

Regular Board Meeting – April 20, 2010

**SUBJECT:      RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION AND STANDARDS IN PRACTICE**

**OVERVIEW**

Increased student learning requires the consistent practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs. Response to Intervention (RtI) is a general education initiative which requires collaborative efforts among general education teachers, special education and ELL teachers, special services personnel, and instructional support staff. Student academic and behavioral needs are identified and monitored continuously with student performance data to make instructional decisions. By the school year 2010-11, documentation of the RtI process must be a part of the evaluation process for students when a specific learning disability (SLD) is suspected. The previously used model of identifying a discrepancy between IQ and achievement and a processing deficit may no longer be used, but a district may use other tools and procedures as part of the evaluation process. District 68 has prepared to meet the requirements of this law through professional development in the areas of problem solving, assessment, data analysis, and lesson study using a *Standards in Practice (SIP)* model. The goal is to improve our response to student needs so that optimal academic and behavioral growth may occur for all students.

**RtI Components**

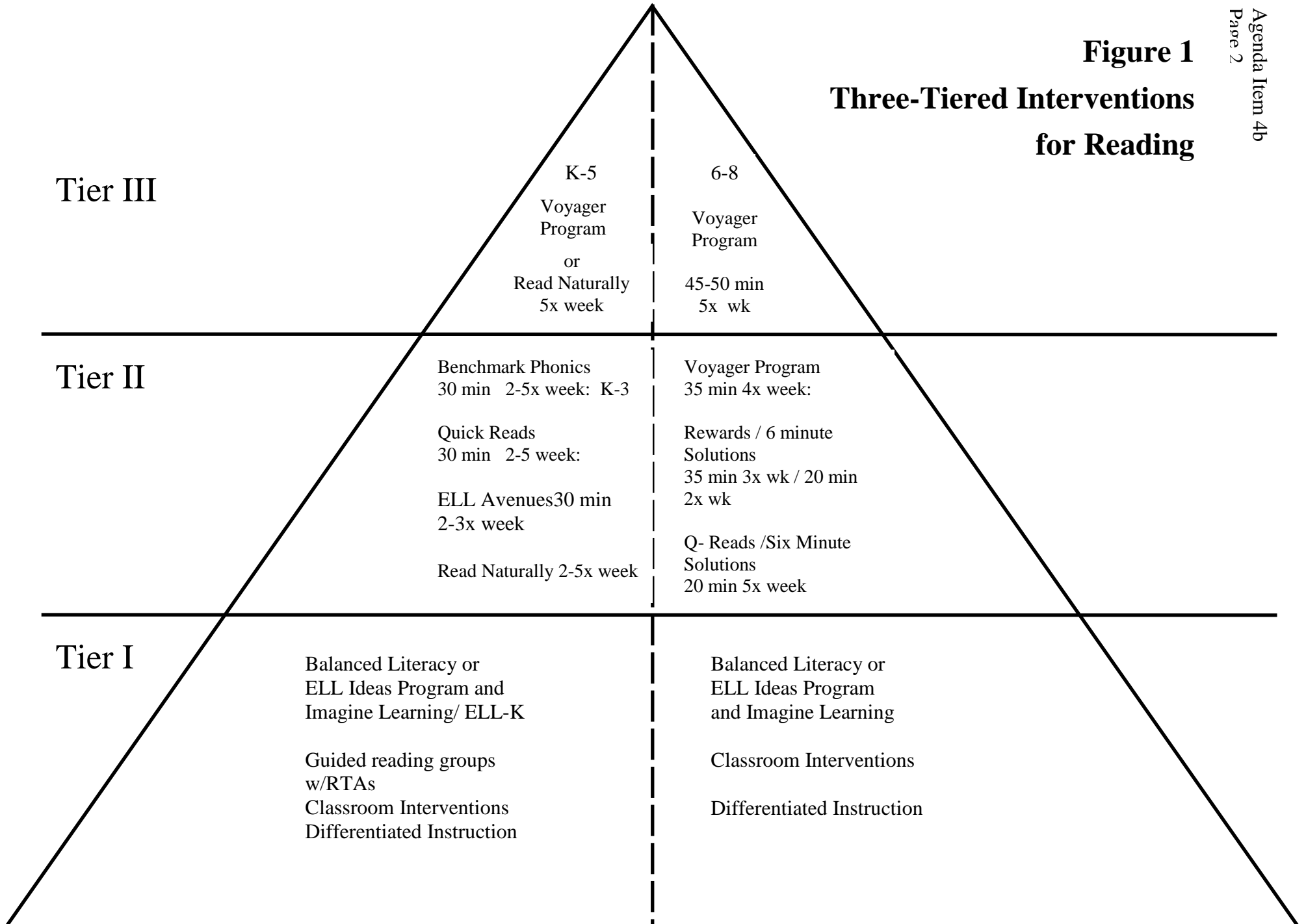
RtI models have three essential components: 1) use of a tiered model of support; 2) use of a problem-solving method for decision making; and 3) the use of an integrated data system which informs instruction. The components lead to the use of differentiated instructional strategies for all learners, provide all learners with research-based interventions, require progress monitoring instruments for measurement, and lead educators to make decisions based upon a student's response to the interventions provided.

**Three-Tier Model of Support**

The typical RtI framework is depicted in a three-tier model which uses increasingly more intense instruction and interventions. Tier I is the foundation designed for all students in the general curriculum and consists of scientific, research-based instructional and behavioral methodologies including preventative, proactive interventions available to all students. Tier II includes supplemental instruction and interventions in addition to core instruction provided to students when additional instructional support is necessary. Tier III adds even more intense instructional interventions provided to the core with the goal of increasing the student's rate of progress.

Figure 1 represents the three-tiered model of school support for students in reading in District 68 for grades K-5 on the left and grades 6-8 on the right. The most common interventions are enumerated.

**Figure 1**  
**Three-Tiered Interventions**  
**for Reading**



Tier III

Tier II

Tier I

K-5

6-8

Voyager  
Program

Voyager  
Program

or

Read Naturally  
5x week

45-50 min  
5x wk

Benchmark Phonics  
30 min 2-5x week: K-3

Voyager Program  
35 min 4x week:

Quick Reads  
30 min 2-5 week:

Rewards / 6 minute  
Solutions  
35 min 3x wk / 20 min  
2x wk

ELL Avenues 30 min  
2-3x week

Read Naturally 2-5x week

Q- Reads /Six Minute  
Solutions  
20 min 5x week

Balanced Literacy or  
ELL Ideas Program and  
Imagine Learning/ ELL-K

Balanced Literacy or  
ELL Ideas Program  
and Imagine Learning

Guided reading groups  
w/RTAs  
Classroom Interventions  
Differentiated Instruction

Classroom Interventions  
  
Differentiated Instruction

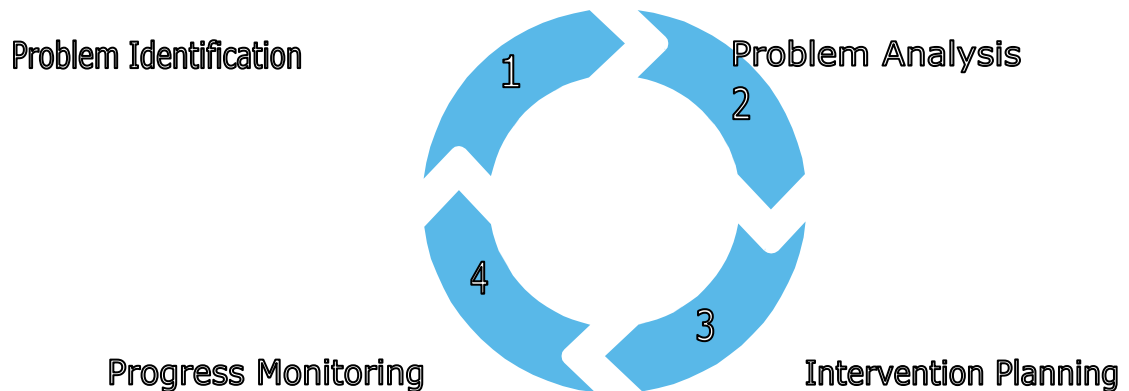
When a general curriculum is effective and robust, the needs of approximately 80% of the student population are met in Tier I. Based upon the trends seen in fall and winter AIMSWeb reading scores, we are approaching this target in every grade.

Targeted interventions are selectively offered in Tier II, primarily in small groups, which serve 5-20% of the student population. During the current school year, students served in the fall and the winter in District 68 fell within this range. Tier III includes intensive and sometimes individual interventions with approximately 5-10% of students.

### **Problem Solving Method of Decision-Making**

Over the past two years, teachers have attended professional development workshops offered by NTDSE to learn a specific problem-solving methodology. The decisions made during problem-solving lead to a better match of instructional resources to educational needs. Figure 2 illustrates the steps in problem solving.

Figure 2  
Steps of Problem Solving



In the first step, the members of the problem-solving team define the problem by investigating the difference between what is expected and what is happening. Once this is established, the team moves to analyzing the problem using data to ascertain why the difference is occurring. The third step involves developing a student goal, a plan to address the goal, and how the progress of the student will be monitored. Finally, data is collected and monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. Teachers have been meeting monthly (or more frequently) as grade level teams K-8 to use this process to better meet the needs of students. Problem-solving can occur for both academic and behavioral concerns.

### **Progress Monitoring and Data Collection**

All students in District 68 are monitored in reading three times each year using AIMSWeb, a universal screener, in areas of reading such as oral fluency. In Tier I, data from the universal screener are used to determine the effectiveness of the general core practices of instruction and aides the identification of students needing intervention. Those placed in Tier II interventions are monitored more often, usually every two weeks, to determine the effectiveness of the intervention being received. Based on the data, this may result in a continuation of the same intervention, a change in intervention, or an exit from Tier II intervention. Over time, weekly or monthly progress is compared with other measures of achievement, such as the MAP or ISAT data, to determine how the growth in skills transfers to other state and district measurements and expectations. An examination of data in K-8 after the winter AIMSWeb probes were administered indicated that those receiving Tier II interventions were making progress in relation to their targeted expectations and that particular research-based programs we have added to the curriculum, including Voyager and Q-reads, are producing solid improvement.

### **Special Education Eligibility Considerations**

During the RtI process, teams use student progress data collected at each tier to verify how a student is responding to researched-base interventions as part of the evaluation process in order to consider eligibility for special education services. Eligibility decisions customarily occur when a student is in Tier III and is not responding to the most intensive interventions. A social worker, speech pathologist, principal, or psychologist may join the problem solving group during Tier II or Tier III interventions to assist with developing other interventions before any special education determination is made.

### **Lesson Study**

In the tiered model that has come to represent the RtI process, a strong general curriculum is the foundation for successful student achievement. Each curricular content area has been revised on the basis of best practice in the last ten years. When a district is achieving between 70%- 85% of students meeting or exceeding the state standards, the foundation is strong. When the curriculum is not reaching one or more sub-groups, however, there is reason to be concerned. Professional development for teachers using a model that would enhance our research-based curriculum was sought. We selected the Education Trust's Standards in Practice (SIP) Model, which is noted for examining the academic achievement of historically low-performing groups such as African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students in order to close the achievement gap.

The *Standards in Practice (SIP)* protocol examines the core assignments given to students. Teachers examine their lessons for rigor and alignment with standards and measure whether their students have the skills and knowledge to demonstrate proficiency. Teachers work in

teams to examine student work based on a rubric and set of expectations which the team developed. A “Know and Don’t Know” chart is created to pinpoint areas mastered and those causing difficulty. This step is followed by a plan developed by the group to target the yet unlearned skills and knowledge.

For the past two years, teachers in grades K-8 used the SIP protocol for lesson study and worked with consultants from Education Trust. After feedback was collected from our teachers in February, a decision was made to suspend the formal SIP process. A summary of the feedback from the teachers indicated that it assisted them in knowing the standards, aligning lessons with standards, seeking the right level of rigor aligned with the standards, and collaborating with colleagues on expectations and rubrics. However, the feedback also indicated that for many of our teachers, the SIP process was done too often, the process was too time-consuming and rigid, it was not impacting instruction the next day, the purpose of SIP was not clear, and knowing which lessons to “SIP” was problematic. A K-8 leadership meeting was held in April with teachers and administrators to provide more context for on-going initiatives in the district focusing on the development of goals, the creation of common formative and summative assessments with analysis of student work, the recording and monitoring of data, and the purpose of professional learning communities to improve student achievement. This group will continue to work together as planning for the 2010-11 school year continues.

### **Summary**

RtI requires teams to work together to plan, implement, monitor, analyze, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all children in the district. Just as District 68 has relied on learning, analyzing, and judiciously selecting best practices based on research for its curriculum revisions, the same care will be taken to identify effective instructional practices to increase student achievement. The steps will include alignment with the performance goals of the District 68 Performance Scorecard and will include working as professional learning communities to 1) analyze data, 2) problem-solve, and 3) develop common assessments to meet the needs of all our students.