelity monitoring; and
- **Progress Monitoring** data indicating a lack of responsiveness to intervention.
- **Components of a special education evaluation/re-evaluation.**

The following outlines the eligibility criteria and eligibility determination when establishing the eligibility of a student for special education services based on a Specific Learning Disability.

**Specific Learning Disabilities Eligibility Criteria**

Definition: The term **Specific Learning Disability** means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, and that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Such term includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities (e.g., visual processing), brain injury that is not caused by an external physical force, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific Learning Disability does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of Visual Impairment; Hearing Impairment; Orthopedic Impairment; Intellectual Disability; Emotional Disturbance; Limited English
Proficiency; or Environmental or Cultural Disadvantage.

The characteristics as identified in the Specific Learning Disabilities definition are to include:

A. Evaluation for Specific Learning Disabilities shall meet the following standards:

1. To ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having a Specific Learning Disability is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction (i.e., empirically research-based instruction that is rigorous, systematic, and peer-reviewed) in the student’s State approved grade level standards, the following must be obtained:
   a. Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the student was provided appropriate instruction (i.e., empirically research-based instruction that is rigorous and systematic throughout all Tiers of instruction/intervention) in regular education settings, delivered by qualified and appropriately trained personnel;
   b. Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement, reflecting formative assessment of student progress during intervention, which was provided to the student’s parents at a minimum of once every four and one-half (4.5) weeks.

2. The student does not achieve adequately for the student’s age or to meet state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student’s age or state-approved grade level standards:
   a. Basic Reading Skills
   b. Reading Fluency Skills
   c. Reading Comprehension
   d. Written Expression
   e. Mathematics Calculation
   f. Mathematics Problem Solving

An evaluation of Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension shall be completed pursuant to the Speech or Language Impairment eligibility standards if an SLD is suspected in either area. If a student has been evaluated by a Speech Language Pathologist and does not qualify as Language Impaired, then the IEP team may consider a Specific Learning Disability in either Oral Expression or Listening Comprehension if either continues to be a suspected area of disability; however, the rigorous intervention and progress monitoring standards must be met.

In order to substantiate inadequate achievement, an individual, standardized, and norm-referenced measure of academic achievement must be administered after initial consent is obtained in the area of suspected disability (i.e., Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression,
Mathematics Calculation, and Mathematics Problem Solving). Intensive intervention must occur within the tiers before inadequate classroom achievement can be assessed. The score from a standardized achievement test administered prior to receiving intensive intervention may not be used to determine inadequate classroom achievement. The team will select assessment instruments that are sensitive to floor effects and developmental levels, especially for students in the primary grades.

3. The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more areas (i.e., Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Math Calculation, Mathematics Problem Solving) when using a process based on the student’s responsiveness to scientific, research-based intervention in each area of suspected delay.

A lack of sufficient progress will be established by examining the student’s Rate of Improvement (ROI) including a gap analysis and will be based on the following criteria:

- The rate of progress or improvement is less than that of his/her same-age peers,
- or
- The rate of progress is the same as or greater than that of his/her same age peers but will not result in reaching the average range of achievement within a reasonable period of time.

4. The LEA must ensure that the child is observed in the student’s learning environment (including the general education classroom setting) to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty.

A pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance shall be documented by two systematic observations in the area of suspected disability. One may be conducted by a special education teacher and one must be conducted by the School Psychologist or certifying specialist:

- Systematic observation of routine classroom instruction, and
- Systematic observation during intensive, scientific research-based or evidence-based intervention.

In the case of a student who is in a placement outside of the local education agency (LEA), a team member must observe the student in an environment appropriate for a student of that age.

5. The team must determine that underachievement is not primarily the result of
Visual, Motor, or Hearing Disability, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disturbance, Cultural Factors, Environmental or Economic Factors, Limited English Proficiency, or Excessive Absenteeism.

A measure of cognition is not required for all students referred to special education based on a suspected Specific Learning Disability. Only when the team suspects the student may be evidencing another disability (e.g. Intellectual Disability or Functional Delay) will a comprehensive measure of the student’s intelligence be administered.

B. A student whose characteristics meet the definition of a student having a Specific Learning Disability may be identified as a student eligible for special education services if:
   1) All of the aforementioned eligibility criteria are met, and
   2) There is evidence, including observation and/or assessment, indicating how the Specific Learning Disabilities adversely impact the student’s performance in or access to the general education curriculum.

C. Evaluation participants must include:
   1) The parent or guardian;
   2) The student’s general education classroom teacher;
   3) A licensed special education teacher;
   4) At least one person qualified to conduct an individual diagnostic evaluation (i.e., School Psychologist and/or Speech-Language Pathologist); and
   5) Other professional personnel as indicated (i.e., Occupational Therapist).

In the case of a private evaluation and/or diagnosis (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Visual Processing), the team should consider information presented to help inform instruction and intervention. The student must be provided academic interventions congruent with the RTI 2 guidelines if the team suspects the presence of a Specific Learning Disability as either a primary or secondary disability.

Exclusionary/Rule-out Factors:
Within the special education evaluation process, these factors must be ruled-out as the primary reason for the student’s underachievement.
### Eligibility Determination:

In order for a student’s eligibility for special education services to be established, the team must complete and sign the Specific Learning Disabilities Assessment Documentation Form. This form will replace the typical comprehensive Psychoeducational Evaluation as it relates to a Specific Learning Disability ONLY. An Eligibility Report and a Prior Written notice indicating the student’s eligibility determination must also be completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier of Instruction and Intervention</th>
<th>Guidelines of Tier</th>
<th>Screening Provided</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier I</td>
<td>TIER I: as defined per Tier I guidelines.</td>
<td>Skills Based universal screening</td>
<td>K-8: 3x per year (fall, winter, and spring) 9-12: recommended 3x per year (fall, winter, and spring)</td>
<td>Ongoing measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier II</td>
<td>TIER II: In addition to Tier I. As defined by Tier II guidelines.</td>
<td>Progress monitoring in specific area of deficit that is sensitive to change and provides a ROI.**</td>
<td>Every other week</td>
<td>Minimum of 8-10 data points to make a data based decision to change to Tier III*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier III</td>
<td>TIER III: In addition to Tier I and more intense than Tier II. Per Tier III guidelines.</td>
<td>Progress monitoring in specific area of deficit that is sensitive to change and provides a ROI.**</td>
<td>Every other week</td>
<td>Minimum of 8-10 data points with Tier III interventions to make a data based decision to refer for special education consideration*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Re-evaluations:

All re-evaluations for students with a Specific Learning Disability will be grounded in progress monitoring data. For students who qualified for services using the discrepancy model, it is assumed that the initial eligibility process was valid. Existing student-centered data including ongoing assessments of progress and focused/diagnostic evaluations will be reviewed through the Re-evaluation Summary Report to determine if additional information is needed. Again, a gap analysis will be completed and the student’s ROI will be calculated in order to determine the amount of services/intervention required to close his or her achievement gap. The level of service required (special education versus general education) will be used to negate or substantiate continued eligibility.

Transfers:

When a student with a SLD transfers from one Tennessee LEA to another, the school psychologist will conduct a records review to ensure that all eligibility components were met; however, there is no need to complete the Re-evaluation Summary Report unless components of the student’s eligibility for services are missing. There is also no need to create a new Eligibility Report when all eligibility criteria have been clearly met.

When a referred student transfers from one Tennessee LEA to another before an eligibility determination is made, the new LEA must facilitate the timely completion of the requested evaluation. The previous school district must send all relevant assessment information to the inheriting school district as soon as possible so that the evaluation and eligibility determination processes are not delayed. If additional time is needed to establish the student’s eligibility for services, then the inheriting school district may submit a request to extend the evaluation timeline. This may be accomplished using the formal extension process, which requires any extension of the timeframe be amended by mutual written agreement between the student’s parents and a group of qualified professionals.

Consistent with previous guidance, all out-of-state transfers will be treated as re-evaluations. Furthermore, the team will use the Re-evaluation Summary Report to document all relevant information and make a determination. If the previous eligibility process is sufficient to establish the student’s eligibility for services based on Tennessee SLD criteria, then the team may choose to adopt those results. A new Eligibility Report will be completed reflecting this decision.

For students with an SLD who were made eligible using a model other than RTI2, whose pre-referral intervention and/or progress monitoring data is missing, or whose previous evaluation does not meet TN SLD criteria, it is assumed that the student did not respond to general education intervention; however, a comprehensive re-evaluation (i.e., progress monitoring and achievement data collection) will be completed for eligibility purposes. The student’s responsiveness to intervention as indicated by progress monitoring data will be collected, based on services (intervention) provided through the IEP. Again, a gap analysis will
be completed and the student's ROI calculated in order to determine the amount of services/intervention required to close his or her achievement gap. The level of service required (special education versus general education) will be used to negate or substantiate continued eligibility. All information will be collected and an eligibility determination will be made within the initial evaluation timeframe unless the team agrees to request an extension of the timeline.

**Private/Home School:**

IDEA requires that districts use a proportionate amount of funding to provide services to students in private and homeschool settings. In order to establish a student's need for these services, districts must engage in child find activities and respond to parental requests for evaluation. There are two possible scenarios:

1) **If the student is referred but consent for evaluation has not been received:**

In order to rule-out lack of appropriate instruction, the district must assist the private or homeschool in both the intervention and progress monitoring process. The team must decide whether these services will be offered by qualified individuals in the private or homeschool setting, or if these services need to be provided by the LEA. If universal screening and/or academic achievement information is not available, the LEA is encouraged to initiate the referral/problem-solving process by gathering this information.

2) **If the parent provides written request for evaluation:**

During the evaluation timeline that begins with the receipt of a written request for evaluation, the LEA will collect data on the appropriateness of the student's current curriculum, the fidelity of instruction, and any interventions implemented prior to the request. Again, the team must decide whether the required tiered interventions will be offered by qualified individuals in the private or homeschool setting, or if these services need to be provided by the LEA (i.e., walk-in). If interventions are put into place and the student begins making significant progress, the LEA will meet with the parent and decide whether or not to request an extension of the evaluation timeline. This may be done using the formal extension process, which requires any extension of the timeframe be amended by mutual written agreement between the student’s parents and a group of qualified professionals. If the student makes minimal to no progress, the evaluation and eligibility determination must be completed within the evaluation timeframe.

If a district accepts the referral but then later chooses not to qualify the student because lack of appropriate instruction cannot be ruled out, parents may exercise their right to an independent evaluation or initiate due process.
5.3 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures.

When determining eligibility for special education, the team will consider data collected with tiered interventions. Data will have been used to determine movement within and out of tiered interventions. Students will have had researched-based, peer-reviewed interventions within the specific area of deficit. They will have been progress monitored over time and a rate of improvement will have been determined. Students that are making sufficient progress will remain at the level of support required to be successful. After tiered interventions have been exhausted and the student has demonstrated insufficient progress, then the student's eligibility for special education service may be determined. The team may initiate the referral process using the following criteria:

- A student does not appear to making sufficient progress after tiered interventions have been implemented with fidelity and data based decisions have been made using 8-10 data points (every other week) or 10-15 data points (weekly) at each tier.
- ROI and a gap analysis must be completed for students being referred for special education to determine if needs are beyond general education Tier III interventions.

The Tennessee SLD criteria identifies two decision rules to inform the IEP team analysis of progress monitoring data from intensive, scientific research-based or evidence-based intervention. A student’s rate of progress during intensive intervention is insufficient if either of the following apply:

- The rate of progress is less than that of his/her same-age peers, or
- The rate of progress is greater than his/her same-age peers but will not result in reaching the average range of achievement in a reasonable period of time.

5.4 Parent Request for Evaluation

If a parent or legal guardian requests an evaluation within the RTI2 process, the team must complete the agreed upon components of the evaluation within the initial evaluation timeline as indicated by the LEA's receipt of informed parental consent. The student may be eligible for services as a student with a Specific Learning Disability based only on the aforementioned eligibility standards. There is no option to use either a discrepancy model or a pattern of strengths and weaknesses model to identify a Specific Learning Disability.
If a parent requests an evaluation, the LEA will include for consideration all intervention and progress monitoring data available at the time of referral. The student will continue to receive intervention in the specific area of deficit and will continue to be progress monitored. If the initial evaluation timeline will expire before adequate data has been collected, then all information and testing completed to that point will be used to establish the student’s eligibility for special education. If the team lacks sufficient evidence to establish the student’s eligibility for services, the team may agree to request an extension of the evaluation timeline or the student will be made ineligible until sufficient data can be collected.

5.5 Fidelity Monitoring (per Guidelines in Tier II and Tier III)

The fidelity of implementation per intervention should be assessed by qualified personnel throughout the process; however, the minimum requirement is a combined total of 8 checks: 3 checks in Tier II where 2 must be a direct observation, and 5 checks in Tier III where 3 must be direct observations and 2 must be a review of implementation data (i.e., attendance, lesson plans, progress monitoring results). Ongoing fidelity documentation of intervention should include: interventions used, evidence of implementation at 80% or greater, student attendance, progress monitoring results, and any other anecdotal information that might account for the student’s progress or a lack thereof. If the intervention is not implemented with integrity, the interventionist should be supported with training until integrity reaches 80%. Fidelity monitoring should continue within special education interventions and follow the same fidelity monitoring schedule as Tier III interventions.

5.6 Progress Monitoring and Intervention Procedures in Special Education

Students who qualify for special education with a Specific Learning Disability will be assigned services by their Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Special education services will be the most intensive level of intervention. The student will remain in the core instruction (Tier I) and will have access to tiered intervention within the general education curriculum to the greatest extent possible. The same problem solving approach used in the general education RTI2 process will be used in special education. Furthermore, interventions will be tailored to the student in the area of identified disability, and progress toward their IEP goals will be monitored weekly or every other week. When students fail to respond to intervention as a result of the provision of special education services, an IEP team meeting will be reconvened.
5.7 Dismissal from Special Education

Students may move from special education interventions to general education interventions if there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the student no longer needs special education services. Movement from special education to general education will be supported by multiple sources of data including ROI, gap analysis, evidence of meeting IEP goals, and student need. The goal is for all students to be served at their level of need within the least restrictive environment. The team will use the Re-evaluation Summary Report process to gather all sources of information and make an eligibility determination.

5.8 Program Evaluation

The RTI2 process within a district will be continually monitored and adjusted to better meet the needs of all students. All students should benefit from the data based decision making process and all decisions should be made for the best interest of an individual student. District data, school data and student data will continually be monitored and changes will be adjusted based on the data collected (e.g. strengthening Tier I or more research based interventions in Tier III).
Glossary of Terms

**Academic vocabulary:** Words that are traditionally used in academic texts or discussions, and typically not encountered in informal conversations.

**Affect:** The emotional or psychological effect an environment has on a student; affect includes the tone or mood of the classroom and can be influenced by the physical setup of the classroom, classroom rules, routines and procedures, and interactions between teachers and peers.

** Appropriately-complex texts:** Texts that possess quantitative and qualitative complexities that align with grade level expectations and/or student readiness levels.

**Basic Reading (Skills)** - Basic reading skills include the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in language; to identify printed letters and their associated sounds; to decode written language.

**Benchmark** - Short term or long-term assessment goal used to indicate grade level expectations during a specific grade level and at a specific time period (e.g., fall, winter, spring).

**Certifying Specialist** - An assessment professional that is involved in the evaluation of a student for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education services. Certifying specialists may include school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, etc.

**Child find:** IDEA regulation, states must have in effect policies and procedures to ensure that (1) all children with disabilities residing in the state, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the state, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated; and (2) a practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

**Close Reading:** Careful and methodical attention to text, often including repeated reading, to uncover various layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension.

**Comprehension (Reading)** - The ability to understand and make meaning of text.

**Comprehensive Evaluation** - Assessments that are completed for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education services. Components of the evaluation are chosen based on the referral and are specific to the Tennessee State eligibility standards for the suspected disability or disabilities.
**Conceptual understanding:** Understanding of mathematical ideas and the ability to transfer knowledge into new situations and apply it to new contexts.

**Connected Texts:** Words that are linked (as opposed to words in a list) as in sentences, phrases, and paragraphs.

**Core Curriculum/Instruction (Tier I Instruction)** - Grade level instruction provided to all students in the regular education classroom. Core instruction often includes various instructional orientations to include whole class, small-differentiated groups, collaborative, and individual opportunities for learning. Core instruction is targeted to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Materials and lesson protocols used from the core program are based on current data and are designed to meet the needs of all students.

**Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)** - A system for ongoing monitoring of student progress through a specific curriculum. Through the use of CBM assessments, teachers assess students’ academic performance on a regular basis with very brief tests. Results are used to determine whether students are progressing appropriately from the core (Tier I) instructional program, and to build more effective programs for the students who do not benefit adequately from core (Tier I) instruction.

**Data-Based Decision Making** - Data-based decision making is the process of using appropriate data collected to inform and drive each instructional decision.

**Diagnostic Evaluation/Assessment** - Standardized assessments designed to assess the extent to which students are on track to master grade level standards and to determine individual strengths and concerns of skills. Diagnostic assessments may also provide evidence of curricular strengths and needs in particular skill areas.

**Differentiated Instruction (Differentiation)** - Targeted instruction provided to meet the needs of students. Instruction includes diverse avenues to learn the skills and content to process, construct, extend, generalize, or make sense of ideas. Furthermore, differentiation will develop learning opportunities so all students within a classroom will learn effectively, regardless of differences in student progress, interests, and needs.

**Direct Instruction** - Direct instruction is an instructional approach that utilizes explicit and structured teaching routines. A teacher using direct instruction models, explains, and guides the students through extended practice of a skill or concept until mastery is achieved. The lessons are fast paced, students are academically engaged, and teachers are enthusiastically delivering instruction. Direct instruction is appropriate instruction for all learners, all five components of reading, and in all settings (whole group, small group, and one-on-one).

**Duration** - The length of time intervention is provided a student as indicated by benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results.
**Early Intervention** - Specialized instruction specifically designed to target skill deficits and provide appropriate instruction to meet the needs of students. Intervention is provided early in order to prevent future learning disabilities or present academic performance deficits with the goal of maintaining grade-level or above grade-level performance.

**English Language Arts (ELA)** - English Language Arts that includes teaching, learning, and mastery of skills to appropriately build and possess the strong foundational skills of reading; read various types of texts to include literature, fictional, informational and technical texts and media technology; write and speak for different purposes and to various audiences; and to have full command and use of appropriate language.

**English Language Learner (ELL)** - A student who through testing and other means is found to have some difficulty speaking, reading, and/or writing in English.

**Enrichment** - Enrichment activities expand on students’ learning in ways that may differ from the strategies used during Tier I instruction. They often are interactive and project-focused. They enhance a student’s education by bringing new concepts to light or by using old concepts in new ways to deepen students’ understanding. These activities are designed to be interesting, challenging, and impart knowledge. They should allow students to apply knowledge and skills learned in Tier I to real-life experiences.

**Evidence Based Intervention** - Interventions that have been tested and have demonstrated success with a particular group of students. This means that the research results are reliable and valid. As a result, the research shows there is reasonable evidence to indicate the program or strategies will result in academic gains when used appropriately.

**Explicit Instruction** - Instruction that involves direct, face-to-face teaching that is highly structured, focused on specific learning outcomes, and based on a high level of student and teacher interaction. It involves explanation, demonstration, and practice with topics being taught in a logical order. Another characteristic of explicit teaching is modeling skills, thinking, and behaviors. This also involves the teacher thinking out loud when working through problems and demonstrating processes for students.

**Fidelity** - The extent to which the prescribed instruction or intervention plan is executed. Fidelity includes addressing the deficit area, using the type of intervention prescribed, maintaining an appropriate group size, length of session, etc.

**Fidelity Monitoring** - The systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (i.e. principal, instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of instruction or an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models originally developed. Fidelity monitoring has increasing significance for evaluation and treatment effectiveness. The fidelity of
implementation per intervention and instruction should be assessed throughout the process as per the guidelines in the manual.

**Flexible grouping/small groups**- A basic strategy for grouping students for the purpose of providing targeted instruction to meet the needs of student groups. Grouping provides the opportunity for students to work together in a variety of ways, and in a number of arrangements. Groupings may be whole class, small groups, individual, and partners, teacher-led or student-led and are commensurate to instructional activities, learning goals, and student needs. Flexible grouping provides the opportunity for student groups to change based on the changing needs of students, as indicated in benchmark and progress monitoring assessments.

**Reading (fluency)**- Reading fluency refers to the ability to read words accurately, quickly, and effortlessly. Moreover, fluency skills include the ability to read with appropriate expression and intonation (prosody). Reading fluency is the ability to read with sufficient accuracy and rate to support comprehension. Reading fluency applies to accurately reading on-level fiction, prose, and poetry with expression through repeated reading. Non-fiction and technical reading passages generally requires a slower more thoughtful level of reading rate to support comprehension. Reading fluency can also be the rate at which young students demonstrate and name their conceptual understanding of letter-sound correspondence, alphabetic knowledge, and reading nonsense words, sight words, sentences, and texts.

**Math (fluency)**- Mathematical fluency is the ability to make sense of problems and/or patterns and structure and to proficiently calculate and accurately find appropriate solution paths to identify, solve, and find reasonable explanations. Mathematical fluency can also be the rate at which young students demonstrate and name their conceptual understanding of numerals, counting, naming numerals, and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts.

**Focused Assessment**- A focused assessment is a prescribed measure used to evaluate a particular skill area to determine levels of performance.

**Formative Assessment**- Quality instruction includes assessments during instruction to provide the information needed to effectively direct and target teaching and learning as it occurs. Formative assessments enable the teacher to push instruction toward the targeted goals to ensure mastery of intended outcomes.

**Frequency**- The number, proportion, or percentage of items in a particular set of data. General Education- The program of education that students receive based on state standards that are evaluated by the annual state educational standards tests.

**Grade Level Content Expectations**- provide a set of clear and rigorous expectations for all students and provide teachers with clearly defined statements of what students should know and be able to do as they progress through school.
Highly-trained personnel- Teachers adequately trained to deliver the selected instruction as intended, that is, with fidelity to design.

Hybrid intervention- A hybrid approach within an RTI model combines methods of a problem-solving and a standard protocol approach.

Implementation Integrity- The extent to which core instruction and intervention materials are used as intended by the author/publisher. Implementation integrity also includes the prescribed amount of time and the frequency required for the treatment to yield its best results.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)- As reauthorized in 2004 ensure services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. (Reference: Ed.gov, United States Department of Education)

Intense (intensity)- The measure of strength by which instruction or intervention is delivered. Intensive academic and/or behavioral interventions are characterized by their increased focus for students who fail to respond to less intensive forms of instruction. Intensity can be increased through many dimensions including length, frequency, and duration of implementation.

Intervention- Support at the school level for students performing below grade-level expectations. Educational professionals determine academic intervention needs of students (determined by ongoing data), determine methods for dealing with academic issues, and – most important – monitor on an ongoing basis whether these methods are resulting in increased student learning and achievement.

Interventionist- An educator trained to deliver a prescribed intervention with fidelity. This may include a general education teacher, special education teacher, trained teaching assistant, or intervention specialist.

Intervention kit/materials- A research-based curriculum designed to target specific instructional needs with varying intensity.

LEA – Local Education Agency- A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or
secondary schools.

**Manipulatives**- Any object that allows students to explore an idea in an active, hands-on approach. Manipulatives include anything that can be manipulated to include counters, blocks, shapes, toys, letter tiles, etc.

**Math (Mathematics/Mathematical) Calculation**- The knowledge and retrieval of facts and the application of procedural knowledge in calculation.

**Math (Mathematics/Mathematical) Problem Solving**- Involves using mathematical computation skills, language, reasoning, reading, and visual-spatial skills in solving problems; applying mathematical knowledge at the conceptual level.

**Multi-Sensory**- Multi-sensory teaching and learning is simultaneously visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile to enhance memory and learning. Links are consistently made between the visual (what we see) auditory (what we hear), and kinesthetic-tactile (what we feel) pathways in learning to read, spell, reason, count, and compute.

**Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)**- A standardized assessment of consonant-vowel- consonant and vowel-consonant nonsense words that are individually administered to assess letter/sound relationships and blending (and/or segmentation) of phonetic sounds (e.g., fim, nen, sig).

**Other Health Impairment (OHI)**- Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia; and Tourette’s Syndrome that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. A child is “Other Health Impaired” who has chronic or acute health problems that require specially designed instruction due to: 1) impaired organizational or work skills; 2) inability to manage or complete tasks; 3) excessive health related absenteeism; or 4) medications that affect cognitive functioning.

**Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)**- A standardized reading measure of accuracy and fluency with connected text or passages, usually measured beginning mid-first grade through sixth grade.

**Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)**- A standardized measure of a student’s ability to segment three and four phoneme words into individual phonemes fluently, for example the examiner says “bat” and the student says /b/ /a/ /t/. PSF is usually measured mid-kindergarten through the spring of first grade.

**Phonemic Awareness**- The ability to hear, think about, identify and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
Phonics- Phonics refers to a systematic approach of teaching letters (and combinations of letters) and their corresponding speech sounds. Phonics begins with the alphabetic principle: language is comprised of words made up of letters that represent sounds.

Phonological Awareness- Phonological awareness is a broad skill that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language – parts such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. Children who have phonological awareness are able to identify and make oral rhymes, can clap out the number of syllables in a word, and can recognize words with the same initial sounds like “money” and “mother.” (Reference: Reading Rockets)

Probe- When using Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), the instructor administers a brief, timed assessment or "probes" made up of academic material taken from grade-level curriculum.

Progress Monitoring- Progress monitoring is used to assess students’ academic performance, to quantify a student rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Prescriptive Intervention- An intervention specifically targeted to meet the instructional needs of the student.

Prevention- The practice of providing additional assistance in any academic area to prevent students from falling behind.

Problem-Solving Approach within RTI- Within RTI, a problem-solving approach is used to tailor an intervention to an individual student. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluated (PAIR).

Professional Learning (PL)- Continuous targeted research-based instruction for school professionals and staff to improve learning outcomes for students and meet goals of the adult learner, class, school and/or district. The purpose of PD should be to provide educators with current research concerning best practices for teaching and learning.

Purposeful practice: Activities that enable students to apply learning in authentic, real-world scenarios. Purposeful practice can also include the strategic and targeted development of skills, either to strengthen an area of need or build on an area of expertise.

Rate of Improvement (ROI)- The expected rate of improvement on progress monitoring assessments is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. The ROI is compared to the improvement of a typical peer to determine adequate progress.
**Reliable**— Reliability refers to the consistency with which a tool classifies students from one administration to the next. A tool is considered reliable if it produces the same results when administering the test under different conditions, at different times, or using different forms of the test.

**Research-Based Instruction/Intervention**— A research-based instructional practice or intervention is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of students, the student can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice.

**Scaffold**— Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn the task, and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. In this manner, a teacher enables students to accomplish as much of a task as possible without assistance.

**School Psychologist**— School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students. School psychologists are highly-trained in both psychology and education, completing a minimum of a specialist-level degree program. This training emphasizes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and systems. School psychologists must be certified and/or licensed by the state in which they work. For more information, go to nasponline.org.

**Scientifically-Based Research**— Scientifically-based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;

- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;

- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;

- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for
random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;

- Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and

- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

**Screening** - A quick checklist, survey or probe used to provide an initial general indicator of levels of performance. Screenings may also include diagnostic assessments to gain more information about a student’s academic strengths and/or areas of concern.

**Special Education** - The most intensive interventions and specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students identified with an educational disability. This term may include related services such as speech/language or occupational therapy depending on student needs.

**Specific Learning Disability** - The term Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, and that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Such term includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities (e.g., visual processing), brain injury that is not caused by an external physical force, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific Learning Disability does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of Visual Impairment; Hearing Impairment; Orthopedic Impairment; Intellectual Disability; Emotional Disturbance; Limited English Proficiency; or, Environmental or Cultural Disadvantage. Specific Learning Disabilities may be identified in the following areas: Basic Reading, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Math Calculation, Math Problem Solving, Written Expression, Oral Expression, and/or Listening Comprehension.

**Specific Measurable Outcome** - The statement of a single, specific desired result from an intervention. To be measurable, the outcome should be expressed in observable and quantifiable terms (i.e., Johnny will demonstrate mastery of grade-level basic math calculation skills as measured by a score of 85% or better on the end-of-the unit test on numerical operations).

**Standard protocol intervention** - Standard protocol intervention relies on the same, empirically validated intervention for all students with similar academic or behavioral needs. Standard protocol interventions facilitate quality control.

**Standardized Assessment** - An assessment test that is developed using standard procedures and is then administered and scored in a consistent manner for all test takers.
**Summative Assessment** - Summative assessment is a form of evaluation used to describe the effectiveness of an instructional program or intervention, that is, whether the intervention had the desired effect. With summative assessment, student learning is typically assessed at the end of a course of study or annually (at the end of a grade).

**Survey-Level Assessment** - A process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and which skill/instructional level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate rate of improvement and growth.

**Systematic** - Systematic instruction refers to a carefully planned sequence for instruction, similar to a builder's blueprint for a house. A blueprint is carefully thought out and designed before building materials are gathered and construction begins. The plan for systematic instruction is carefully thought out, strategic, and designed before activities and lessons are developed. Systematic instruction is clearly linked within, as well as across the five major areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). For systematic instruction, lessons build on previously taught information, from simple to complex, with clear, concise student objectives that are driven by ongoing assessment. Students are provided appropriate practice opportunities, which directly reflect instruction.

**Trend line or trajectory** - A straight line that connects a series of results from assessments on a graph used to help determine progress toward intended target.

**Universal Screening/Screener** - An LEA must administer a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener. A universal screener is a brief screening assessment of academic skills (i.e. basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math calculation, math problem solving, written expression) administered to ALL students to determine whether students demonstrate the skills necessary to achieve grade level standards. Universal screening reveals which students are performing at or above the level considered necessary for achieving long-term success (general outcome measures). This data can also serve as a benchmark for measuring the improvement of a group, class, grade, school or district. Furthermore, universal screening can be used to identify students in need of further intervention due to identified skill deficits. A more precise assessment may be needed to determine a student’s specific area(s) of deficit before beginning an intervention.

**Valid** - Validity refers to the extent to which a tool accurately measures the underlying construct that it is intended to measure.

**Written Expression** - Involves basic writing skills (transcription) and generational skills (composition). Transcription: difficulty producing letters, words, spelling; Composition: difficulty with word and text fluency, sentence construction, genre- specific discourse structures, planning processes, and reviewing and revising processes.
References


National High School Center & National Center on Response to Intervention. (2010). *Tiered Interventions in High Schools: Using Preliminary “Lessons Learned” to Guide...*


