



Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Instructional Programs and Services

Response to Intervention: The Mississippi Experience

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History of RtI in Mississippi

- Remedial education law was the precursor to RtI
 - Implemented in 1988
 - Required assessment of student's level of attainment
 - Required a matching of services to student needs
 - Established teacher support teams in each school to determine instructional needs of students

History of Rtl in Mississippi

- The challenges of improving student achievement and disproportionality led to looking for a successful model that fit our state context.
 - Knox County Schools
- The State Board of Education approved an Rtl (Intervention) policy in 2005.

The Mississippi Department of Education shall require an instructional model designed to meet the needs of every student. The model shall consist of three tiers of instruction.

Tier 1: Quality classroom instruction based on MS Curriculum Frameworks

Tier 2: Focused supplemental instruction

Tier 3: Intensive interventions specifically designed to meet the individual needs of students

Teachers should use progress monitoring information to (a) determine if students are making adequate progress, (b) identify students as soon as they begin to fall behind, and (c) modify instruction early enough to ensure each and every student gains essential skills. Monitoring of student progress is an ongoing process that may be measured through informal classroom assessment, benchmark assessment instruments, and large-scale assessments.

State Board Policy 4300 (continued)

If strategies at Tiers 1 & 2 are unsuccessful, students must be referred to the Teacher Support Team. The TST is the problem-solving unit responsible for interventions developed at Tier 3. Each school must have a Teacher Support Team (TST) implemented in accordance with the process developed by the Mississippi Department of Education. The chairperson of the TST shall be the school principal as the school's instructional leader or the principal's designee. The designee may not be an individual whose primary responsibility is special education.

Interventions will be:

- designed to address the deficit areas;**
- research-based;**
- implemented as designed by the TST; and**
- supported by data regarding the effectiveness of interventions.**

After a referral is made, the TST must develop and begin implementation of an intervention(s) within two weeks. No later than eight weeks after implementation of the intervention(s), the TST must conduct a documented review of the interventions to determine success of the intervention. No later than 16 weeks after implementation of the intervention(s), a second review must be conducted to determine whether the intervention is successful. If the intervention(s) is determined to be unsuccessful, then the student will be referred for a comprehensive assessment.

State Board Policy 4300 (continued)

In addition to failure to make adequate progress following Tiers 1 & 2, students will be referred to the TST for interventions as specified in guidelines developed by MDE if any of the following events occur:

- A. Grades 1-3: A student has failed one (1) grade;**
- B. Grades 4-12: A student has failed two (2) grades;**
- C. A student failed either of the preceding two grades and has been suspended or expelled for more than twenty (20) days in the current school year; OR**
- D. A student scores at the Minimal level on any part of the Grade 3 or Grade 7 Mississippi Curriculum Test.**

Referrals to the Teacher Support Team must be made within the first twenty (20) school days of a school year if the student meets any of the criteria A-D stated above.

History of RtI in Mississippi

- The MDE provided basic training, a manual, FAQs, and other resources.
- Reading First implementation closely followed this policy and process.
- This initial implementation happened on top of recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

History of RtI in Mississippi

- By late 2006-07
 - Implementation across school districts was inconsistent
 - There was a need for more training
 - School districts were struggling with disproportionality

History of RtI in Mississippi

- Identified the need to provide school districts with more guidance for implementation of RtI with an emphasis on fidelity of implementation
- MDE offices began contacting regional centers for assistance to address particular issues (Tier 1, disproportionality)
- Need for coordinated effort was recognized

Collaboration

- Brought a diverse group of internal stakeholders, technical assistance centers (SECC, SERRC, SEC), and university faculty together around a common goal of increasing student achievement (many of whom were not familiar with RtI)
- Identified current professional development, technical assistance, & other resources that supported RtI

Collaboration

- Identified gaps in professional development, technical assistance, & other resources
- Developed strategies and plans to address gaps and weaknesses
- Created an implementation action plans for 3-6 month timeframe

Strategies

- Develop Detailed Best Practice Guidance for Implementation
- Coordinate MDE Leadership for Rtl Implementation
- Formalize and Focus Pre-Service Training, Professional Development and Technical Assistance
- Build an Effective Regional TA System
- Cultivate Stakeholder Involvement in Rtl
- Fine-tune Policies and Procedures

Sustaining Implementation

- Established a cross-functioning departmental team charged with providing a seamless system of technical assistance, professional development, and support to school districts in implementing the Response to Intervention model (RtI Coordinating Council)
- Conduct quarterly collaborative meetings to review implementation, and to update and develop action plans for the next 3-6 months

Lessons Learned

- Rtl provides an overarching framework for many current components, programs, trainings, etc. – except many folks across the department of education and school districts are not aware of it or how it fits what they are doing.

Lessons Learned

- Many school leaders have tried to add RtI to what they are doing rather than doing RtI and adding what fits. In other words, they see RtI as a program or initiative rather than a process or way of going about our work.
- Many educators think they are already successfully implementing Tier 1 (they probably are not).

Lessons Learned

- Educators tend to rate themselves highly on knowing what to do, but much lower on implementation.
 - Need for meaningful, sustained training
 - Need to provide training at many levels
- Rtl is not how educators have been trained to implement instruction. Support is required. The professionals best equipped to provide this support are school psychologists.

Lessons Learned

- The principal is crucial to implementation at the school level.
- Remember this implementation is a journey, not a destination!