Parent and Family Guide
TO UNDERSTANDING
Response to Intervention

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**Schools are responsible for helping all children succeed.**

There are many ways to help children who are struggling to learn and need additional support. The Mississippi Department of Education Response to Intervention is one form of support that school districts in Mississippi are required to implement.

**WHAT IS RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION?**

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-step process that is put in place to support the academic and behavioral needs of ALL students as early as possible to ensure success. The goal of RtI is to prevent failure and make all students successful learners. RtI might also be referred to as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). RtI contains the following essential components:

- Universal Screener in math, reading, and other content areas to help schools identify students who may need more support or other types of instruction;
- Research-based interventions, teaching strategies, or other methods that have been proven to be effective in addressing a student’s academic or behavioral problems that will help children learn;
- Progress monitoring a student’s progress in the general curriculum to see how well the student is doing on a specific skill;
- Following recommended state guidelines for making decisions about which students are making progress or responding to intervention.

**PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**What can I do as a parent?**
If your child is struggling in school, it is important that you:
- Ensure your child attends school daily.
- Communicate with your child’s teacher(s).
- Request help from the teacher early.
- Encourage your child to do well in school.
- Understand the assessments (tests) that your child takes.
- Monitor your child’s progress in school and at home with homework.
- Ask how you can help your child at home.
- Focus on what your child can do and build on that foundation.
- Collaborate with your child’s school.

**How can I tell if my child is struggling?**
Your child may be having difficulties in school if he or she shows any of the following:
- Lack of motivation, interest, or attention;
- Homework frustrations;
- Behavior problems;
- Slipping grades;
- Low self-esteem.

The RtI process provides different levels of support depending upon the needs of the child. At the core of RtI is high quality classroom instruction that is aligned to the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards.
RtI can be used at any grade level and provides teachers and schools a process for looking at student performance. By using data and progress monitoring, teachers and parents can understand how the student is doing compared to grade-level expectations. Keeping a student at or near grade level, from the first days of pre-school to the final days of high school, is essential to a student’s self-esteem and long-term success.

RtI provides an opportunity to identify students in need of additional classroom supports or special education services. Information and data gathered by an RTI process can lead to earlier identification of students who have true disabilities and are in need of special education services.

For students receiving special education services, RtI can help determine whether students are benefitting from those services.

**RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION ACTION: A THREE-TIER MODEL**

The Mississippi Department of Education requires all school districts to follow a model which consists of three (3) tiers of instruction.

At all stages of the process, teachers and school leaders use RtI to make the student more successful by following the student’s progress in academic and behavioral target areas.

**TIER I**
- All students receive high quality classroom instruction, supports for academic and behavior, and ongoing monitoring of progress.

**TIER II**
- All students receive high quality classroom instruction, supports for academic and behavior, and ongoing monitoring of progress.
- Students also receive supplemental instruction for identified skill deficits.
- Progress monitoring will take place.

**TIER III**
- All students receive high quality classroom instruction, supports for academic and behavior, and ongoing monitoring of progress.
- Students also receive intensive instruction for identified skill deficits.
- Progress monitoring will take place.
WHAT DOES THE RtI PROCESS LOOK LIKE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL?

As part of the Response to Intervention Process or MTSS, teachers have recommended documentation to collect to ensure appropriate interventions and supports are provided to your child. Outlined below is the process that the Mississippi Department of Education recommends districts follow.

**TIER I**
- Deliver high quality classroom instruction to all students, adjust instruction as needed, and assess student performance through assessments and screening. For students who continue to have difficulty, it is recommended that teachers move students to Phase II.

**PHASE I**
- Tier I: Deliver high quality classroom instruction to all students, adjust instruction as needed, and assess student performance through assessments and screening. For students who continue to have difficulty, it is recommended that teachers move students to Phase II.

**PHASE II**
- Tier II: Supplemental Instruction
  - Observation and documentation of the teacher delivering high quality classroom instruction will be observed by the principal.
  - Teachers complete a Student Profile with the following information: attendance, retention, current and past grades, behaviors exhibited, universal screener results, hearing and vision screener, along with any other data needed to help make instructional and behavioral decisions pertaining to your child’s supports.
  - Data will be reviewed by the teacher, and Tier II documentation will begin. The documentation will consist of the intervention that targets your child’s area of difficulty, how often the supplemental instruction/intervention is needed, and weekly progress monitoring checks.
  - Principals will observe and document that the supplemental instruction was provided with integrity and fidelity.
  - Parents should be notified that their child is receiving additional supports in Tier II.

**PHASE III**
- Tier II: Referral to Support Team
  - Based on progress or lack thereof, your child may be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST).
  - The TST will review all data and make recommendations such as: move to Tier III, continue on Tier II, return to Tier I and monitor, or refer for further assessment for special education services.
  - If recommendations for Tier III are made, they will include specific interventions made by the team.

**PHASE IV**
- Tier III: Intensive Intervention
  - Recommendations made by the TST will be followed.
  - Data will be reviewed by the teacher, and Tier III Interventions and documentation will begin.
  - Documentation will consist of the intervention that targets your child’s area of difficulty, how often the supplemental instruction/intervention is needed, and weekly progress monitoring checks.
  - Principals will observe and document that the intensive intervention was provided with integrity and fidelity.
  - Parents should be notified that their child is receiving additional supports in Tier III.
WHAT RtI IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

RtI is...

- Screening to monitor student performance in general curriculum.
- Scientifically proven interventions.
- Closely-monitored student progress.
- Decision-making based on student data.
- Accuracy and consistency (fidelity).
- Clear communication with parents.

RtI is not...

- General classroom instruction or assignments (more of the same).
- Classroom observations.
- Special or reassigned classroom seating.
- Shortened assignments.
- Suspension.
- Retention.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF RtI IS HELPING MY CHILD SUCCEED?

Another important part of RtI is progress monitoring.

Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to take a snapshot of how children are doing on a specific skill. It shows how well the extra support is working or if it needs to be changed. It includes observations, tests, and other assessments.

The guidelines for progress monitoring at your child's school should state how long a child will receive specific support and how they will determine whether the support is helping your child. When a student meets the goals developed by the school, the extra support is no longer needed and the child continues to receive regular support from his or her classroom teacher.

When progress monitoring shows that a student is not responding to the extra support, another strategy may be tried. However, if the Teacher Support Team (TST) determines a higher level of support is needed, a student may receive individual instruction that further focuses on supporting the skills the student needs to be a successful learner (Tier III).
WHAT IF I THINK MY CHILD NEEDS SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

RtI does not replace the special education process. If at any time you believe your child needs special education services, you have the right to ask for an evaluation. RtI cannot be used to delay or deny that evaluation. If a student is not making progress in the RtI process at Tier III, a comprehensive evaluation for special education services may be recommended by the Teacher Support Team (TST).

Ask for a formal evaluation for special education if you suspect your child has a disability.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK MY CHILD’S SCHOOL?

☐ Is the curriculum (core classroom instruction) meeting the needs of my child?
☐ Is my child currently in the tier process? If so, at which level?
☐ What are the extra support strategies that my child’s school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?
☐ What have you identified as the area that my child is struggling in or needs additional support?
☐ What are you currently providing to meet those areas of deficiencies?
☐ How are you progress monitoring their growth?
☐ Is my child making progress?
☐ How will I be informed of the progress my child is making?
☐ If my child is not making progress, what are you going to do differently?
☐ What can I do at home to support my child in this process?

Parents play an important role in the success of their student at school. Research shows that the more parents are involved in student learning, the higher the student’s success.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
**Curriculum:** the focus of a course of study; includes the goals and expectations for teaching and learning in a subject

**Fidelity:** the accuracy and consistency of an intervention compared to how it was intended to be delivered

**Intervention:** an additional support and opportunity for students to master the goals of the course or grade level; often involves short-term support in a small group or one-on-one setting

**Progress Monitoring:** the use of student results and data to determine if an intervention is successful; involves regular checks on the extra support provided and is used by schools to determine if a student needs more or less support

**Response to Intervention:** the practice of using data and research-based strategies to meet the needs of all learners; can be used to provide early, effective support in both academic and behavioral areas

**Screening:** a short assessment or procedure used to identify a particular set of knowledge, skills, or ability gaps in students

**Teacher Support Team (TST):** a problem-solving group of teachers and school leaders responsible for interventions at Tier III; is a requirement for each school to have a TST

**NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

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**National Association of State Directors of Special Education**
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Adapted from: “A Parent’s Guide to Response to Intervention” by National Center for Learning Disabilities; “A Family Guide to Response to Intervention (RtI)” by Parent Information Center of NH; and State Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 41: Interventions (previously State Board Policy 4300), Mississippi Department of Education