

MSAD #53 School Board
Curriculum Report
November 2, 2009

Response to Intervention (RTI) Update

Currently there is a discrepancy in the Maine education regulations about the date for full implementation of RTI. The Special Education regs state a deadline of July 2010 while 1325 states July 2012. The Commissioner will reopen Chapter 101 with the intent to eliminate the 2010 deadline.

The National Center on Response to Intervention describes RTI this way:
Response to intervention integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. (available <http://www.rti4success.org/>)

We have taken several steps forward in the implementation of RTI in the district. At the PK-4 level, all teachers were provided this fall with a binder of RTI resources, including a flow chart mapping the referral process through the Student Assistance Team and intervention and assessment tools. We will frequently add to this binder of resources as we identify additional intervention strategies and assessments.

Another significant step at the PK-4 level is the identification of assessments to use for universal screening of all students in math. Using ARRA funds, we have purchased a subscription to the AIMSweb assessment resource system. AIMSweb provides nationally normed, research-based assessments to use for universal benchmark assessments and progress monitoring. For example, Kindergarten students will take four 1-minute tests of their knowledge of number identification, quantity discrimination (which number is bigger/smaller), oral counting, and identification of a missing number in a sequence. Students in grades 1-3 will take 2-minute grade level tests of computation facts while grade 4 takes a 4-minute test. The purpose of universal screening is to identify quickly how many students are performing below average on basic skills. The tests raise a "red flag" and provide teachers with information about students potentially at risk and in need of additional support/intervention. Students in grades 5-8 take the NWEA assessment for math in the fall and spring as a universal screening.

Scheduling time to work with students who need extra support/intervention is an ongoing challenge. Last year, teachers in grades 5 and 6 piloted a Skills Block period for reading and math. The Skills Block classes focus on basic skills for low performing students, target potential areas of relative weakness for average performing students, and

accelerate skills for high performing students. These classes provide direct instruction *in addition to* regular reading and math classes.

The Skills Block approach has expanded to 7th and 8th grades for math two days a week this year, to 4th grade for math four days a week, and to 2nd grade for reading four days a week.

Goals for the district include ongoing professional development in differentiating instruction and other effective instructional strategies, implementation of progress monitoring and documentation of that progress, and the development of screening and intervention tools for behavioral needs.

Respectfully submitted,

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