

Problem Solving Overview

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws both require the use of research based instruction and interventions. In Illinois a problem-solving model must be implemented to evaluate student responses to research based interventions. **Response to Intervention**, also known as a multi-tiered system of supports, is often abbreviated and referred to as RTI/MTSS. A problem-solving model is a systematic and **data-driven** method for determining the degree to which a student has responded to interventions. Services should intensify for a student as the student's response to the intervention is below expectations. The problem-solving model is an initiative that supports general education school improvement goals. It is intended to help as many students as possible to meet proficiency standards without special education. The model is applicable to academic and behavioral issues.

In the typical paradigm, there are three levels of interventions that are referred to as Tiers. The descriptions of each Tier are described below. These tiers are viewed as a continuum of services where Tier 1 is the least intense, while Tier 3 involves the most intense interventions.

Tier 1 is the delivery of a Scientifically Based Core Program within the general educational setting. Universal screening will determine the students that may be at risk in comparison to the identified district benchmarks for each of the subject areas. Screening should be quick but accurate and completed at least three times a year to monitor student progress. All students receive instruction within Tier 1 in the general education classroom which may include core group interventions (a specific skill-building strategy implemented and monitored to increase student skill in a specific area) designed to promote student to progress at a sufficient rate. When the core program is delivered with fidelity, intensity, passion, and with necessary, appropriate, and practical accommodations (change made in the student's environment, requirements, consequences for behaviors and /or resources to help the student be more successful) it should meet the needs of 80% of the students within the grade level subject area.

Tier 2 is delivered to those students which have been identified to be at risk of failure through the universal screening tool. Students identified for Tier 2 will receive supplemental instruction using targeted interventions, either within the classroom or in an alternate site, in addition to the instruction received in Tier 1. This supplemental instruction will include **MORE** time, explicit teacher-led instruction, scaffold instruction, opportunities to respond with corrective feedback, language support, intensive motivational strategies, and frequent progress monitoring in order for students to decrease the performance gap in comparison to Tier 1 peers. Once the progress monitoring data indicates a student has made sufficient progress toward benchmarks, a decision could be made that the student no longer requires Tier 2 supplemental interventions but Tier 1 instruction will continue. Research indicates that approximately 15% of the students will be in Tier 2.

Tier 3 is designed for students who, through progress monitoring data, do not show significant improvement in their identified deficit area(s) when presented with various Tier 2 interventions. Tier 3 students will receive intensive, individualized targeted interventions in an alternate location. This is in addition to Tier 2 supplemental and Tier 1 core instruction. This intensive instruction will include the **MOST** time, explicit teacher-led instruction, scaffold instruction, opportunities to respond with corrective feedback, language support, motivational strategies, and frequent progress monitoring in order for students to decrease the performance gap in comparison to Tier 1 peers. Approximately 5 % of students will require the intensity of Tier 3 interventions (which translates to 1.25 students for a class of 25 students).

The tiered model is intended to be a fluid system that promotes the movement of students from one tier to another as indicated by the data. Each district plan will dictate when a request for evaluation of possible special education needs should be considered. Specific Learning Disability eligibility should be considered when a student is progressing at a significantly slower rate than peers, when performance is significantly below peers/standards, and when student's needs are of an intensity that exceeds resources of general education. When considering eligibility, please refer to the **Prior to Request for Evaluation** section of the BHASED manual. Districts may elect to use these forms or create their own.

“Rather than devoting extensive resources to finding out whether students have disabilities, we should devote those resources to assessing students’ exact instructional needs using models like Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Support. Schools will need to provide instruction through collaboration between general and special education personnel to ensure that all students continue to have full access to the general education curriculum... let’s teach the children what they need to know.” (Harry Klinger, Educational Leadership)