

A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement for All Students

Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework



Maryland State Department of Education
A Collaborative Effort of
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
Division of Instruction
Division of Student, Family, and School Support

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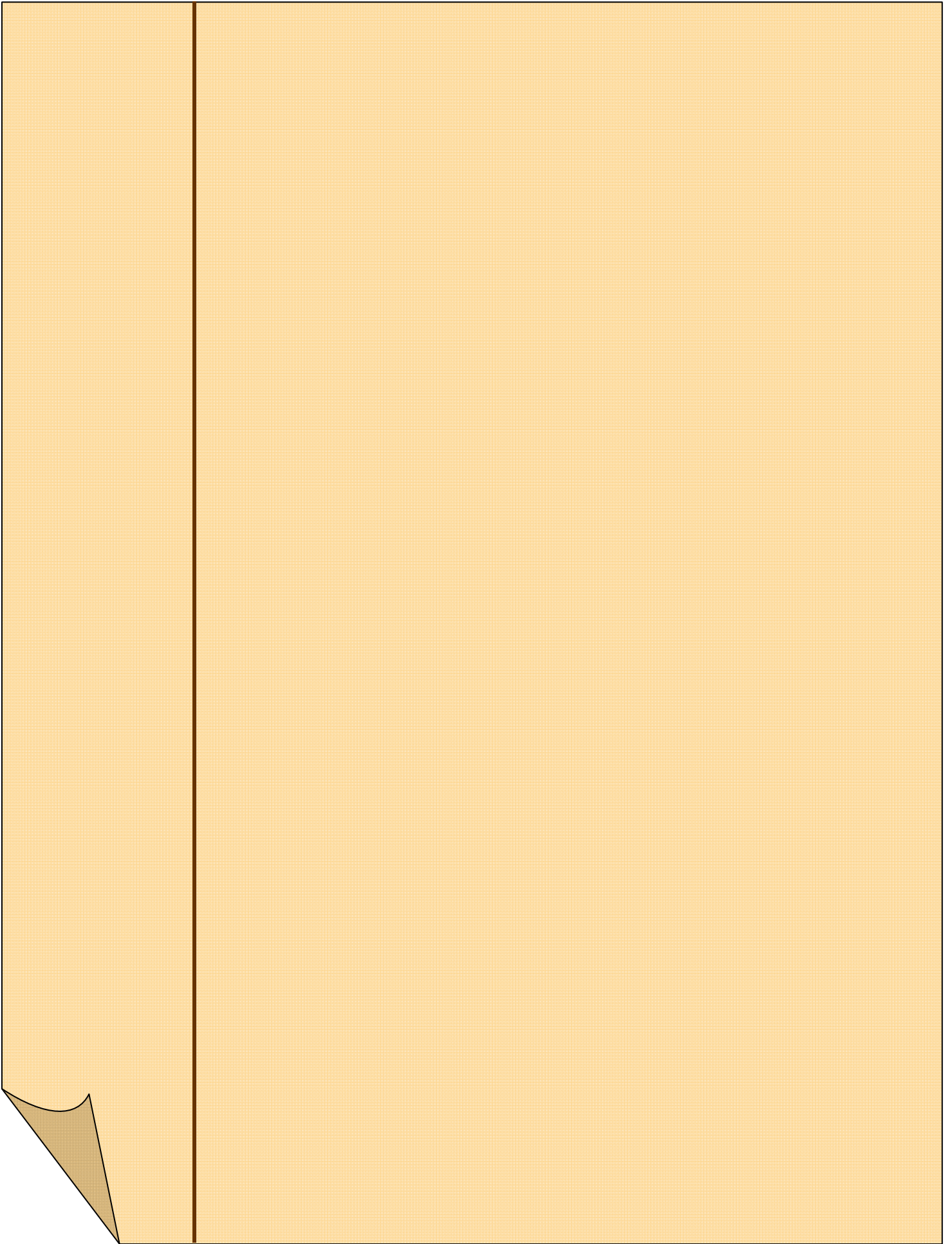
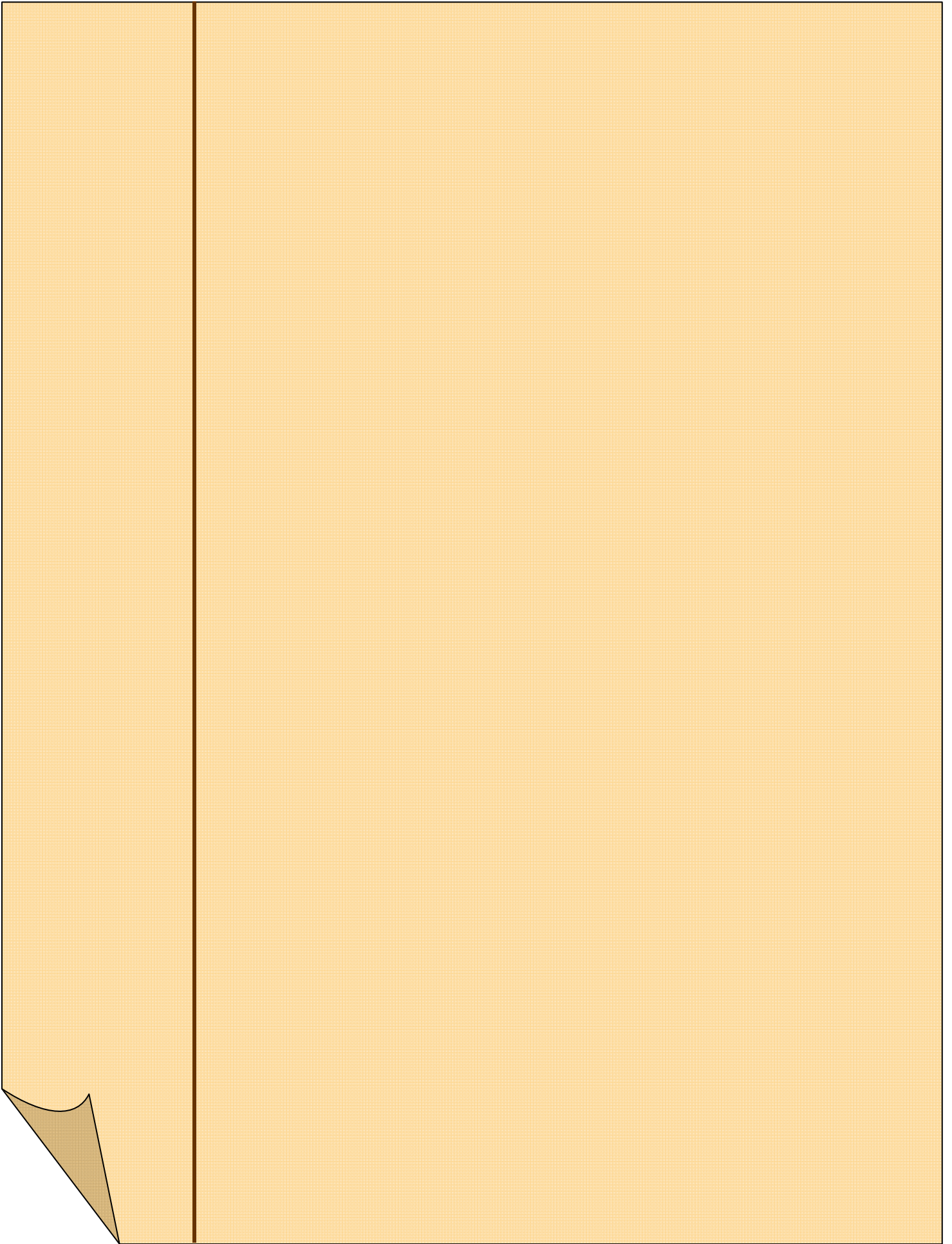


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Dear Colleagues,

Maryland has an ongoing commitment to improve education for all students in the State, striving to strengthen each Maryland school to ensure all students master subject matter content. One model of continuous improvement can be a tiered instructional approach to support student achievement, also known as response to scientific, research-based intervention in the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

This document provides guidance for establishing a tiered instructional approach to support the achievement of all students in Maryland public schools, in particular those students not demonstrating grade level content mastery. Embedded within this approach is a framework for a nationally recognized process for implementing instruction with fidelity, based upon a student's response to scientific, research-based instructional programs and interventions. This strategic framework includes screening of all students, identifying specific learner needs, providing appropriate instruction aligned with identified needs and closely monitoring student progress to determine the need for any instructional adjustments. With the implementation of these processes, Maryland educators can continuously refine educational practices to ensure all students achieve or exceed performance standards.

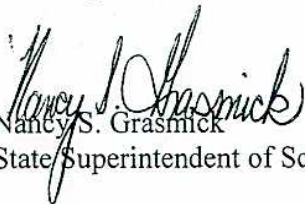
The guidance provided within this document supports each of the Maryland State Department of Education's five public education priorities. These priorities include:

- 1) Improving student achievement;
- 2) Building educator's capacity to improve achievement;
- 3) Building an aligned, understandable system of instruction, curriculum, and assessment;
- 4) Fostering positive school environments; and
- 5) Involving families in education.

Enhancing educational quality requires ongoing support, collaboration, and advocacy among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community and governmental leaders. The implementation of these processes is complex and will require professional development for local school system staff as well as, informational meetings for parents, and community and governmental leaders regarding how to support this effort to meet the needs of each student in Maryland public schools.

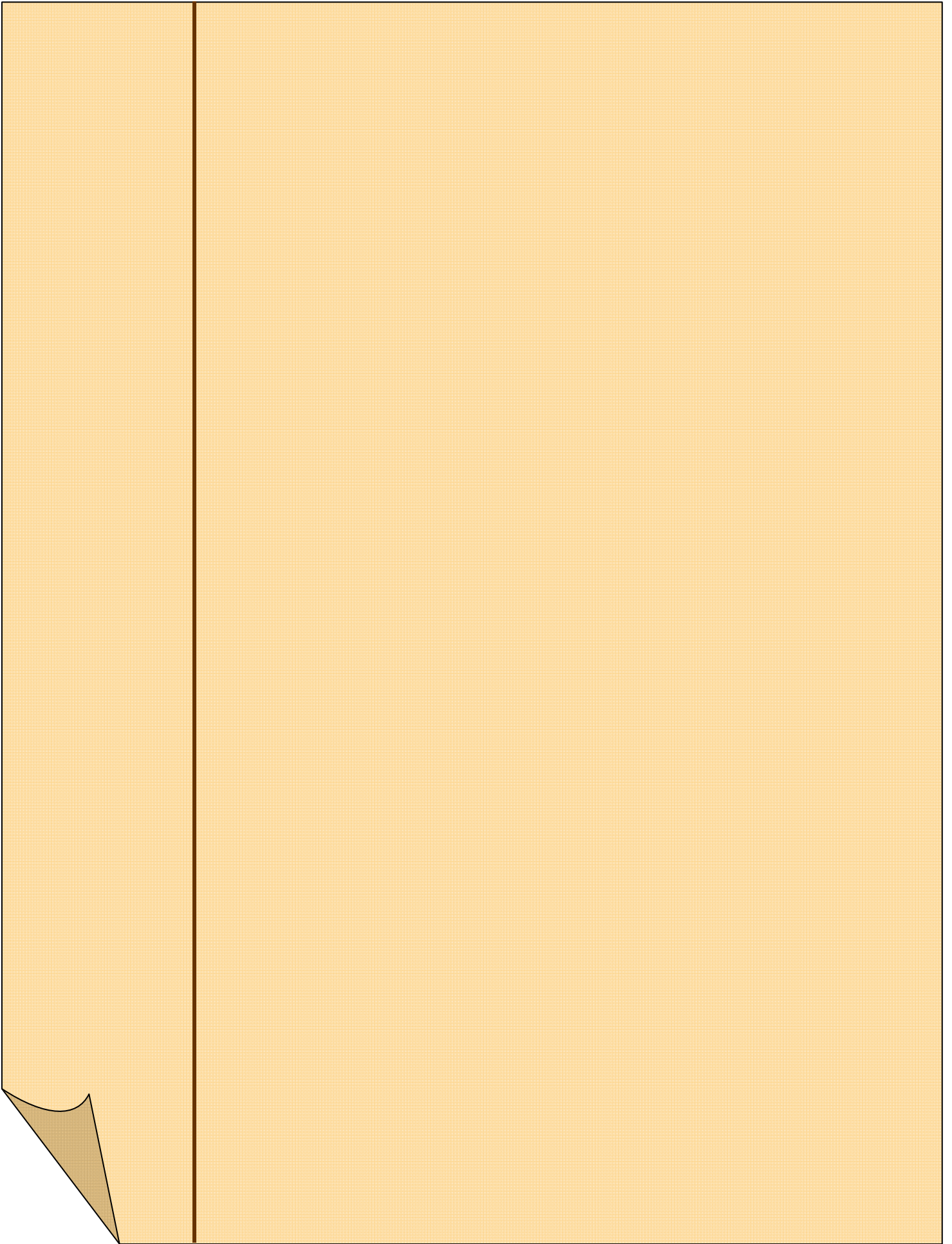
I thank you in advance, as I know you will continue to support our efforts to improve education for all children in Maryland schools. Only together can we make Maryland's public education the best in the nation.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Grasmick

State Superintendent of Schools



A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement for All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to local school systems in Maryland regarding the implementation of a tiered instructional approach to support achievement of all students with emphasis on those students who are not demonstrating grade appropriate skill and content mastery. Based on a review of current requirements including the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requirements, and a growing body of research related to effective instructional practice, the state offers this framework to guide the work of local school systems in the use of tiered instructional delivery systems.

The State recognizes the ongoing work in each local school system to provide quality education and interventions to students in Maryland, including implementation of many components of the framework that will be described in this document. However, in order to ensure implementation of federal requirements and options, and to assist local school systems to effectively organize and utilize resources to support achievement of all students, the State has developed this document to articulate a research or evidence-based framework that is consistent with regulatory requirements and best practice in Maryland public schools.

This document includes: 1) a description of a suggested *tiered instructional approach to support achievement for all students* that may be implemented as an essential component of the response to intervention process, 2) guidance for the local school system option to use the response to intervention process for identifying specific learning disabilities, and 3) a description of the process followed by a broad-based group of Maryland stakeholders to develop this guidance document for use by local school system professionals. (See Appendix A for the summary of the stakeholder process and Appendix D for a glossary of terms.) This document is based on current research foundations and best practice knowledge.

“...a tiered instructional approach to support achievement for all students...”

Background and Context

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) and the reauthorized *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* initiated a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education in the United States. NCLB is built on four pillars: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options, and increased local control and flexibility. The most recent reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (IDEA) has prompted national policymakers to make connections between IDEA and NCLB. Stevenson (2007) points out that both NCLB and IDEA, at their core, share the same purpose: *to ensure that all children achieve high standards.*

The response to intervention process is a systematic school-wide multi-tiered approach that when implemented with fidelity fosters prevention of achievement and behavioral difficulties while providing interventions at increasing levels of intensity matched to the academic and behavioral needs of students. Essential components of the response to intervention process include:

- universal screening
- problem-solving/decision-making practices
- tiered levels of implementation of high-quality instruction/intervention
- progress monitoring
- fidelity of implementation
- family involvement
- considerations for English Language Learners.

This process includes decision-making teams that use a problem-solving method and frequent formative assessments to inform the selection of appropriate instructional interventions that improve learning outcomes for all students. Systematic, ongoing monitoring of student progress is consistently used to guide decisions regarding instructional match, instructional delivery, instructional strategies or materials, and the intensity of instruction provided to meet individual student needs. The results of a tiered approach to the implementation of scientific research-based interventions can be incorporated into the procedures used for identifying specific learning disabilities (Johnson & Mellard, 2006).

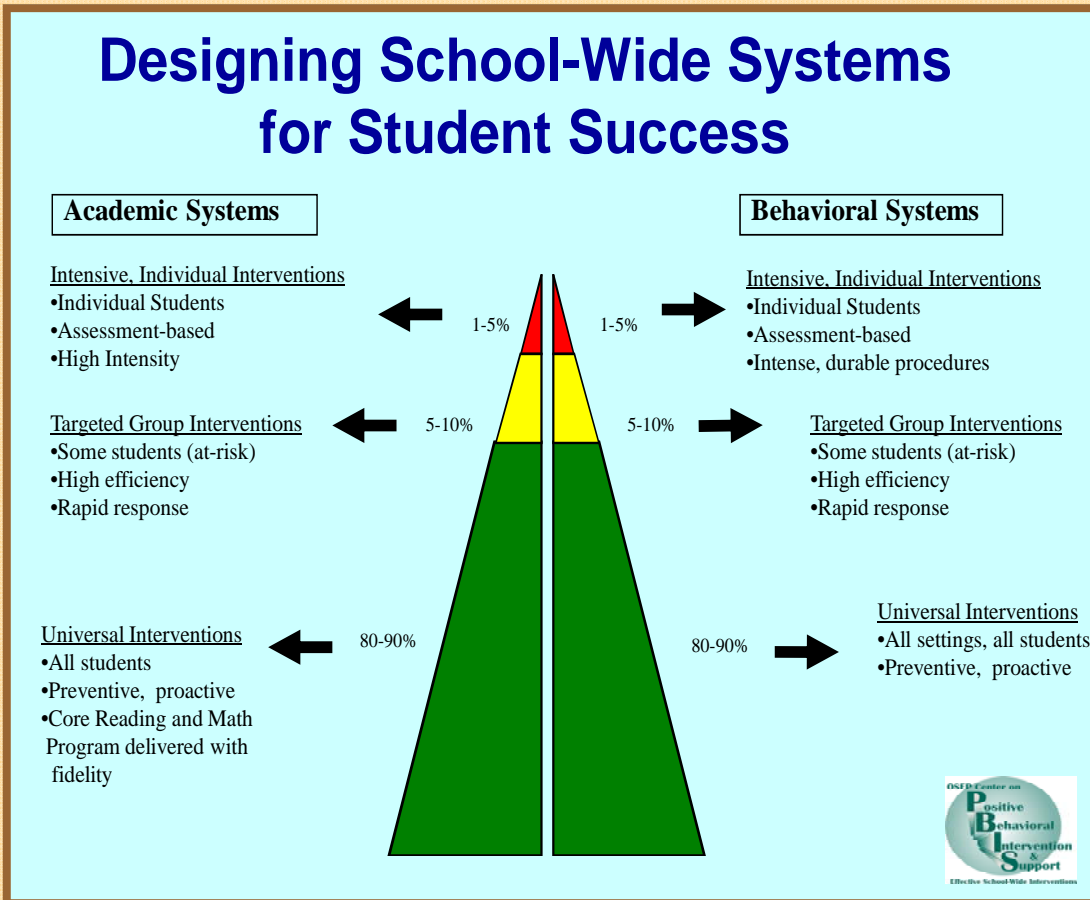
Instructional leaders, educational researchers, mental health specialists, and those focused on creating safe school environments realize that prevention is the first intervention. Effective core instructional programs, services, evidenced-based interventions, and positive behavioral approaches should be available to all students and intervention resources should be accessible based on intensity of need. Extensive research has been conducted in public health communities which lends itself to application in the prevention of learning problems in young children (Simeonsson, 1994).

“...NCLB and IDEA share the same purpose: to ensure that all children achieve high standards.”

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, Effective School-Wide Interventions (www.pbis.org) created a pictorial representation of a tiered intervention framework (see Figure 1). The figure suggests that 80-90% of students should be able to be instructionally or behaviorally successful with universal interventions and an additional 5-10% of students should be successful with targeted group interventions. Within a population of students, only approximately 1-5% of students would need individualized, intensive interventions.

“...approximately 1-5% of students would need individualized, intensive interventions.”

Figure 1



National Context

Response to intervention practices are viewed as an educational reform model that emphasizes the provision of high quality teaching and learning experiences for all students, in all grades, and in all classrooms. Current instructional research includes tiered instructional delivery approaches that address the needs of struggling learners early and often as an effective approach to instruction. Among those sources are the National Institute for Child Health and Development Studies (1994), the National Reading Panel (2000), National Research Council Panel on Minority Overrepresentation (2002), the National

“Consider children with disabilities as general education children first...”

Summit on Learning Disabilities (2002) and the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2001). In the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education Report entitled, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families*, the following recommendations were made:

- “Consider children with disabilities as general education children first...In instruction, the systems must work together to provide effective teaching.”
- “Embrace a model of prevention not a model of failure. The current model guiding special education focuses on waiting for a child to fail, not on early intervention to prevent failure. Reforms must move the system toward early identification and swift intervention, using scientifically based instruction and teaching methods” (President’s Commission Report, p 9).

Most of the educational research documenting the effects of response to intervention practices has been accomplished in the area of basic skills in reading at the K-3 level. Additional research is emerging in mathematics and at other grade levels. However, appropriate instructional and positive behavior supports at all grade levels and academic content areas can be addressed within a response to intervention process (Gresham, 1991; 2002). At the middle and high school levels, research demonstrates promise for the development of progress monitoring and instructional and behavioral interventions in a tiered approach addressing complex learning problems associated with acquisition of academic content (Hughes & Deshler, 2007).

Maryland Context

Maryland school systems are already implementing research-based and tiered interventions as part of their school improvement process of identifying targeted students in need of prioritized, intense instruction to address their lack of demonstrated mastery in meeting grade level expectations or Adequate Yearly Progress targets. All Maryland school systems have coordinated programs of pupil services (COMAR 13.A.05.05) that use the Pupil Services Team (PST) model or a similar team construct (e.g., Student Services Team, Student Support Team, Instructional Consultation Team, Instructional Support Team and other interdisciplinary team models). Throughout this document the term “decision-making team” is used as the generic term for general education problem-solving teams already in existence in school systems that rely on objective data to make decisions regarding students’ academic and behavioral programs. As a result of decisions made by these problem-solving teams, some schools already use components of the response to intervention process or tiered instruction by providing incrementally intensive instructional supports.

Maryland's Pupil Services Teams and decision-making teams are strongly encouraged to utilize research-supported problem-solving methods. Systematic problem-solving methods provide educators with a consistent step-by-step process to identify problems and to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. According to the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (2006), the problem-solving method requires answering four interrelated questions:

- (1) Is there a problem and what is it?
- (2) Why is it happening?
- (3) What are we going to do about it?
- (4) Did our intervention work?

The problem-solving logic is reflected during data-based decision-making as teams use functional academic and behavioral assessments to identify why students are not mastering required academic skills. This scientific, problem-solving method helps teams consider factors that can be directly altered and influenced by educators such as curriculum, instruction, teacher quality or effectiveness, and environmental conditions. Teams use functional data to develop interventions. Teams identify measurable goals that serve as criteria for assessing the effectiveness of interventions.

In addition, many connections exist between *No Child Left Behind Act*, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and the *2002 Maryland Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act*. Through the Master Plan process, the *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act* provides the framework for the alignment of federal, State, and local reform initiatives and leverages fiscal support to improve student achievement and eliminate achievement gaps. In their Master Plans and subsequent updates, local school systems are required to analyze disaggregated data and describe progress and challenges in terms of student progress toward the *No Child Left Behind* goals by grade level, subject area, and subgroup populations. Where progress is evident, school systems are required to identify the scientific, research-based programs, practices, or strategies that appear to contribute to that progress. Where challenges are evident, school systems must describe changes or adjustments, such as the development of a tiered instructional approach, which will be implemented to overcome achievement challenges for all subgroups.

The initial impetus for establishing a task force to develop *Maryland's Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement for All Students: A Response to Intervention Framework* was the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004* and the accompanying regulations adopted in August of 2006. The regulations indicate that states must adopt criteria that permits the use of a process based on a child's response to scientific, research-based intervention for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability. These statutory and regulatory changes shift the sole responsibility for

“...the problem-solving method requires answering four interrelated questions”

specific learning disabilities identification out of the special education arena into a partnership with the general education curriculum and instruction. As a result, a cross disciplinary effort to develop a tiered instructional framework with variable levels of support for struggling students was initiated. Information gathered as a result of the response to intervention process, may then become part of a comprehensive evaluation process to determine whether a child has a specific learning disability and is eligible for special education services.

Assumptions

The premise of this document is that all students in Maryland can achieve high standards, and when a tiered instructional approach within a response to intervention framework is implemented with fidelity, it will help achieve this goal. The following assumptions are based upon the work and history of accountability of local school systems in Maryland.

- Professional development for local school system central office staff will be essential to build local capacity regarding the development and implementation of a tiered instructional approach and a response to intervention process.
- Ongoing professional development on the tiered instructional approach which meets the Maryland Professional Development Standards, will need to be provided by appropriate local school system staff for all stakeholder groups prior to the initiation of a tiered instructional approach and response to intervention process. In addition, local school systems may need to reorganize existing structures to identify the most efficient and effective way to use fiscal and human resources.
- Support and involvement throughout the response to intervention process and tiered instructional approach of central office administrators, school administrators and parents/families is essential in order for educators to provide appropriate instructional and behavioral interventions before a student experiences repeated failures.
- Tiered instructional delivery is a fluid process of thorough data-based analysis and problem-solving, supplementing instruction with increased or decreased intensity based upon ongoing assessment, and examination of student progress toward achievement of grade level standards and intervention target goals.
- All students, including students with an individualized education program (IEP), will have access to any instructional or intervention programs made available through the tiered instructional approach in alignment with their IEP.
- Since each local school system adopts its own curriculum, plans need to be made to ensure that all instructional programs selected are aligned to local and state curricula, developmentally appropriate, and implemented with fidelity as specified in the research-base of the program.

*“...all students
in Maryland
can achieve high
standards,...”*

- The needs of English language learners and gifted and talented students should intentionally be considered as local school systems develop procedures related to these processes.
- Rigorous procedures must be followed to insure that the tiered instructional approach and response to intervention components are implemented with fidelity.

The use of the response to intervention process upholds the parent's right to request an evaluation at any time to determine if a disability exists for their child.

The previously listed premises are intended to assist local school systems in planning as they develop capacity for successful implementation of a tiered instructional approach. The response to intervention tiered instructional components and data-based instructional decision-making processes are outlined in the following sections. If implemented with fidelity, decision-making teams in Maryland schools will be better equipped to design and provide appropriate and timely academic and/or behavioral interventions to match identified student needs.

Family Involvement

Family involvement in any process affecting student performance is not only best practice, but also a requirement under NCLB and IDEA 2004. As Maryland moves towards a tiered instructional approach to support the achievement of all students, parents and families must be meaningfully involved at all instructional levels. Communication with families must be in a format that is understandable to the parent. It is anticipated that schools will already have established a positive relationship with parents/families prior to a problem arising. Families need to be informed and involved when student difficulties are first noticed, and then continue to be involved as decisions are made regarding changes in instruction and interventions provided.

If a student is participating in a response to a scientific, research-based intervention process for the purpose of eligibility determination for special education, the local school system must document that the student's parents were notified about the following:

- Policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data that would be collected and the general education services that would be provided;

“Family involvement ... is a requirement under NCLB and IDEA 2004.”

“Tiered service delivery cannot be used to delay identification of students with disabilities;”

- Strategies for increasing the student’s rate of learning; and
- Their right to request an evaluation to determine if a specific learning disability exists at any time during the response to intervention process which in turn initiates protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

• Tiered service delivery **cannot** be used to delay identification of students with disabilities; therefore, school personnel need to ensure that parents understand their right to request an evaluation as guaranteed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Additional guidance for parents is available from the National Center for Learning Disabilities in their document entitled *A Parent’s Guide to Response-to-Intervention* (Cortiella, 2006) www.ld.org and the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities has “Parent Pages” in the Resource Kit posted at: www.NRCLD.org/resource.

Overview of the Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement

Response to intervention practices incorporate a multi-tiered model of instructional and behavioral service delivery in which each tier represents an increased intensity of instructional delivery that directly corresponds with the level of a student’s needs. The implementation of this flexible, interrelated instructional delivery approach provides a framework that includes appropriate curriculum, instruction, and school organization that increases the likelihood of improved student achievement and success for all students. Provision of targeted instruction based on student needs holds promise toward reducing the number of students that may be inappropriately or prematurely referred for special education services and supports. Parents and other stakeholders can expect that a student identified with a disability will receive instruction within general education as appropriate through the tiered instructional approach unless otherwise indicated in their individualized education program (IEP).

However, children with disabilities who are currently identified as needing special education and related services may not receive response to intervention services that are funded with IDEA funds used for early intervening services pursuant to 34 CFR §300.226. Early intervening services are “...for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.” (Office of Special Education Programs, January 2007).

Each tier within a response to intervention framework defines the level, intensity and type of instruction and support required for student progress toward grade level standards and the intervention target goals. The tiered instructional approach in Maryland schools includes three instructional tiers that represent a flexible and fluid process of supplementing instruction with increased or decreased intensity based upon on-going assessment and analysis of student progress through data-based decision-making.

At Tier 1, universally accessible and developmentally appropriate core curriculum is delivered with fidelity in the general classroom setting and includes appropriate differentiation for all students. All students receive instruction and supports within Tier 1, and if needed, a student may receive more intensive Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 instruction and supports. The student's level of need is determined through multiple sources of data. Decision-making teams use a problem-solving method to identify the level of support, the length of time that an intervention is implemented, and the student's expected response to the intervention. Realistic time periods are required for targeted skills to be developed. Students may possibly receive multiple tiers of instructional support at any given time. For example, a student may be receiving general education (Tier 1) core instruction in one subject area such as reading while receiving (Tier 2) supplemental instructional support in mathematics.

The data used for response to intervention decisions are derived from assessments that measure the student's attainment of grade level curriculum and intervention goals. These assessments need to be sensitive to small changes over time and should be directly linked to the provided instructional approaches and curriculum. In the response to intervention framework, assessment is used to inform instructional match. The process includes evidence-based screening tools, diagnostic information, and regular progress monitoring so that students who are having difficulty will be able to achieve grade level standards.

The decision-making team may need to be sensitive to reviewing universal screening results to determine possible services needed for twice exceptional students, i.e. gifted students with learning disabilities. Some students may or may not meet proficiency levels on the screening instruments, but results cue a significant variance between their ability and their performance, flagging a potential gifted student whose achievement is being limited by a suspected learning disability. In those cases, the decision-making team may want to consider intervention at the appropriate tier and/or referral for an evaluation to determine the student's eligibility for special education.

“All students receive instruction and supports within Tier 1,”

Universal Screening

The term “universal” refers to school-wide or district-wide screening of academics and behavior in order to determine which students need closer monitoring or additional interventions (National Association of School Psychologists, 2007). This section describes universal screening, important features of a screening process, the role of screening in the tiered instructional approach, and steps necessary for implementing a universal screening process.

Universal screening within the tiered instructional approach involves administering cost-effective, short, quick, and easy to administer assessment items (probes) that are aligned to the curriculum and measure specific skills a student has achieved. The most useful screening measures identify students who need closer monitoring or additional interventions, are practical to administer, and accurately identify low achieving students. These probes can be either a criterion-referenced or a norm-referenced standard of performance (Johnson, et. al., 2006). Curriculum-based assessments and criterion-based measures are preferred since they give more accurate information about a student’s ability to perform relevant academic skills specifically aligned to local and state curriculum and the intervention target goals.

The purpose of the screening instrument is to identify all students who may be “at risk” for academic difficulties. Universal screening is conducted at regular intervals, usually three times per year or each fall, winter, and spring (NASDSE, 2005; The IRIS Center, February 2007; Nebraska Department of Education, 2006). Universal screening, administered at regular intervals throughout the year, enables school staff to evaluate a student’s performance relative to his or her peers and the mastery of grade level curriculum expectations.

Classification errors are possible with any screening measure. There may be “false positives” when using universal screening instruments (i.e., screening results may suggest a student is “at risk” for academic difficulties although the student subsequently makes satisfactory progress). False positives may reflect the transient impact of developmental or experiential differences that quickly fade or disappear over time (Fuchs and Fuchs, in press).

Fuchs and Fuchs (in press) have suggested that one practice schools can consider to reduce “false positives” is to monitor student progress for five weeks following the initial screening. Using regular progress monitoring may result in lowering the number of students identified to participate in intensive, and often costly, intervention programs. The recommendation is that the entire school be assessed in a short period of time using brief curriculum-based content measures. Depending upon the size of the school, universal screening can usually be administered in one day or less. To the extent possible, it is important to remember that the screening instruments should be culturally valid for all students in the school (The IRIS Center, February 2007).

“The purpose of the screening instrument is to identify all students who may be “at risk” for academic difficulties.”

While universal screening typically focuses on curriculum-based assessments in essential academic skills, screening should also address behavior since there is such a close relationship between academic difficulties and behavior difficulties (Sprague, 2006). Universal screening assists in early identification and intervention for students with behavioral needs. Many Maryland schools implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). A number of these schools use the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to collect information about discipline events. This school-wide data helps school personnel make decisions about the design and management of universal behavioral supports. Universal screening practices have also proven effective in identifying students that have behavioral needs that can negatively impact learning.

Universal screening approaches require innovative planning in the design of standardized decision-making team processes and procedures which include both the allocation of resources and the time needed to administer and review results. For students not making satisfactory progress, data charts and graphs will need to be generated to examine achievement over time and document a student's response to intervention.

School leaders who successfully implement universal screening:

- Create an infrastructure for decision-making processes and team procedures, universal screening, and curriculum-based assessments;
- Research the availability of screening tool options through shared decision-making processes with a staff committee (or entire staff) to select appropriate tools/methods;
- Coordinate universal screening so that it may meet multiple requirements, including the determination of Adequate Yearly Progress reports for the No Child Left Behind Act;
- Provide necessary technology, materials, and resources to staff;
- Ensure the delivery of high quality professional development for staff;
- Provide teachers and district personnel with aggregate and disaggregated data of school-wide screening results; and
- Identify procedures to document fidelity of the implementation of universal screening and core and intervention programs (National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, April 2007).

The implementation of universal screening practices necessitates a close collaboration among parents and school personnel (e.g., classroom teachers, administration, evaluation specialists, math specialists, paraprofessionals, reading specialists, school counselors, school psychologists, special area teachers, and speech/language pathologists).

“Universal screening assists in early identification and intervention for students with behavioral needs.”

Currently, Maryland school systems have decision-making teams in place that support classroom teachers in instructional planning and problem-solving. These teams should lead in the organization and implementation of universal screening which will provide data about all students so that any student who needs additional support is identified. In addition, the teams will need to ensure that the screening procedures are implemented with fidelity and do not yield results that are biased.

Tiered Levels of Implementation of High Quality Instruction and Interventions

The tiered instructional approach is a framework for instructional delivery and should **not** be viewed in a linear manner. Core instruction and supplemental instruction and interventions are provided at the frequency and duration required based upon formative assessment data reviewed by decision-making teams using a problem-solving approach. This approach must be a fluid process of increasing and decreasing intensity of instruction based upon student progress toward grade level standards and intervention target goals.

“...teams will need to ensure that the screening procedures are implemented with fidelity and do not yield results that are biased.”

In addition to the problem-solving approach, a standard protocol approach may be used by decision-making teams. A standard protocol approach requires the use of interventions that researchers have validated as effective. These validations were completed through experimental applications with the proper experimental and control groups to demonstrate that the intervention is effective for children with similar problems in the domain being evaluated. These validated interventions implemented with fidelity by school staff are not accommodations or modifications to existing curriculum; rather they are instructional programs targeted to accelerate a student’s learning of a specific skill.

Research for standard protocol interventions specifies the conditions under which the intervention was proven successful, including the number of minutes per day, the number of days per week, and the number of weeks required for instruction in the intervention. Local school systems have flexibility in choosing specific standard protocols or specific instructional programs available for use in the tiered approach. Decision-making teams at the school level will ultimately determine which students receive the specific standard protocol interventions. At each tier or level of intervention, instruction is standardized and the procedures for teaching and assessing student performance are the same for all students within the group.

Tier 1: Core Curriculum and Differentiated Instruction

Tier 1 is high quality, scientific, research-based or evidenced-based classroom instruction. In a tiered delivery model that addresses academics, social-emotional competence, and behavioral health, Tier 1 instruction includes

early identification, primary supports and interventions that promote learning and achievement. Several fundamental elements contribute to a child's success in school, such as highly-skilled teachers, appropriate academic instruction, developmentally appropriate curricula aligned with state and local standards, character education programs, and positive behavior supports. For most students, this foundation provides what is needed for academic success.

During Tier 1 instruction, individual student progress is systematically monitored through assessments based on benchmarked learning objectives of the core curriculum. Flexible grouping and differentiation within the classroom enable the teacher and support staff to utilize strategies and activities such as explicit instruction, enrichment and extension activities, additional skills practice, and re-teaching to ensure that all students master the curriculum. In order to provide effective instruction, assess skill development, and analyze assessment data, teachers may benefit from professional development in content curriculum, fidelity of instruction, instructional methodologies, progress monitoring, and data-based decision-making.

“...individual student progress is systematically monitored..”

Tier 1 Components (Adapted from NRCLD 2006):

- *Size of instructional group:* Whole class: including flexible grouping and differentiation; small needs-based groups (usually no more than 6 students); or individualized to meet the needs of one student.
- *Frequency of progress monitoring:* Ongoing formative assessments offer opportunities for monitoring student achievement during daily instruction. Assessment timetables may vary depending on the age of the students and/or the skills measured; fall/winter/spring or end-of-marking period benchmark assessments are common. Assessment of foundation skills such as basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills should occur more often (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly).
- *Duration:* Determination of duration is based on expected rates of skill acquisition, the determined benchmarks for success, and data driven summative assessment of the student's response to the core program of instruction or intervention when implemented with fidelity.
- *Instructor qualifications:* Tier 1 instruction is provided by teachers of core content who are “highly qualified” as defined by No Child Left Behind, and who are knowledgeable in all aspects of the curriculum including; content, instructional methodologies, differentiation (including modifications and accommodations), acceleration and enrichment strategies, and progress monitoring.
- *Mastery requirements of content:* Content mastery determinations are made relative to cut points identified on criterion-based screening measures and continued growth as demonstrated by routine progress monitoring.

Schools and local school systems implementing a response to intervention framework shall include the following for effective implementation of Tier 1:

- Identify and select scientific, research-based/evidence-based core instructional approaches and curriculum aligned with State and local standards and research proven best practices.
- Select evidence-based interventions and resources to accompany core instructional program.
- Select and implement evidence-based school-wide academic, social-emotional and behavioral health screening, prevention and intervention approaches.
- Identify both a student decision-making team and the processes to screen, identify, and analyze problems, provide evidence-based solutions, and align instructional practices to desired student outcomes.
- Establish a disaggregated data-collection system and implement systematic monitoring of student progress (such as formative and summative curriculum-based measures).
- Develop, implement, and evaluate professional development to engage school staff in experiences related to scientific, research-based curriculum and teaching practices, progress monitoring, implementing practices with fidelity, and data-based decision-making.
- Develop and implement a process for collaboration with the decision-making team regarding criteria for increasing or decreasing tiered support.
- Identify the student decision-making team process and procedures that will include consistent progress monitoring to identify which students are at risk and require more intense support or when a referral for an evaluation for special education is appropriate.
- Identify measures and procedures to document the fidelity of the instructional and behavioral practices implemented at this tier.
- Inform parents of student progress.

“For some students, the foundation level of support provided in Tier 1 is not sufficient.”

Tier 2: Supplemental Interventions

For some students, the foundational level of support provided in Tier 1 is not sufficient. These students will require supplemental interventions. Targeted interventions with specified instructional approaches and curriculum should be implemented to develop skill mastery. Student success is contingent on a consistent match of effective explicit instruction to student needs. When data indicate that a high percentage of students are not progressing, then school-wide or group problem-solving should occur, which may include evaluating the core program to see if it should be revised or replaced. When students fail to make adequate progress, the reasons for the lack of progress will be systematically determined by decision-making teams through data analysis and problem-solving. Students who continue to demonstrate learning or behavioral difficulties will be discussed by the decision-making team in consideration of Tier 2 interventions and support.

Tier 2 Components (Adapted from NRCLD 2006):

Tier 2 consists of the core curriculum *supplemented* by specialized intervention that has the following components:

- *Size of instructional group:* Small needs-based groups (i.e. 2-4 students, the number recommended by the scientific, research-based intervention) and/or individualized to meet the needs of one student.
- *Amount of time:* Additional time that exceeds the core program block of time. Often a minimum of 30-60 minutes, 2-5 times per week.
- *Frequency of progress monitoring:* One to three times per week.
- *Duration:* Approximately 6-12 weeks as determined by the response of the student to the intervention program implemented with fidelity. Decisions regarding duration should be evidence-based and in accordance with the scientific basis of the intervention.
- *Instructor qualifications:* Tier 2 should be provided by school personnel who have been trained in the core curriculum including; content, instructional methodologies, differentiation, acceleration and enrichment strategies, and progress monitoring. Tier 2 behavior supports and interventions can be provided by student services specialists as appropriate. Supervision shall be provided by “highly qualified” staff as defined by *NCLB*.
- *Mastery requirements of content:* Relative to cut points identified on criterion based screening measures and continued growth as demonstrated by routine progress monitoring.

“Effective implementation of Tier 2 supports ...”

Effective implementation of Tier 2 supports includes the following:

- As necessary and appropriate, expand the membership of the decision-making team and invite additional teaching and/or student services staff to participate.
- Interventions are identified, selected and provided using evidence-based strategies to address identified student needs.
- Time for classroom teachers and instructional specialists to collaborate, implement, observe and evaluate strategies and review student needs.
- Decision rules (e.g., cut scores, intensity reduction criteria) for sustaining supports provided in Tier 2, or for increasing or decreasing the supports provided.
- A system of data collection and progress monitoring to determine level and rate of growth over time or when a referral for an evaluation for special education is appropriate.
- Professional development opportunities for problem-solving and standard protocol approaches.

“Tier 2 instruction delivery can result in one of three possible outcomes that indicate the next steps for the decision-making team.”

- Measures and procedures to document fidelity of intervention implementation.
- Inform parents of student progress.

Tier 2 instructional delivery can result in one of three possible outcomes that indicate the next steps for the decision-making team. (Vaughn, 2003):

1. Successful progress is made in the area of need and the student leaves the Tier 2 intervention group and continues to receive Tier 1 instruction.
2. Although progress is being made, the student has not progressed enough to independently apply knowledge and skills and thus supplemental instructional and/or behavioral interventions and progress monitoring are continued.
3. The rate and amount of progress is inadequate. In this situation the decision making team needs to determine if:
 - a. the correct intervention has been used,
 - b. the instructional match is appropriate,
 - c. the intervention has been implemented with fidelity,
 - d. engaged learning time has been maximized,
 - e. consistent corrective feedback has been provided,
 - f. explicit instruction has occurred consistently.

The decision-making team should identify what will be done next, by whom, and what the new criteria for success will be. The team will determine if the intervention requires an adjustment or if more intensive supports are necessary. When the analysis reveals a need for more intensive supports, the interventions can be provided using Tier 3 supports and assist in determining when a referral for an evaluation for special education is appropriate.

Tier 3: Specifically Designed Interventions

Students not making adequate progress with Tiers 1 and 2 supports are identified by the decision-making team to receive specifically designed individualized interventions that extend beyond the instruction that has been provided. Tier 3 interventions may or may not differ from those provided in Tier 2, depending on local design of the tiered instruction; however, delivery of instruction at this level is more intense in frequency and duration. In addition, Tier 3 support involves more frequent progress monitoring (i.e., daily or as needed).

Tier 3 Components (Adapted from NRCLD 2006):

- Size of instructional group: Small group or individual instruction based on the use of individual diagnostic-prescriptive data that targets the student's skill deficits.
- Amount of time: Additional time that exceeds the core instructional block of time. Usually a minimum of 30-60 minutes, 4-5 times per week.
- Mastery requirements of content: Relative to cut points identified on criterion-based screening measures and continued growth as demonstrated by frequent progress monitoring.
- Frequency of progress monitoring: Daily or as needed to monitor the effectiveness of intervention.
- Duration: Approximately 6-12 weeks as determined by the response of the student to the intervention program implemented with fidelity. Decisions regarding duration should be evidence-based and in accordance with the scientific basis of the intervention.
- Instructor qualifications: This tier focuses on delivering the most intense interventions and thus the instructor must be highly skilled. Tier 3 instruction should be provided by school personnel knowledgeable of the core curriculum and trained in instructional methodologies, differentiation, acceleration and enrichment strategies, and progress monitoring. Tier 3 behavior supports and interventions can be provided by student services specialists and/or special educators who may be involved in the provision of early intervening services, as appropriate. Supervision shall be provided by "highly qualified" staff as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act. However, children with disabilities who are currently identified as needing special education and related services may not receive response to intervention services that are funded with IDEA funds used for early intervening services pursuant to 34 CFR §300.226. Early intervening services are "...for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment." (U.S. Department of Education).

In addition to the tasks previously listed for Tier 2, schools and local school systems that are implementing a tiered instructional approach will need to include the following for effective implementation of Tier 3:

- As necessary and appropriate, identify the decision-making team membership necessary for problem-solving, using standard protocol, and delivery of interventions based upon student need.
- Identify, select and provide interventions using evidence-based strategies to address identified student needs.
- Select targeted, supplementary resources and interventions for Tier 3.
- Develop decision rules (e.g., cut scores, intensity reduction criteria) for sustaining supports provided in Tier 3, or for increasing or decreasing the supports provided.
- Implement a system of daily data collection and progress monitoring to determine level and rate of growth over time or when a referral for an evaluation for special education is appropriate.
- Provide professional development for targeted staff providing Tier 3 supports.
- Identify measures and procedures to document fidelity of implementation of Tier 3 intervention.
- Inform parents of student progress.

Tier 3 interventions can result in successful progress that makes Tier 1 or Tier 2 instruction appropriate for the individual student. If sufficient progress does not occur, continued implementation of Tier 3 instructional interventions and supports may be warranted, or the student's achievement data may indicate a need for consideration of special education services by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Refer to guidelines for determination of specific learning disabilities in the section beginning on page 26.

Progress Monitoring

According to the National Center for Progress Monitoring (2007), progress monitoring is a scientific, research-based practice that is used to assess students' academic progress and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class, grade level or school.

The purpose of progress monitoring is to: (1) identify the student's current levels of performance, (2) establish educational goals for improving learning outcomes, and (3) measure the student's academic performance on a regular basis (e.g., weekly or biweekly). The measurements should be valid and reliable as well as quick and easy to administer. Progress monitoring data should provide a picture of the student's performance and rate of growth to inform immediate instructional and curricular changes so that every student reaches proficiency in the targeted skill area(s).

“...progress monitoring is a scientific, research-based practice that is used to assess students' academic progress...”

Continuous progress monitoring, when implemented with fidelity, offers the following benefits:

- accelerated learning because students are receiving more appropriate targeted instruction;
- data-based instructional decision-making;
- documentation of student progress for accountability purposes (individual, subgroup, class, grade, content, and school);
- more timely communication with families and other professionals about students' progress; and
- clearer expectations for all students by teachers and parents/families.

For students with social-emotional and behavioral needs, continuous progress monitoring is essential. It serves many of the same functions as academic progress monitoring. Data collected during intervention implementation helps guide intervention planning and decision-making.

Progress monitoring tools within a response to intervention framework can be distinguished from other assessment tools used for screening and diagnostic purposes. The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring maintains a website that reports analyses of 10 of the more readily used and widely known monitoring tools in terms of: (1) foundational psychometric standards (i.e., reliability and validity) and (2) progress monitoring standards (i.e., availability of alternate forms sensitive to student improvement, adequate yearly progress benchmarks, improving student learning or teacher planning, and rates of improvement specified.) [www.studentprogress.org]

A long history supports using curriculum-based measures and assessments as a way to monitor student learning over time. Curriculum-based measures and assessments assess specific skills that are presently being taught in the classroom. This method of assessment can be used with all students to determine the rate of progress in the core curriculum. Curriculum-based measures and assessments are designed to demonstrate student progress toward mastery learning.

Progress monitoring serves various functions at each tier. Johnson, et. al., (2006) suggests that for Tier 1 interventions, assessment functions are described in terms of student growth over time and help determine if the student is progressing as expected. For interventions in Tier 2 and beyond, the main purpose is “to determine whether the intervention is successful in helping the student learn at an appropriate rate” (p 24).

Planning for and implementing progress monitoring requires collaboration between school and central office-based educators and specialists. Therefore, central office staff will need to establish implementation guidelines for system-wide use. Since most schools depend on a school-based decision-making team of knowledgeable staff to monitor and analyze student progress,

“Progress monitoring serves various functions at each tier.”

“Professional development for staff is essential ...”

this team will need to establish decision-making rules. These rules may include assessment cut scores, frequency and duration of progress monitoring, criteria for determining responsiveness to intervention, criteria for adjusting intensity of support for students and determination for referral for special education and related services. Also, time needs to be scheduled to allow teams to monitor data, analyze the effects of interventions, problem-solve, design effective instruction, and participate in job-embedded professional development.

Professional development for staff is essential so that assessments are administered with fidelity and yield reliable and valid scores. Roles, responsibilities and time schedules of school personnel may need to be modified to achieve the collaborative conditions necessary for successful implementation of a tiered instructional approach. Existing staff may have new or revised roles in order to implement progress monitoring in a tiered instructional approach.

Considerations for English Language Learners

Upon arrival in a local school district, Maryland students with a home language other than English are assessed for English language proficiency by means of CTB/ McGraw Hill’s diagnostic English language proficiency placement test. Once the students are identified as eligible for English language instruction, they are assessed each year thereafter with the State approved English language proficiency summative assessment to determine their gains in English proficiency. LAS Links scores and other benchmark data may be used for progress monitoring and intervention planning.

Universal screening and progress monitoring of English language learners requires consultation with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) professionals. In addition, the following should be considered within these processes in regard to English language learners:

- Of paramount importance is that personnel observing and assessing the student be familiar with the process of second language acquisition and related research. While a student takes only months to develop basic interpersonal communication skills, many years can be needed for that same student to develop the cognitive academic language necessary for success in academic content areas (Thomas & Collier, 1997).
- Staff assessing English language learners should have an understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and academic background of the student and the family, including the student’s use of language at home as compared with the language used at school.
- Members of the team should understand that linguistic and literacy elements of the first language may have a great influence on the acquisition of a second language (English).

- The team must include a trained interpreter to make the process accessible to the parents or guardian(s).
- Staff assessing English language learners must take into consideration that a student may be in the process of acculturation or assimilation (cultural change). The evaluation of academic progress should then be viewed in relationship to other culturally and linguistically different students in the same cohort of students.

Implementation of a tiered instructional approach for English language learners should include consideration of the process of second language acquisition, as well as cultural and linguistic differences among students. The response to intervention framework should be designed to reduce threats to the reliability and validity of decisions and inferences that arise due to language and cultural differences. (Ortiz & Ochoa, 2006).

Fidelity of Implementation

A school's success in achieving high quality instructional experiences and better outcomes for its students hinges on the fidelity of program implementation and explicit classroom instruction throughout the response to intervention framework. Fidelity of implementation is the consistent delivery of research-based/evidence-based instruction and interventions in the way in which it was designed to be delivered, and at the needed level of intensity to address the student's individual difficulties (Gresham, et. al., 2000; National Association of School Psychologists, 2007).

In a response to intervention model, fidelity is important at both the school level (e.g., implementation of the process) and at the teacher level (e.g., implementation of instruction and progress monitoring) (Johnson, et. al., 2006). If the response to intervention process is going to be implemented at the local school system level, a process to ensure fidelity of implementation should be defined by the local school system and adhered to consistently.

To ensure fidelity of implementation, the following must be considered:

- Provision of systematic, effective instruction that is in alignment with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum and local curriculum.
- Selection and implementation of core programs and materials of instruction to meet the identified needs of students and appropriately modified based on assessment data.
- Engagement in high quality professional development on the core program content, assessment instruments, data analysis, and decision-making team processes with data collected on teacher learning outcomes.
- Completion of frequent observations of school teams, interventions, and progress monitoring practices with feedback provided by school system leadership.

“A school’s success in achieving high quality instructional experiences and better outcomes for its students hinges on the fidelity of program implementation...”

- Implementation of consistent monitoring of student progress using assessments that are aligned to the State and local curriculum.
- Specification of methods, criteria, and local standards for determining the appropriate tier of instructional delivery for students.
- Specification of measurement instruments that will be used in the local school system for selection of the tier and instructional programs and are aligned with the student needs.
- Establishment of exit criteria to determine at what point interventions and support are no longer necessary.
- Completion of frequent data collection from performance-based, formative and summative assessments, and ongoing observations to ensure that students are provided the appropriate tier of instructional intervention and support. Additionally, data collection and analysis should be diagnostic and prescriptive in nature so that instruction can be adjusted and movement among the tiers should be fluid.
- Establishment of frequent and ongoing use of monitoring tools for diagnosing student needs and assist in prescribing, altering, and adhering to instructional practices and intervention(s).

The instructional tools and strategies, student achievement and professional development components of schools will be affected by the implementation of a tiered instructional approach in a response to intervention framework. The school's plan for assessing and ensuring fidelity of implementation will shape the effects of each of those components. In practical terms, the school can build a positive and collaborative climate for a system of fidelity checks that promotes teacher improvement. Mentors or coaches supporting the school staff in response to intervention processes should address individual as well as collective needs. This framework for collaboration may be new for some schools, but these efforts can pay dividends in opening communication, building capacity, and improving results.

Roles and responsibilities for fidelity of implementation rest at several levels of the local school system. Teachers, mentors/coaches, administrative staff, and central office staff can contribute to the fidelity of implementation in the following ways.

Teachers, Mentors/Coaches who demonstrate:

- Thorough knowledge of the assessments, interventions, curriculum and instructional approaches, and monitoring and evaluative processes intended for implementation.
- Knowledge and understanding of all options regarding assessment and intervention including what, if anything can be modified during implementation and when an intervention should be abandoned in favor of another curriculum and instructional approach due to a lack of response from students based on available data.
- Skillful use of strategies that address specific individual student strengths and needs.
- Use of a diagnostic approach, i.e. be able to use data to make determinations as to which intervention is appropriate based on data.
- A collaborative, particularly in settings where students are “shared”, e.g., flexible grouping, co-teaching.

Administrative Team who:

- Communicates a clear vision and reasonable expectations regarding response to intervention implementation.
- Takes responsibility for implementation and be accountable for results.
- Demonstrates intimate knowledge of the intervention(s), curriculum, and instructional approaches so that they can ensure that teachers are implementing with fidelity.
- Supports teachers during implementation and provides or brokers technical assistance as appropriate.
- Makes all options available to teachers regarding implementation and sets parameters and protocols regarding modification.
- Provides all necessary materials and supplies to ensure fidelity of implementation, e.g. books, manuals, ongoing professional development, etc.
- Continuously monitors the implementation of response to intervention practices as well as the implementation of instruction and intervention.
- Ensuring that students with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated, in accordance with statutory requirements of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

Central Office staff who:

- Ensure that the necessary resources are available for the implementation of the response to intervention practices. Resources should include financial support for program implementation, professional development, methods to assess fidelity, and appropriate human resources.
- Are both supportive and evaluative. That is, central office staff evaluate the entire system to ensure that the response to intervention practices are being implemented in a consistent manner across the system and are supportive where gaps in implementation are found. Variability in implementation fidelity within and across school sites may result in poor reliability, inadequate validity, or bias, particularly when procedures are applied to vulnerable students (e.g., students whose minority, economic, or linguistic status places them at risk) (American Psychological Association, 2005).
- Determine what data will be collected and instruments used to make determinations regarding which interventions are appropriate for individual and groups of students. Additionally, it should also be the role of central office staff to support schools by providing data management systems and assisting in the analysis of data.
- Lead in investigating successful outcomes and make recommendations for interventions based on scientific research and data. Additionally, the central office staff provides access and training on the use of the interventions.
- Coordinate collaborative activities to ensure students are supported in their transition from one grade level building to another (e.g., an elementary school to a middle school). The tiered organization of supports means that learners are not just matriculating across grades, but have supports designated to meet their in-class expectations.
- Ensure that students with disabilities are located, evaluated, and identified in accordance with statutory requirements of the *Individual with Disabilities Education Act*.
- Ensure that the varied district level initiatives and responses to federal and State regulatory requirements are aligned so that mission statements, objectives, structures and resources, and energy are integrated for efficiency and effectiveness.

Systemic Decision-Making

Many districts already use effective problem-solving, instructional and behavioral consultation, intervention and assessment practices. The implementation of a tiered instructional approach to support achievement for all students will require a thoughtful, intentional process to first analyze which elements of the tiered approach are already being implemented within a local school system. The tiered instructional approach in a response to intervention framework can serve as a structure for efficiently allocating instructional resources specifically targeted to student needs. Commitments to using scientific, research-based instructional practices and student performance data for instructional planning and decision-making are necessary to improve student achievement of grade level standards.

Local school systems will need to determine which resources are currently available to support the response to intervention framework. For example, in systems implementing Maryland's Reading First initiative, components of the response to intervention process are already developed. In addition, The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* **allows** local school systems to use a student's response to scientific, research-based intervention for the purpose of identification of students with specific learning disabilities. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* also specifies that a local school system may use up to 15% of their federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* Part B funds for Early Intervening Services for children who are not identified as needing special education or related services. Local school systems that have been determined to be significantly disproportionate in the eligibility, placement, or disciplinary actions of minority students in special education are **required** to use 15% of their Part B funds for Early Intervening Services. These funds can support the tiered approach, but cannot be used to support tiered services for students already identified with disabilities as described previously in this document.

School districts will need to develop both systematic and systemic plans for reorganizing existing structures and reallocating resources to support student achievement. Data should drive the decisions at the local school and system level so that over time, each school building has the necessary instructional and behavioral resources to ensure the success of all students.

Although a student's response to scientific, research-based intervention is included within the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* statute and regulations in the section regarding the identification of specific learning disabilities, it is an **optional** process for which data collected within the response to intervention framework can be used as one component of a comprehensive evaluation to determine special education eligibility. However, the initial intent for the development of a tiered instructional approach is to improve the quality of instruction and interventions provided for all learners, especially those who struggle with meeting the same standards as their peers.

“Many districts already use effective problem-solving, instructional and behavioral consultation, intervention and assessment practices.”

Guidelines for Determination of Specific Learning Disabilities

“... must all the schools in the entire LEA be trained simultaneously?”

At this time, Maryland is **not** requiring; but, consistent with 34 CFR §300.309, is permitting local school systems to use the option of identifying a specific learning disability based upon a child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention. In addition, Maryland is not requiring the use of the IQ-discrepancy model of identification. Professionals should be thoughtful and intentional when selecting processes and procedures for identifying specific learning disabilities.

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the United States (U.S.) Department of Education has developed a *Question and Answer* document to provide guidance related to requests for clarification of IDEA regulations. The response developed by the U.S. Department of Education is informal guidance that reflects its interpretation of the applicable statutory or regulatory requirements and is not legally binding. Additional information can be found at <http://idea.ed.gov>.

One of the guidance questions and responses from the Office of Special Education Programs regarding the use of response to intervention in the specific learning disability identification process is extremely pertinent to local school systems (local education agencies-LEA) that choose to use the option of identifying a specific learning disability based upon a child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention. The question and response is verbatim as follows.

Q- *“When an RtI model is implemented, can an incremental process be used to train individual schools so that over time the entire LEA is implementing the model, or must all the schools in the entire LEA be trained simultaneously?”*

A- *If the State or LEA requires the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, researched-based intervention, in identifying children with SLD, then all children suspected of having a SLD, in all schools in the LEA, would be required to be involved in the process. However, research indicates that implementation of any process, across any system, is most effective when accomplished systematically in an incremental manner over time. If the LEA chose to “scale up” the implementation of the RtI model gradually over time, as would be reasonable, the LEA **could not** use RtI for purposes of identifying children with SLD until RtI was fully implemented in the LEA. Therefore, it is unwise for a State to require the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention before it has successfully scaled up implementation.”*

Since Maryland is **not** requiring the use of a process based on a child's response to scientific, research-based intervention, local school systems that choose to use this process will need to develop a systemic plan for operationalizing the criteria for its use. Within a systemic plan it is essential to include a data-driven decision-making process based on the individual child's need. When a student's achievement data indicates a need for consideration of special education and/or if a disability is suspected, it is the obligation of the local school system to evaluate the student to determine whether or not the student's lack of response or progress in attaining grade level content standards is a result of the presence of a disability that requires the provision of special education and related services to ensure a free appropriate public education. If school personnel and/or a parent perceive that a student needs specialized instruction and individualized support the student may be referred for an evaluation. It is imperative that processes used for response to scientific, research-based intervention be carefully tracked in order to determine at what point the intervention process becomes part of a special education evaluation. At that point, procedural safeguards should be provided and informed parental consent obtained which initiates the evaluation timeline.

“Within a systemic plan it is essential to include a data-driven decision-making process ...”

Evaluation Process: General Requirements for All Disability Determinations (34 CFR §§300.302; 300.304 and 300.305)

The following content reinforces that, all general federal and State regulatory requirements for evaluation and re-evaluation for the purpose of eligibility determination of students with disabilities still apply. These are addressed through the regulations referenced above and include:

Parental Consent

The public agency must promptly request parental consent whenever a child is referred for evaluation to determine if the child is eligible to receive special education and related services and must adhere to timeframes described in 34 CFR §§300.301, .303 and COMAR 13A.05.01.13. The public agency must provide written notice to the parents of a child with a disability, in accordance with 34CFR§300.503, that describes any evaluation procedures the agency proposes to conduct. In addition, parents must be provided with Maryland's Procedural Safeguards Notice.

Screening

Screening by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.

Exclusionary Factors - 34 C.F.R. §300.306(b)(1)

A child must **not** be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for that determination is:

- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208(3) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*) [including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and oral reading skills, and reading comprehension strategies];
- Lack of appropriate instruction in math; or
- Limited English proficiency.

Evaluation

An evaluation is a comprehensive process conducted by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Evaluation means procedures used in accordance with 34CFR §§ 300.301-.311 to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. Evaluation includes the review of information from parents, existing data, and the results of assessment procedures used. This review shall occur at a meeting of the IEP team. [COMAR 13A.05.01.06]

In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability as defined in 34CFR §300.8, and the educational needs of the child, each public agency must:

- Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, teacher recommendations, as well as information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; and
- Ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered.

Assessment

The process of evaluation requires a synthesis of all available assessment information. The student's parents are an integral part of the evaluation process, including providing information about the student. Parents are members of the IEP team meeting held for the purpose of determining the educational needs of the student, including whether the team needs to conduct assessments in order to complete a comprehensive evaluation.

“The process of evaluation requires a synthesis of all available assessment information.”

In completing assessments as a part of the evaluation process public agencies must ensure:

- ***Nondiscrimination:*** Testing and assessment materials and procedures used to assess a student's need for special education and related services are selected and administered in a manner, which is not racially or culturally discriminatory.

- ***Assessment materials:***

- Assessment and other evaluation materials used to assess a child are administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication in a form most likely to yield accurate information regarding the child's academic achievement and functional performance;
- Assessment and other evaluation materials must be used for the purposes for which they are valid and reliable:
 - Must be administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessment; and
 - Are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills results accurately reflect the child's aptitude of achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that are to be measured).

- ***Assessment Procedures:***

- Administration of assessment and other evaluation materials is conducted by trained and knowledgeable personnel.
- A student shall be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability as appropriate, including:
 - Academic performance;
 - Communication;
 - General intelligence;
 - Health;
 - Hearing;
 - Motor abilities;
 - Social, emotional, and behavioral status; and
 - Vision.
- A variety of assessment tools and strategies shall be used to gather relevant functional, cognitive, developmental, behavioral, and physical information that directly assists the IEP team in enabling the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum.
- Use of technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors;
- Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient. [34CFR §300.304]

Requirements for Determination of Specific Learning Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act specifies that States may not require the use of an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) discrepancy process. In addition, States are to allow local education agencies the option to identify a specific learning disability based on a process including response to scientific research-based intervention. Specifically, the regulations state:

“A State must adopt, consistent with 34 CFR §300.309, criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10). In addition, the criteria adopted by the State:

- Must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10);
- Must permit the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention; and
- May permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10).

A public agency must use the State criteria adopted pursuant to 34 CFR §300.307(a) in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.”

[20 U.S.C. §§1221e-3; 1401(30); 1414(b)(6); 34 CFR §300.307]

See page 37 for the Evaluation section of Procedural Requirements for the Determination of Specific Learning Disabilities.

Definition of 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, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. A specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.” 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10)

Criteria For Specific Learning Disability Determination

In accordance with COMAR 13A.05.01.06, the determination of the existence of a specific learning disability and a child's eligibility for special education and related services is made by an IEP team. Parents should be provided with Maryland's Procedural Safeguards Notice.

Achievement

The IEP team may determine the child has a specific learning disability if:

The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or meet State approved grade level standards in one or more of the following areas when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State approved grade level standards:

- Oral expression;
- Listening comprehension;
- Written expression;
- Basic reading skills;
- Reading fluency skills;
- Reading comprehension;
- Mathematics calculation; or
- Mathematics problem solving.

Process Options

Option 1

Determination of responsiveness to intervention through a tiered instructional approach

The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State approved grade level standards in one or more of the areas identified in this section when using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention.

or

Option 2

Determination of a pattern of strengths and weaknesses based on individual assessment data

The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development that is determined by the IEP team to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments, consistent with 34 CFR §300.309(a)(2)(ii). It is important to consider the specific needs related to students who are both gifted and talented and learning disabled when making determinations.

“... the determination of the existence of a specific learning disability and child's eligibility for special education ... is made by an IEP team.”

“The IEP team must demonstrate and document the student’s performance through the collection and review of multiple sources of information.”

Option 3

Use of other alternative research-based procedures

At this time, Maryland State Department of Education has not identified other alternative research-based procedures (Option 3) for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10). In the future, the Maryland State Department of Education will consider local school system proposed alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.

Exclusions

When determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, the IEP team must show that the disability is not a result of a visual, hearing, or motor disability; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency. The IEP team must demonstrate and document the student’s performance through the collection and review of multiple sources of information.

Data Collection and Decision-Making

Public agencies must use the State criteria adopted pursuant to 34 CFR §300.307(a) in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.

Option 1: Response to Intervention Program

While the Maryland State Department of Education supports a tiered instructional approach using a response to intervention process, Maryland is **not** requiring the use of a process based on a child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention for determining whether or not a child has a specific learning disability. Local school systems that choose to use Option 1, a response to intervention process for the purpose of determination of a specific learning disability, will need to develop and implement the essential components for data collection and decision-making as described in this document.

If a local school system elects to use data collected through a response to intervention process to document the student’s performance for the purpose of determination of a specific learning disability, the instructional process and data collections must be consistent with the State’s framework for a *Tiered Instructional Approach to Support the Achievement of All Students*. The local school system must ensure the student has access to instructional and behavioral supports in addition to the core programs consistent with previous sections of this document.

Essential elements:

If using the response to intervention process for identifying specific learning disabilities, local school systems, at a minimum, shall have provided:

- Universal screening processes for identifying students with learning needs;
- A description of concern(s) in meaningful and measurable terms;
- Appropriate instruction and positive behavioral supports delivered by appropriately trained personnel;
- Scientific, research-based or evidence-based interventions matched to student needs and appropriate for the suspected area(s) of disability;
- An established baseline using the selected performance measure before implementing an intervention;
- An objective, relevant, ongoing measure or performance indicator of the student's progress;
- Ongoing data-based progress monitoring of learning rate over time;
- A comparison of expected performance and actual performance using the student's performance measure;
- Data-based documentation of a student's response to the intervention(s);
- Data-based documentation related to the integrity, fidelity, and intensity (e.g., number and length of sessions) of the intervention;
- A comparison of the student's performance rate or slope of improvement: (a) a comparison of the slope of improvement with the historical slope of improvement, or (b) a comparison of a normative rate reference based on the response of peers;
- Periodic collaborative team review of student outcome data;
- A standard of comparison selected and used to evaluate the student's performance. The standard chosen must be relevant to the individual student and targeted area of concern and may include:
 - State norms,
 - Developmental norms,
 - Local school system norms, and
 - Local school system measure of peer performance.

Essential decision making:

In order to determine whether a student meets criteria for identification as a student with a specific learning disability, the team must:

- Establish decision rules related to responsiveness to scientific, research-based interventions before the student evaluation to ensure valid and reliable decision-making. These rules should be based on comprehensive curriculum-based data and include the following:
 - Graphic representations of student progress,
 - Frequency of monitoring,
 - Estimation of the error (e.g., the standard error of measurement associated with the monitoring data),
 - Learning rate, and
 - Duration of intervention.

- Identify a specified decision point for determining responsiveness to intervention based on a student’s level and rate of progress, both prior to and after the initiation of an intervention. The decision points must be valid and reliable for determining a specific learning disability and eligibility for special education services based in part on both an age-based discrepancy in performance and a discrepancy in expected rate of progress.

Decision-Making Criteria within the Response to Intervention Framework

Tiered service delivery cannot be used to delay identification of students with disabilities; therefore, school personnel need to ensure that families understand their right to request an evaluation as guaranteed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

All students access grade level curricula aligned with State standards, including the use of differentiated instruction and supports. The student **always continues participating in Tier I** regardless of additional Tiered supports provided unless otherwise specified in an IEP, or in an instructional program appropriate to the needs of gifted and talented students.

The following chart describes the decision-making criteria that serve as the basis for actions to be taken.

Criteria	Actions
<p>After the provision of differentiated Tier I instruction and supports, and weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring for a period of 6 or more weeks, the decision-making team determines whether a student’s performance is significantly below expected rates of skill acquisition. A sufficient number of data points needs to be collected and analyzed to determine if a student’s performance is reliably below the expectations established by the team. If a decision is to be made in less than 6 weeks, the team needs to account for possible error of measurement (e.g., analyze standard errors of measurement or confidence intervals). If data analysis provides sufficient evidence that the student’s response to instruction is below the expected rates of skill acquisition, then the team may recommend Tier II Interventions/ Supports.</p>	<p>Increase Intensity to Selected Tier II Interventions/ Supports</p>
<p>After the provision of selected Tier II instruction and supports, mastery of targeted skill and determination that Tier I differentiated instruction and supports alone will be sufficient for progress.</p>	<p>Decrease Intensity to Universal Tier I</p>

Criteria

Actions

Learning rate and skill acquisition is partially effective. Multiple data sources suggest student will respond to Tier II intervention and supports. These data sources should be identified **prior** to data collection. While team judgment can be important to this decision, the work products should be the primary source.

Continue Selected Tier II Interventions/Supports

After the provision of selected Tier II instruction and supports, and progress monitoring administered one to three times per week for a period of 6 or more weeks, the decision-making team determines whether a student's performance is significantly below expected rates of skill acquisition. A sufficient number of data points needs to be collected and analyzed to determine if a student's performance is reliably below the expectations established by the team. If a decision is to be made in less than 6 weeks, the team needs to account for possible error of measurement (e.g., analyze standard errors of measurement or confidence intervals). If data analysis provides sufficient evidence that the student's response to instruction is below the expected rates of skill acquisition, then the team may recommend Tier III interventions/supports. In addition, data indicate the rate and amount of progress with the use of Tier II interventions and supports are insufficient to produce desired outcomes.

Consideration of Increased Intensity to Selected Tier III Interventions/Supports

After the provision of selected Tier III instruction and supports, mastery of the targeted skill is demonstrated and determination is made that Tier II interventions/supports will be sufficient for continued progress.

Decrease Intensity to Selected Tier II Interventions/Supports

Learning rate and skill acquisition is partially effective. Multiple data sources suggest the student will respond to Tier III interventions/supports.

Continue Targeted Tier III Interventions/Supports

After the provision of targeted Tier III instruction, interventions, and supports with daily progress monitoring, data indicates Tier III is insufficient to increase the student's rate of learning and skill acquisition to a level comparable to peers. Review existing data and information from parents to determine whether or not the student may have a disability that requires the provision of specialized instruction and/or related services to enable the student to progress in the general curriculum.

Referral for Evaluation

Option 2: Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses

Local school systems that choose to implement Option 2 for determination of a specific learning disability will need to establish procedures and criteria that yield reliable decisions and that are consistent with 34 CFR §§300.304, 300.305, and 309(a)(2)(ii). Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child must be valid and reliable, and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel. At a minimum, patterns of a student's strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade level standards or intellectual development should be evaluated in terms of the level of performance, the degree of variation among strengths and weaknesses, the frequency of such variation across individuals, and the relevance to identification of a specific learning disability. Criteria need to account for the fact that some profile variation is typical of non-disabled peers. That is, significant intra-individual differences in score profiles are normal and can be expected to occur among all students. Furthermore, when two assessment scores are compared, the difference between the two scores (i.e., difference score) is nearly always less reliable than the separate scores on which the difference is based. With these cautions in mind, use of Option 2 for determination of a specific learning disability requires local procedures and criteria that identify patterns of a student's strengths and weaknesses that are significant, meaningful, and relevant to identification of a specific learning disability.

“It is best practice to include a school psychologist during the IEP team meeting...”

Please refer to current guidelines for specific learning disability identification (Identifying Specific Learning Disabilities: Maryland's Technical Assistance Guide, June 2001) for additional information regarding methods of data collection and assessment to gather and review information regarding the student's progress, performance and patterns of strengths and weakness.

Option 3: Alternative Procedures

As stated previously, at this time, the Maryland State Department of Education has not identified other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c)(10).

Procedural Requirements for the Determination of Specific Learning Disabilities

Participants on an IEP Team

In Maryland, the IEP team is responsible for identifying specific learning disabilities and eligibility for special education services. (COMAR 13A.05.01.06). It is best practice to include a school psychologist during the IEP team meeting when teams are considering the determination of a specific learning disability. School psychologists have the training and expertise to help IEP teams address reliability and validity issues that may arise with both Options 1 and 2 described previously.

An IEP team must include:

- The parents of the child;
- Not less than one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment);
- Not less than one special education teacher of the child or where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the child;
- A representative of the public agency who
 - Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
 - Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and
 - Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency;
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results;
- At the discretion of the parent or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate; and
- Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability. (34 CFR §300.321).

Evaluation

The determination of whether a child suspected of having a specific learning disability is a child with a disability as defined in 34 CFR §300.8(c) (10), must be made by an IEP team including the parent, qualified professionals, and the IEP team members described previously. Specific additional group members included in the federal regulations are described as follows: the child's regular teacher; or if the child does not have a regular teacher, a regular classroom teacher qualified to teach a child of his or her age; or for a child of less than school age, an individual qualified by the State to teach a child of his or her age; and at least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of children, such as a school psychologist, speech-language pathologist or remedial reading teacher. 34 CFR §300.8 (a) and (b).

Information shall be gathered from the following persons in the evaluation of a child having or suspected of having a specific learning disability:

- parent or guardian (principal caretaker of the child, if appropriate);
- the child's general education classroom teacher;
- at least one licensed teacher with qualifications to conduct an individualized diagnostic examination or evaluation of children (i.e., School Psychologist, Speech-Language Pathologist, Remedial Reading Teacher), and
- other professional personnel as indicated.

Decisions about the specific qualifications of the evaluation team members shall be made at the local level so that the composition of the group

may vary depending on the nature of the child's suspected disability, the expertise of local staff, and other relevant factors (Federal Register, August 14, 2006/Rules and Regulations, page 46650)

To ensure that underachievement in a child suspected of having a specific learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the IEP team must consider as part of the evaluation, (1) data that demonstrates that prior to, or as part of the referral process the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel; and (2) data based documentation of repeated assessment of achievement at reasonable intervals reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction which was provided to the child's parents.

(34 CFR §300.309(b)(1)(2))

Although a student's response to scientific, research-based intervention is included within the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* statute and regulations in the section regarding the identification of specific learning disabilities, it is an **optional** process for which data collected within the response to intervention framework can be used as one component of a comprehensive evaluation to determine special education eligibility. The initial intent for the development of a tiered instructional approach is to improve the quality of instruction and interventions provided for all learners, especially those who struggle with meeting the same standards as their peers.

Observation

The child is observed in the child's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) to document the child's academic performance and behavior in the area(s) of difficulty. Documented observations of the child shall include:

- Observational information in routine classroom instruction and monitoring by the child's general education classroom teacher before the child was referred for an evaluation; or
- A direct observation by a professional on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team after the child has been referred for evaluation and parental consent obtained. Observations must address the child's academic behaviors, academic performance in the regular classroom, and relevant work samples. The following information must be included:
- Parental input and, as appropriate, the child's input;

“The child is observed in the child's learning environment ...”

- Documentation that the child’s learning problems are not primarily due to previously listed exclusionary factors, including:
 - Visual, hearing, or motor impairment;
 - Cognitive impairment (mental retardation);
 - Emotional disturbance;
 - Environmental, cultural, or economic factors; and
 - Motivational factors.

The classroom observation can be an important opportunity for assessing the fidelity with which instruction is provided. The observation could be considered important for assessing student engagement, opportunities to learn, and judgments about curricular and instructional fidelity. If this focus is not emphasized, the observation becomes more perfunctory or just a routing that doesn’t lend itself to the diagnostic information that could be valuable.

Documentation of Specific Learning Disability Eligibility

(34 C.F.R. §300.311)

For all methods of identification, the IEP team shall prepare a written report that includes documentation required for a student suspected of meeting the criteria for identification as a student with a specific learning disability which must contain a statement of:

- whether the student has a specific learning disability;
- the basis for the determination, including an assurance that the determination has been made in accordance with 34 CFR §300.306 (c) (1);
- the relevant behavior, if any, noted during the observation and the relationship of the behavior to the student’s academic functioning;
- the educationally relevant medical findings, if any;
- whether the child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to meet State-approved grade level standards consistent with 34 CFR §300.309 (a)(1), and
- whether the student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade level standards consistent with 34 CFR §300.309 (a)(2)(i); or
- whether the student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade level standards or intellectual development consistent with 34 CFR §300.309 (a)(2)(ii);
- determination regarding the effects of a visual, hearing, or motor disability, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, cultural factors, environmental or economic disadvantage or limited English proficiency on the student’s achievement level;

“For all methods of identification, the IEP team shall prepare a written report...”

- if the student has participated in a process that assesses the student’s response to scientific, research-based intervention the documentation requirements in the next section must be included when identifying a specific learning disability. (Refer to the next section entitled, “Additional Documentation Requirements if a Tiered Responsiveness to Intervention Approach to Instruction is used for Specific Learning Disability Determination”); and
- each group member must certify in writing whether the report reflects the member’s conclusion. If it does not reflect the member’s conclusion, the group member must submit a separate statement presenting the member’s conclusions.

Additional Documentation Requirements if a Response to Intervention Process through a Tiered Approach to Instruction is Used for Specific Learning Disability Determination

Parent/Family Notification

If a student has participated in a tiered instructional approach/response to intervention process, and the response to intervention process is a component used for identification of the child as a child with a specific learning disability, the local school system must document that the student’s parents were notified about the following:

- Applicable policies and procedures regarding the amount and nature of student performance data to be collected and the general education services that would be provided;
- Strategies for increasing the student’s rate of learning; and
- The parents’ right to request an evaluation to determine if an educational disability exists for their child at any time during the tiered instructional approach/response to intervention process.

Data and Responsiveness to Interventions

The data collected and information that must be documented in a written report and maintained for students who are receiving interventions and monitoring through a tiered instructional approach/response to intervention process includes the following categories and related information:

- Area of concern
 - Valid and reliable performance measure
 - Performance goal or indicator

“... the student’s parents were notified about the following:”

- Research-based intervention
 - Identified intervention that matches the student’s needs
 - Fidelity of implementation data
- Performance monitoring
 - Performance data
 - Frequency of data collection
 - Decision plan to determine effectiveness of intervention
 - Modification of plan as appropriate
- Rate of progress as compared to expected rate of the established trend line
- Data analysis and conclusions
 - Individual’s actual rate of skill acquisition compared to the expected rate of progress
 - Frequency, intensity, and duration of relevant behaviors
 - Fidelity of intervention implementation
 - Identification of conditions in which the student experiences the most growth

The written report will need to include not only the reporting of test scores and the information described previously, but the rationale or thinking that lead to the eligibility determination. Local school systems need to develop a template that would provide a uniform standard for specific learning disability eligibility reports.

All information from the response to intervention process that was used in the determination of a student’s specific learning disability and eligibility for special education and related services, must be included within the child’s special education record.

It is important to remember that as clarified by the Office of Special Education Programs, “a response to intervention process does not replace the need for a comprehensive evaluation.” A public agency must use a variety of data gathering tools and strategies even if a response to intervention process is used. The results of a response to intervention process may be one component of the information reviewed as part of the evaluation procedures required under 34 CFR §§.301-.311. As required in 34 CFR §300.304(b), consistent with section 614(b)(2) of the Act, an evaluation must include a variety of assessment tools and strategies and cannot rely on any single procedure as the sole criterion for determining eligibility for special education and related services.” (Analysis of Comments and Changes to the Regulations IDEA 2004, p 46648)

Appendix A

Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement for All Students (Response to Intervention) Task Force Process

Membership and Charge

In order to address the essential components of a Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement for All Students: A Response to Intervention Framework, a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders was invited to participate in designing a suggested tiered intervention framework for the state of Maryland. See **Appendix B** for a list of the Task Force participants.

The results of the Task Force's work will have broad-reaching impact on both general and special education practices. Dr. Carol Ann Baglin, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services; Ms. Ann Chafin, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Student, Family and School Services; and Dr. Colleen Seremet, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Instruction, provided an overview of the project and presented the charge to the Task Force. That charge was to develop criteria for determining specific learning disability eligibility by using response to scientific, research-based intervention processes in conjunction with or without the use of the discrepancy model that was previously used for identifying a specific learning disability.

Meeting Calendar and Activities

Four meetings from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. were scheduled for January 23, February 9, April 19, and May 31, 2007. In addition to these meetings, ongoing communication and exchange of ideas and resources were available on a Task Force members only electronic learning community. Subcommittees met or communicated regularly between the four assigned Task Force meetings. Facilitation, national presenters, resource compilation, and management of the electronic learning community, were supported by Ethel Bright and Tara Kidwell from the federally funded Mid-South Regional Resource Center at the University of Kentucky.

The January 23, 2007 meeting outcomes for participants were to: (1) understand the charge of the Task Force, (2) understand their purpose/role on the Task Force, and (3) have a research-based overview of a tiered instructional

approach to support achievement for all students. Following the overview and charge developed by Dr. Baglin, Dr. Seremet, and Ms. Chafin, national response to intervention expert researchers provided additional background information and current research. Dr. Greg Roberts from the National Comprehensive Center on Instruction at the University of Texas presented information regarding “Response to Intervention in a School Improvement Context” and Dr. Doug Fuchs from the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities at the Peabody College of Vanderbilt University presented “Response to Intervention as Early Intervention and Disability Identification.” Next, the Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology staff provided training and directions for using the electronic learning community.

Task Force members were requested to select a subcommittee in which they were most interested. The subcommittee focus areas included school-wide screening, a tiered service delivery model, progress monitoring, fidelity of implementation, and a glossary of key terms. Subcommittee members were asked to review literature that was included in resource binders or posted on the electronic learning community. This literature related to each focus area was to be reviewed and commented upon by participants who posted their findings on the electronic learning community. Members were asked to include the title of the document, key points, and to identify which key elements should be considered for Maryland’s tiered instructional approach.

At the February 9, 2007 meeting, Ms. Sharon West from the Maryland State Department of Education provided a review of the January meeting by restating the charge and clarifying the scope of work expected from the subcommittees. Each subcommittee was provided a hard copy of the electronic learning community postings related to their focus area. Subcommittees had the remainder of the day to review the postings and compile information based upon guiding questions under the following headings:

- definitions and features,
- changing structures and responsibilities,
- methods and procedures, and
- parent involvement.

Information from each subcommittee was shared with the entire group and feedback was provided. Two of the subcommittees met again on February 23, 2007 at Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology in Education to continue their work. Other subcommittees met at various locations intermittently. Subcommittee chairpersons were to compile information in narrative form and submit this information to the Maryland State Department of Education by March 15, 2007. The Maryland State Department of Education staff compiled the subcommittee work into a draft document for review and feedback by the Task Force members at the April 19, 2007 meeting.

The outcomes for the April 19, 2007 meeting were for participants to: (1) gain an understanding of the national perspective regarding response to intervention for identification of specific learning disabilities and early intervening services, (2) review the Task Force report documents, provide feedback, and identify areas needing enhancement, (3) develop suggestions for the organization of the documents to make them “user friendly”, and (4) review the draft conclusions in the Task Force Report thus far, and generate any additional general statements that need to be included as a result of the overall document review. During this meeting, Dr. Daryl Mellard from the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities at the University of Kansas provided a national perspective regarding the implementation of response to intervention processes and reaction/feedback regarding Maryland’s draft documents. Committee members had the opportunity to discuss issues that still needed to be addressed and provided input that could enhance the documents.

At the May 31, 2007 meeting, participants were asked to comment and provide feedback on the most current version of the Task Force documents and appendices, develop or modify draft suggestions for premises or assumptions regarding existing infrastructure and/or procedures, and review draft conclusions and generate feedback. Participants reviewed their subcommittees section and the entire document in terms of inaccuracies, lack of clarity, or omissions of pertinent information.

Conclusions

After completing literature reviews, reviewing resources and other State documents, hearing from nationally recognized educational researchers and/or technical assistance providers, the Task Force members formulated the following conclusions:

- *Elementary and Secondary Education Act: No Child Left Behind* and *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004* have resulted in a change in how the needs of individual learners and achievement gaps are addressed.
- A response to intervention process serves as an instructional framework that guides instruction for all students in general and/or special education via supports and scientific, research-based interventions that can be embedded within school improvement efforts.
- A response to intervention process consists of universal screening of students’ academic achievement and behaviors, ongoing assessment and analysis of progress toward grade level standards, use of problem-solving teams to make decisions, and implementation of scientific, research-based instruction and interventions.

- In order for schools to implement a response to intervention process, a well trained student decision-making team is essential. The decision-making team must be knowledgeable in evaluation, data collection, decision-making/problem-solving, progress monitoring, and the ability to match scientific, research-based valid practices to student needs based on assessment and progress monitoring data.
- Response to intervention can serve as a structure for efficiently allocating instructional resources specifically targeted to student needs. This structure includes: a commitment for using scientific, research-based and/or evidence-based instructional practices and using student performance data for instructional planning; and informed decision-making regarding program and intervention selection to improve student achievement of grade level standards.
- The tiered instructional approach and response to intervention framework were designed to improve the quality of instruction and interventions provided for all learners, especially those who struggle meeting the same standards as their peers. An added benefit is that the response to intervention process can serve as an alternative, *optional* process for which data collected within the process can be incorporated as one component of a comprehensive evaluation for special education eligibility determination.
- Local school systems should begin to examine how existing resources and structures may support the tiered instructional approach in the response to intervention framework. Systematic, purposeful data collection and analysis is essential to the efficacy of the tiered instructional approach.

Appendix B

Task Force Membership

<i>Janet Ambrose</i> Assistant Professor Hood College	<i>Sharon Dillon</i> Teacher Specialist of Secondary Special Education Harford County	<i>Cindy Heslin</i> Nonpublic Diagnostic Specialist Anne Arundel County Public Schools
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<i>Carol Ann Baglin</i> Assistant State Superintendent MSDE, DSE/EIS	<i>Rhona Fisher</i> Branch Chief, Student Achievement and Results MSDE, DSE/EIS	<i>Martin Kehe</i> Operational Manager MSDE, Division of Accountability
<i>Brian Bartels</i> Specialist, School Psychology MSDE, DOSFSS	<i>Althea Franklin</i> Specialist, Early Learning MSDE, DECD	<i>Denise Lancaster</i> Communications Facilitator State Steering Committee for School-Based Speech and Language Pathologists, Howard County Public Schools
<i>Susan Bartels</i> Director, Graduate Program in School Psychology Towson University	<i>Jodi French</i> Director of Special Education Cecil County Public Schools	<i>Kimberly Lewis</i> Program Manager MSDE, DSE/EIS
<i>Jill Basye-Featherston</i> ESOL Program Specialist Baltimore City Public Schools	<i>Marci Frye</i> Mathematics Specialist MSDE, DOI	<i>Jane Lichter</i> Coordinator Language Arts Baltimore County Public Schools
<i>Ethel Bright</i> Associate Director Mid-South Regional Resource Center University of Kentucky	<i>Lorraine Fulton</i> Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Carroll County Public Schools	<i>Ted Luck</i> Supervisor of Education that is Multicultural, Gifted and Talented Frederick County Public Schools
<i>Ann Chafin</i> Assistant State Superintendent MSDE, DOSFSS	<i>Michele Goady</i> Director of Reading First MSDE, Office of Reading First	<i>Leslie Seid Margolis</i> Managing Attorney MD Disability Law Center
<i>Diane Chesley</i> Parent, MD Learning Disabilities Association	<i>Bonnie Hain</i> Curriculum Specialist, English/Language Arts Frederick County Public Schools	
<i>Rhonda Creecy</i> Chairperson, Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee Harford County Public Schools	<i>Carol Hepler</i> Specialist MSDE, DOSFSS	

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Appendix D

Glossary

Accommodation – A practice or procedure that provides a student with a disability equitable access during instruction and to assessments in the areas of: presentation response; setting; and scheduling. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations.

Alignment - The degree to which assessments, curriculum, instruction, textbooks and other instructional materials, teacher preparation and professional development, and systems of accountability all reflect and reinforce the educational program's objectives and standards. One expects to see a clear linkage of the practices to the written documents from which they are drawn (1)*.

Accelerated Learning - Successful use of many different techniques, methodologies, and approaches to instruction and the learning environment to achieve a faster learning rate.

Active Learning – Any approach that focuses the responsibility of learning on the learner. Learners are engaged by matching instruction to the learner's interests, understanding and developmental level which often includes hands-on and authentic activities. A process of learning new ideas, skills and attitudes by learning from doing, performing, and taking action. Examples of active learning include discovery learning, problem-based learning, experiential learning and inquiry-based instruction and may incorporate reciprocal teaching, high response rates, games, simulations, role playing, etc.

Assessment – The administration of tests, and other methods of gathering and integrating information to determine a student's current level of performance to illustrate whether the student is achieving appropriately to the instructional program being delivered.

Assessment information will aid in instructional and or intervention planning.

Assessment as it relates to Special Education Eligibility Determination - The process of collecting data for an evaluation to be used by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine a student's eligibility for special education and related services.

At-Risk - Not acquiring relevant skills that may result in a need for an intervention.

*See Primary Source list at the end of this appendix.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) – A proactive plan designed to address problem behaviors exhibited by any student in the educational setting through the use of positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports.

Behavior Modification – Programming intended to modify or eliminate problem behavior(s) and to increase performance of desired behaviors. Techniques may include; modeling, prompting, positive reinforcement, etc.

Benchmark - A numerical measurement, or standard, that serves as a point of reference by which student performance is measured. The benchmark is a minimum criterion for expected student mastery or performance.

Best practice - Evidenced-based program(s), initiative(s) or activities that reflect contemporary research and are associated with positive outcomes. Best practices are considered to be exemplar models and have resulted in positive outcomes following implementation with fidelity.

Competency-based Instruction - Instruction organized around a set of learning objectives based upon the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a set of skills, otherwise known as competencies. Evaluation of student success is based on competent performance of the skills with specific exclusion of normative measurement.

Confidence Interval - A band or range of scores around the obtained score that likely includes the true or actual score.

Criterion-referenced Assessment – Student performance is compared to a set standard or objective. Evaluation of objectives as a learner progresses through the course of instruction. In most cases, success is measured by attaining or exceeding a cut score and is NOT determined by their rank or standing among peers. In this case, *criterion* refers to the subject matter rather than the specific cut score assigned (2).

Curriculum - The aggregate of formal courses of study given in a learning environment. Courses are arranged sequentially to increase the efficiency of learning a subject. In schools, a curriculum spans several grades; for example, a math curriculum. In business, it can run for days, weeks, months, or years. Learners enter it at various points depending on their job experience and the needs of the business.

Curriculum-based - Phrase referring to a program of courses that meet the graduation requirements.

Curriculum-based Assessment (CBA) – “Determination of the instructional needs of a student, based upon the student’s on-going performance within the existing course content in order to deliver instruction as effectively and efficiently as possible.” (Gickling, Shane, & Croskery, 1989, pp. 344-345).

Curriculum-based Measurement (CBM) - A set of standardized and validated short duration tests that are used by special education and general education teachers for the purpose of evaluating the effects of instructional programs (Deno, 1985, 1986; Fuchs & Deno, 1991) in the basic skills of reading, mathematics computation, spelling, and written expression (Deno, 1985, 1986, 1989; Shinn, 1989b, 1998).

Differentiated Instruction – A process of designing instruction that meets the varied needs of a group of learners. Differentiated instruction includes, but is not limited to, varying the instructional strategies, groupings or materials and student assignments based on student skill levels, learning preferences and interest levels.

English Language Proficiency Test – A test of English language proficiency administered to English language learners upon their entry into the school system and annually during a testing window in the spring. The test measures a student's English language ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. Assessment results are used by the local school systems to make decisions as to each student's participation in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. The State uses ELPT assessment results when reporting information related to the English Language Proficiency Performance Targets/Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs); the AMAO for attainment of English proficiency and the AMAO for progress in learning English.

The IEP team for a student with a disability who is also an English language learner shall decide the appropriate accommodation(s) at the IEP development or review meeting for the year in which the student is scheduled to take the ELPT and indicate the decision on the student's IEP. The student's IEP team will forward recommended accommodations to the School Test Coordinator. Accommodations must be justified and documented in the student's IEP.

Evaluation - The process of gathering information in order to make good decisions. Evaluation is broader than testing, and includes both subjective (opinion) input and objective (fact) input. Forms of evaluation include memorization tests, portfolio assessment, and self-reflection.

Evaluation as it relates to Special Education Eligibility Determination - The review of information from parents; existing data; and results of assessment procedures at a meeting of the IEP team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, to determine whether a student has a disability, and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the student needs.

Fidelity - Refers to two attributes, accuracy and consistency, to which instruction, intervention, screening, progress monitoring and/or other practices are implemented in comparison to the original design or evidence-based process. Unless the instructional practice and curriculum is delivered with high fidelity, one cannot determine the basis of a student's learning difficulties.

Frequency - Number of occurrences within a given time period (e.g., words read per minute).

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) - The systematic process of gathering information to guide the development of an effective and efficient behavior intervention plan for the student's identified problem behavior. An FBA includes the identification of the functions of the problem behavior for the student; a description of the problem behavior exhibited in the educational setting; and identification of environmental and other factors and settings that contribute to or predict the occurrence, nonoccurrence, and maintenance of the behavior over time.

Language Assessment System (LAS) Links - The English language proficiency test (ELPT) administered to English language learners upon entry into the school system and annually during a testing window in the spring. The test measures a student's English language ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. The IEP team for a student with a disability who is also an English language learner decides the appropriate accommodation(s) at the IEP development or review meeting for the year in which the student is scheduled to take the ELPT.

Limited English Proficient - An individual who does not speak English as his or her primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) Kindergarten Assessment - MMSR is a school readiness framework. It is an assessment and instructional system designed to provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering school. It is defined by early learning standards for what children should know and be able to do by the end of kindergarten. In the summer of 2004, the MMSR standards were revised to reflect the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) content standards, indicators and objectives. In addition, the MMSR Fall Performance Examples (FPE's) were revised to provide close alignment between the new MMSR standards and exemplars that describe the assessment guidelines for kindergarten and pre-kindergarten.

An important component of the MMSR is the Work Sampling System (WSS), which provides a way for teachers to document and assess children's skills, knowledge, behavior, and academic accomplishments in a variety of subject areas. By observing students, teachers gain a better understanding of what they know, are able to do, and still need to practice. The WSS is not a conventional readiness test and is not used to place students in particular programs. It is designed to support students' learning in seven areas:

- Social and personal development;
- Language and literacy;
- Mathematical thinking;

- Scientific thinking;
- Social studies;
- The arts; and
- Physical development.

Modification – A practice or procedure that changes, lowers, or reduces learning expectations. Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect students throughout their educational career.

Monitoring - Assessment of academic and behavioral performance in order to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and behavioral management.

Observation – Technique used to gather formal/informal information about an individual student’s needs and achievements.

Outcome - The ultimate, long-term, resulting effect-both expected and unexpected-of an educator's use or application of the instructional strategies. Content outcomes describes what students should know and be able to do in particular subject areas. Student performance outcomes describe how and at what level students must demonstrate such knowledge and skills (2).

Outcome-based Learning – “Outcomes are clear, observable demonstrations of student learning that occur after a significant set of learning experiences. Typically, these demonstrations, or performances, reflect three areas: (1) what the student knows; (2) what the student can actually do with what he or she knows; and (3) the student’s confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration. A well-defined outcome will clearly define content or concepts and will be demonstrated through a well-defined process beginning with a directive or request such as ‘explain,’ ‘organize,’ or ‘produce’.” (*Spady & Marshall, 1994*)

Performance Assessments - Instruments that involve the comparison a learner’s behavior to an established guideline or rubric. The guidelines can be a single condition – or complicated multi-page rubrics with carefully described levels of performance for each action or behavior.

Problem-Solving Model - This construct addresses each student’s failure to respond to intervention and makes an individually tailored plan for the next level of instruction or support. It is essentially a case-by-case approach to addressing individual student’s unique needs. The problem-solving model relies on teacher assistance teams or instructional support teams already established in most schools (3).

Proficiency - Ability to perform a specific behavior (e.g., task, learning objective) in accordance with the established performance standard in order to demonstrate mastery of the behavior.

Progress Monitoring - Measuring student performance over time to illustrate whether the student is achieving appropriately to the instructional program being delivered (3).

Reliability – Yielding comparable results each time. In assessments, reliability refers to consistency or achieving the same result on successive trials.

Research-based - Based on multiple, systematic investigations, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

Response to Intervention (RtI) – A process of providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student need that includes frequent progress monitoring to assist in decision making regarding the need for a change in instructional and/or behavioral programming.

Scaffolding - An instructional process that involves identification of prerequisite skills that are needed for a student to achieve grade level standards. Scaffolds are temporary supports put in place by the teacher during instruction to build on existing knowledge and enhance a student's opportunity for success. Scaffolds are removed as the student demonstrates increased proficiency in meeting grade level expectations.

Scientifically-Based Research – Research involving the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs.

Screening – A brief procedure used to identify a particular set of knowledge, skill or ability gaps in students. The purpose of the screening could be related to academic, behavioral, or health such as vision or scoliosis screenings are conducted as brief measures to judge whether further assessment or referral is needed.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) – A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. SLD includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. SLD does not include students who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Stakeholders - Individuals, groups and/or organizations having a legitimate interest or involvement in a student's success (e.g., parents, teachers, school administrators, institutions of higher education, local businesses, local government etc.).

Standard Error of Measurement - An estimate of the amount of error associated with an obtained score.

Standardized Protocol Model - Standardized protocols, or specific instructional programs, are developed and implemented using prescribed procedures for academic or behavioral problems at each stage of instruction. At each level of intervention, instruction is standardized, meaning that consistent instructional methods are implemented for a specific length of time. The procedures for teaching and assessing the performance and growth of the students who responded poorly to general class instruction are the same for all students in the small group (4).

Standards - Agreed upon principles of protocol or broad expectations of what students should know, understand and be able to do at a particular grade level in a certain subject.

Tiered Instructional Delivery – An approach for educational service delivery in which each tier represents an increased intensity of instructional and/or behavioral delivery that corresponds with a student’s needs. The implementation of this flexible interrelated instructional delivery approach provides a framework that includes appropriate curriculum, instruction and school organization that increases the likelihood of improved student achievement. Differentiation of instruction is critical to each of the tiers.

Universal Screening – School or district-wide type of assessment of age appropriate critical academic and/or behavior skills to determine which students may be “at risk”. Students identified as “at risk” may need closer monitoring, interventions, or more in-depth assessment. Universal screening, if administered at regular intervals throughout the year, would enable the ongoing evaluation of a student’s performance relative to his/her peers in the mastery of grade level expectations.

Validity - Validity is an attribute of a score and refers to the accuracy with which a score represents a person’s knowledge, skills or abilities. In addition, validity refers to the meaning of a score or assessment result and may be influenced by content/theory, response processes, internal structure, relationships to other variables and assessment consequences.

Primary Source

1. <http://www.schoolpress.co> <http://www.schoolwisepress.com/smart/dict/dict.html>
2. http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/l_1_guid.htm
3. Special Education Dictionary, Edited by John W. Norlin, Esq., Julie J. Kline, Esq., and Amy E. Slater, Esq., LRP Publications 2007, Horsham, Pa 19044
4. Thinking About Response to Intervention and Learning Disabilities: A Teacher’s Guide (CEC)
5. Assessment of Children: Cognitive Applications (4th Ed.) by Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc., San Diego (2001)

Appendix E

Resources

RtI Manual, SLD Handbook. (2006) National Research Center on Learning Disabilities-http://www.nrcld.org/response_to_intervention_manual

Getting Started with Specific Learning Disabilities. (2006) http://www.nrcld.org/getting_started.shtm

Response to intervention technical assistance document. (June 2006). <http://nde.state.ne.us/RtI/PDF>

Although school personnel can design their own assessments (e.g., web-based tools for designing CBM materials are available via www.interventioncentral.org), materials for regular and ongoing measurement of students' performance are commercially available. These materials include both measurement probes and accompanying software or web-based tools for interpreting students' performance in relation to their peers. They help enable school personnel to identify (or "screen for") students who have or are at risk of having performance deficits and to monitor these students' performance over time.

Resources and Research on Measuring Student Progress

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Shapiro, E. S., & Kratochwill, T. R. (Eds.) (2000b). *Conducting school-based assessments of child and adolescent behavior*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Skinner, C. H. (1998). Preventing academic skills deficits. In T. S. Watson & F. M. Gresham (Eds.), *Handbook of child behavior therapy: Issues in clinic child psychology* (p. 61 – 82). New York: Plenum Press.

<http://education.osu.edu/wheward/Publications/Everyone96.pdf> Manuscript titled *Everyone Participates in This Class*, which includes information on using and evaluating response cards in the classroom to increase academic engagement.

<http://dibels.uoregon.edu> Official DIBELS website

<http://www.aimsweb.com> Official AIMSweb website

Research/Resources on Problem Analysis

Daly, E. J., III, Andersen, M., Gortmaker, V., & Turner, A. (in press). Using experimental analysis to identify reading fluency interventions: Connecting the dots. *The Behavior Analyst Today*. Available on-line at <http://www.behavior-analyst-today.com>

Daly, E. J., III, Chafouleas, S. M., & Skinner, C. H. (2005). *Interventions for reading problems: Designing and evaluating effective strategies*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

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Duhon, G. J., Noell, G. H., Witt, J. C., Freeland, J. T., Dufrene, B. A., & Gilbertson, D. N. (2004). Identifying academic skills and performance deficits: The experimental analysis of brief assessments of academic skills. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 429-443.

Iwata, B., Dorsey, M., Slifer, K., Bauman, K., & Richman, G. (1982). Toward a functional analysis of self-injury. *Analysis and intervention in developmental disabilities*, 2, 3-20. Reprinted in *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 1994, 27, 197-209.

O'Neill, R. E., Horner, R. H., Albin, R. W., Sprague, J. R., Storey, K., & Newton, J. S. (1997). *Functional assessment of problem behavior: A practical assessment guide* (2nd ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Watson, T. S., & Steege, M. W. (2003). *Conducting school-based functional behavior assessments: A practitioner's guide*. NY: Guilford.

Witt, J. C., Daly, E. J., III, & Noell, G. H. (2000). *Functional assessments: A step-by-step guide to solving academic and behavior problems*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

<http://cecp.air.org/fba> This website provides step-by-step information on conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment

Resources for Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions

Several web-based libraries have been created to assist school personnel in selecting evidence-based interventions. The following websites are among those most popular.

International Campbell Collaboration (www.campbellcollaboration.org). The International Campbell Collaboration maintains an online registry of reviews of evidence-based social, behavioral, and educational interventions.

Promising Practices Network (www.promisingpractices.net). The Promising Practices Network website provides descriptions of research-supported programs for improving child, youth, and family outcomes.

What Works Clearinghouse (www.w-w-c.org). The What Works Clearinghouse website, developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Science, provides educators with information about school-based practices supported by scientific evidence.

Reading Intervention Resources

Although numerous resources are available to assist educators in providing evidence-based reading interventions, the following three websites are particularly useful.

Big Ideas in Beginning Reading (reading.uoregon.edu). The Big Ideas in Beginning Reading website provides descriptions of reading research and examples of interventions based on the five Big Ideas in reading (phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency with text, vocabulary, and comprehension) that have been identified by the National Reading Panel.

Florida Center for Reading Research (www.fcrr.org). The Florida Center for Reading Research website includes information on reading research and links to reading intervention resources.

Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (www.texasreading.org). The Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts website includes information on 3-tier reading model.

Resources/Research on the Integrity of Problem-Solving Procedures

Barnett, D. W., Daly, E. J., III, Hampshire, E. M., Hines, N. R., Maples, K. A., Ostrom, J. K., & Van Buren, A. E. (1999). Meeting performance-based training demands: Accountability in an intervention-based practicum. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 14, 357-379.

Bonner, M. & Barnett, D. W. (2004). Intervention-based school psychology services: Training for child-level accountability: Preparing for program-level accountability. *Journal of School Psychology*, 42, 23-44.

Telzrow, C. F., McNamara, K., & Hollinger, C. L. (2000). Fidelity of problem-solving implementation and relationship to student performance. *School Psychology Review*, 29, 443-461.

Response To Intervention Wire: [http://www.jimwrightonline.com/php/Response to intervention/Response to intervention_wire.php](http://www.jimwrightonline.com/php/Response%20to%20intervention/Response%20to%20intervention_wire.php)

Resources on English Language Learners

Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006a). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for the use of accommodations in large-scale assessments*. Houston: Center on Instruction, University of Houston.

Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006b). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations instruction and academic interventions*. Houston: Center on Instruction, University of Houston.

Francis, D., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006c). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for serving adolescent newcomers*. Houston: Center on Instruction, University of Houston.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition

<http://www.ncela.org>

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/expert/glossary.html>

TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)

<http://www.tesol.org>