Ch. 2: Systems Change

MDCPS
Office of Academics, Accountability & School Improvement
2013-2014

SYSTEMS CHANGE

Getting started: RtI/MTSS Leadership Team & School Staff

Although a school may have a comprehensive and strategic RtI/MTSS plan for data based problem solving, it is not, by itself, sufficient for successful implementation.

Prior to the start of the school year, the RtI/MTSS Leadership team must be established as outlined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This team consists of administrators, teachers, curriculum leaders, coaches, special area teachers etc.

Implementation of Problem Solving within an RtI/MTSS framework requires that all school staff (i.e. teachers, principals, student services personnel, etc.), change the way in which they have traditionally functioned. This change necessitates development of the motivation and capacities of educators to work collaboratively toward a common goal (Hargreaves, 1997). Because of the broad impact of the RtI/MTSS model on the entire educational system, significant systemic changes will need to occur to implement with fidelity. These changes must be championed and monitored by leaders at all levels.

To succeed where other reform efforts have failed, it is critical that systems change principles be applied to facilitate implementation of new practices, including problem solving and RtI/MTSS practices. Schools must devote time for implementation and maintenance of the PS/RtI model: time for data chats, for problem solving team meetings, and for development of action plans that identify continued training needs.

The information below on the three components of the change model is compiled from "*Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Evaluation Tool Technical Assistance Manual Revised, Florida Statewide Problem Solving & Response to Intervention Project*". The reader is asked to visit the following website for more detailed information: http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/index.html

The PS/RtI model described in this section involves three stages: **Consensus Development**, *Infrastructure Building*, and *Implementation* (Batsche, Curtis, Dorman, Castillo, & Porter, 2007; Kurns & Tilly, 2008). This change model fosters the development of consensus among key stakeholders in the school or district who are responsible for utilizing problem solving RtI/MTSS practices, the establishment of the necessary infrastructure to support and sustain successful implementation. A brief description of each of the three components of the change model is provided below.
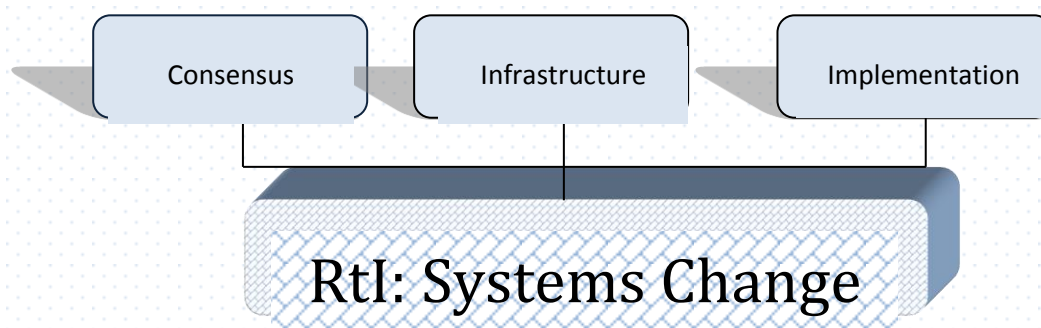
Consensus Development

A fundamental principle of engaging in educational systems change is the development of consensus among key stakeholders in a school (e.g., principal, teachers, instructional support personnel, student services personnel) regarding the implementation of any new initiative (Curtis et al, 2008; Hall & Hord, 2006). Curtis et al. suggest that a commitment from the majority of stakeholders (80% is often suggested but is not universally agreed upon) in a building should be obtained before proceeding with implementation of new practices. Because the level of commitment from school personnel regarding the new initiative will likely impact the extent to which implementation occurs, it is necessary to evaluate factors that may impact educator buy-in. Educators will typically embrace new practices when they (1) understand the need for the change, and (2) believe they either have the necessary skills to implement the initiative or will receive the support required to develop the skills.

For consensus development, it is imperative that educators engage in discussions that focus on exploring common beliefs regarding the nature of student learning, as well as the validity and usefulness of traditional assessment and intervention practices in schools.

Given that education is a dynamic system in which both internal (e.g., student demographics, district goals, staff turnover) and external (e.g., legislation, funding, and policy) pressures are continually evolving, the level of consensus and support for an initiative must constantly be evaluated and systematically targeted. Thus, achieving stakeholder buy-in must not be thought of as a one-time event. Rather, communication with staff, the provision of professional development, and evaluation of efforts to build consensus must be ongoing, planned activities that inform implementation efforts.

Research suggests that an educator's beliefs about student learning and in-structional strategies impact whether they are willing to implement new practices. Foundational beliefs espoused by proponents of the PS/RtI model include but are not limited to:

- Every student is everybody's responsibility
- RtI/MTSS is a General Education initiative, not Special Education
- Improving the effectiveness of core instruction is basic to the RtI/MTSS process
- No Child Left Behind really means "NO"
- Assessment data should both inform and evaluate the impact of instruction
- Policies must be consistent with beliefs

Administrators must prioritize resource allocation to support the effort, as well as staff development on the philosophical underpinnings of RtI.

For successful implementation and consistency of the RtI model it is imperative that staff development focus on the philosophy of RtI.

Efforts to build consensus must be ongoing

- Beliefs must be supported by research
- Focus on alterable variables when examining barrier to learning (Batsche et al.,2005)

Implementation of the problem solving within RtI/MTSS begins with the establishment and facilitation of the RtI/MTSS leadership team as outlined in the School's Improvement Plan (SIP). The principal clarifies the roles and responsibilities of individual team members to ensure the efficient deployment of personnel. This provides the team with a framework from which to begin their collaborative relationship.

Below are descriptors and examples of some roles each stakeholder will assume:

PRINCIPAL/Assistant Principal

Data Collection	Analysis	Interventions	Instructional Strategies	Assessment
Facilitates problem solving through the use of school wide data to guide instructional decisions. Ensures teacher commitment to use data to monitor student progress Conducts on-going classroom walkthroughs	Facilitates and secures school's faculty commitment to conduct ongoing systemic review of academic and behavior data. Actively leads the RtI team through data analysis meetings/instructional implications. Ensures weekly team meetings, and creating a master schedule to facilitate the data meetings.	Guides school-wide planning of interventions for students based on data. Plans data analysis PD for staff based on data.	Have thorough knowledge of the 4-step RtI problem solving process. Understand support needed at all 3 Tiers of RtI. Supports needs of instructional coaches & teachers to ensure that differentiated instruction is provided based on student data. Make decisions regarding professional development for staff in instructional/ intervention needs. Collaborate with parents in understanding the RtI process and providing resources/support to continue the learning process outside of school.	Sets up school wide systems for Tier 1, 2, 3 data collections. Continue classroom walkthroughs to track & support implementation of instruction/ intervention based on data.

RtI Curriculum Support Specialist

Data Collection	Analysis	Interventions	Instructional Strategies	Assessment
Guide schools in completing self-assessment survey (SAPSI) to determine level of RtI implementation as well as the perceptions and skills needed in implementing RtI practices. Completes the Tier I & II critical component checklists at school sites, for district determination of level of school support needed. Conducts walkthroughs to support classroom teachers in ensuring data is driving instruction Supports schools' data collection, management, and usage systems for Tier 1,2, 3 Ensure that a fidelity monitoring system is in place at all tiers.	Participate and support data analysis meetings by reviewing grade level, classroom, group & student data reports with RtI team. Assess progress and determine adjustments to the Tier 1, 2, 3 plans. Assists schools in determining staff PD needed to sustain/accelerate student progress.	Assists with scheduling of interventions based on Tier I & II data. Support implementation of interventions and provide feedback to teachers, coaches and interventionists, so adjustments can be made to support student needs.	Have thorough knowledge of the 4-step RtI problem solving process. Understand support needed at all 3 Tiers of RtI. Coach teachers during/after DI instruction, and interventionists during/after intervention sessions in ensuring that the curriculum and instructional strategies are aligned to data. Support teachers during lesson planning specifically in the area of differentiated instruction. Guide teachers in choosing rigorous supported instructional resources based on data. Provide PD as needed to support instruction or interventions. Guide teachers in forming and re-forming flexible small groups based on mastery of skills. Provides follow up support to teachers from reviews of OPM	Guide school teams in data meetings at each of the 3 AP periods. Support instructional coaches/teachers in their choice of OPM measures to ensure correct fit and sensitivity in reflecting true student growth.

Instructional Coach

Data Collection	Analysis	Interventions	Instructional Strategies	Assessment
Works with the RtI leadership team in setting up a structure for collecting Tier 1, 2, 3 data.	Guides data analysis process at the school, grade, classroom and student level. Ensures that small group needs are aligned to data. Supports teachers in targeting laser like instruction based on data. Assists with the selection and access to resources for differentiated instruction. Coordinates the formative progress monitoring of DI groups to drive instruction along a continuum of support.	Assists team in forming intervention groups based on data. Designs schedules, assigns staff, and institutes a system to ensure that intervention is taking place with fidelity. Works with the RtI team in creating intervention plans at each tier of support. Guide RtI team in selecting appropriate interventions for identified students. Provides PD to teachers/interventionists based on their knowledge and/or skills deficits.	Have thorough knowledge of the 4-step RtI problem solving process. Understand support needed at all 3 Tiers of RtI. Attend District provided monthly coaching meetings and PD, in order to be current with expectations and strategies needed to move students closer to the standards. Provide coaching support, and use the coaching continuum to model research based instructional strategies to teachers based on assessment data Models research based instructional strategies and interventions by co-teaching as necessary. Demonstrate differentiated instructional strategies during DI sessions to build capacity for teachers based on assessment data. Assists in establishing flexible small group instruction for identified students. Ensures that instructional implications for Tier I DI are based on continuous formative data.	Assists RtI leadership team in coordinating the administration of FAIR/identified District assessments, so as to yield valid data. Provides PD to interventionists as needed.

School Psychologist

Data Collection	Analysis	Interventions	Instructional Strategies	Assessment
Participate in the data collection of Ongoing Progress Monitoring at Tier II & III Conducts & collects additional diagnostic assessments data as needed.	Participates in data analysis of meetings at all Tiers of support, and at the school, grade, classroom, and student level. Determines intervention needed at Tier II & III, and/or the need for a referral to the School Support Team (SST) based on data.	Coordinates interventions with the RtI leadership team. From Tier II data, identify students in need of Tier III support/ SST Facilitates SST process.	Have thorough knowledge of the 4-step RtI problem solving process. Understand support needed at all 3 Tiers of RtI. Have familiar understanding of the skills, competencies and standards of each grade level in order to guide problem solving meetings at Tier II and Tier III. Engages in collection of student data on level of engagement and behavior during classroom observations as needed.	Coordinates the administration of ongoing progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments. Reviews other pertinent student data (e.g., attendance, ESOL levels, behavior referrals). Assesses PD needs for behavior and social emotional support

Teachers

Data Collection	Analysis	Interventions	Instructional Strategies	Assessment
Be knowledgeable in accessing/interpreting data reports at each AP/interim assessment period to drive Tier I & Tier II instruction. Use on going formative assessments to drive small group instruction and keep groups fluid as student master skills along a continuum Examines Ongoing Progress Monitoring data with support of	Participate in data analysis meetings to determine Tier I supports. Follows the Tier I plan as designed with the RtI team. Keep fidelity to the plan.	Work with the RtI leadership team to choose the intervention that will yield valid and reliable data. Assists in the design of the Tier II plan for students. Conducts on going articulation with interventionists/RtI team to ensure that Tier II supports are having a positive impact on Tier I instruction.	Have thorough knowledge of the 4-step RtI problem solving process. Understand support needed at all 3 Tiers of RtI. Seek and attend PD based on self-assessment as well as driven by student data. Implements research based curriculum with fidelity. Uses differentiated & aligned instructional strategies/best	Supports the assessment process at each AP/district interim so that the data gathered is valid and reliable. Assists in conducting Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM) assessments as needed. Analyses the

the RtI team to align Tier I & II supports.		Provide targeted & aligned instruction/ interventions based on data.	practices based on need of groups.	data from formative, OPM, and outcomes assessments to drive targeted instruction.

Interventionist

Data Collection	Analysis	Interventions	Instructional Strategies	Assessment
Collects and store data from Ongoing Progress Monitoring & formative assessments in a Tier II data management system set up by the RtI team. Collects and store attendance data as set up in the Tier II plan. Review data with RtI leadership team as well as classroom teachers and follow adjustments to the Tier II plan.	Makes recommendations to RtI team regarding rate of progress of students based on Ongoing Progress Monitoring data. Observes student progress/behaviors during intervention sessions and engage in on-going articulation with classroom teacher/instructional coaches.	Works with Tier II intervention groups to deliver small-group targeted & responsive interventions. Ensures that a clear behavior management system is in place during intervention sessions.	Have fair knowledge of the 4-step RtI problem solving process. Understand support needed at Tier II. Participates in as needed PD based on the chosen intervention program. Conducts targeted and rigorous instruction while using the intervention program with fidelity Ensures that immediate corrective feedback is provided to students during intervention sessions. Ensure that re-teaching occurs for skills not mastered.	Conducts formative ongoing skills assessments, as well as Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM).

*Because of the broad impact of the RtI Model and its impact on the entire educational system, **significant** system changes will need to occur to execute implementation with fidelity.*

Additionally, schools have several tools that can be utilized for examining consensus development at their school sites. These tools were developed by the University of South Florida and the Florida Department of education, and can be accessed by visiting the Florida Problem Solving & Response to Intervention Project website http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/index.html for additional information or refer to the PS/RTI Evaluation Tool, Technical Assistance Manual Revised

 http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/program_evaluation/ta_manual_revised2012/ta_manual_revised2012.pdf

Infrastructure Development

The development of infrastructure involves creating the necessary structures to facilitate and support implementation of the problem solving within an RtI/MTSS model. Schools have finite resources (i.e., time, personnel, funding, materials, technology) to invest in new practices. A school must examine its current goals, policies, resources, and personnel responsibilities with regard to their alignment within an RtI/MTSS model of service delivery. The following are common examples of structures schools must consider addressing to enhance their capacity to implement RtI/MTSS practices (Kurns & Tilly, 2008):

- Scheduling regular consistent problem solving meetings to discuss RtI/MTSS practices
- Creating and modifying structural schedules based on on-going monitoring data
- Providing on-going PD on the RtI/MTSS framework
- Allocating resources to be used in Tier I, II & III
- Developing and adopting technology to facilitate efficient data collection and graphical display of data that is useful to teachers and parents when making decisions about student progress

This is not an exhaustive list of examples; however, the extent to which schools will need to target infrastructure components depends upon the unique characteristics of each school site. Although some progress toward RtI/MTSS implementation can occur while consensus and infrastructure issues are addressed, successful implementation cannot occur without providing ongoing, high quality professional development (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Tools for examining infrastructure development can be found in Ch. 3 of the FloridaProblem Solving/Response to Intervention Evaluation Tool, Technical Assistance Manual-Revised http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/program_evaluation/ta_manual_revised2012/ta_manual_revised2012.pdf

Implementation

Although the likelihood of implementation of RtI/MTSS processes is enhanced when consensus and infrastructure development occurs, providing opportunities for implementation does not automatically ensure that these practices will be adopted. Sarason (1990) purports that many educational reform initiatives fail due to a lack of implementation, suggesting a need to evaluate the extent to which critical components of RtI/MTSS are being implemented with integrity prior to making decisions regarding the model's impact on student outcomes.

The big idea behind implementation is that administrators must evaluate the extent to which components of the intervention/instructional plan are implemented prior to evaluating outcomes. For the purpose of this manual, the term implementation integrity is used to describe the extent to which RtI/MTSS practices are implemented the way it was designed in schools.

Along with identifying and evaluating staff buy-in the RtI Leadership team must also continue to monitor progress toward full RtI/MTSS implementation.

The MDCPS RtI/MTSS evaluation plan requires schools to use the following 2 tools for monitoring their progress toward full implementation of the RtI/MTSS model. These tools were developed by The University of South Florida and are described below:

Tool #1: *Self-Assessment of Problem Solving-Implementation (SAPSI).*

The SAPSI is a highly researched and validated tool. It is a self-report containing 27 items aimed at asking questions built around the systems change model (i.e. consensus, infrastructure & implementation). This survey is used in monitoring progress toward full RtI/MTSS implementation by schools.

Schools must devote time to the implementation and maintenance of the RtI Model

(Data dialogues, PS team meetings, action plan for continued training needs)

Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation (SAPSI)*

PS/RtI Implementation Assessment

Directions:
In responding to each item below, please use the following response scale:

Not Started (N) — (The activity occurs less than 24% of the time)
In Progress (I) — (The activity occurs approximately 25% to 74% of the time)
Achieved (A) — (The activity occurs approximately 75% to 100% of the time)
Maintaining (M) — (The activity was rated as achieved last time and continues to occur approximately 75% to 100% of the time)

For each item below, please write the letter of the option (N, I, A, M) that best represents your School-Based Leadership Team's response in the column labeled "Status". In the column labeled "Comments/Evidence", please write any comments, explanations and/or evidence that are relevant to your team's response. When completing the items on the SAPSI, the team should base its responses on the grade levels being targeted for implementation by the school.

Consensus: *Comprehensive Commitment and Support*	Status	Comments/Evidence
1. District level leadership provides active commitment and support (e.g., meets to review data and issues at least twice each year).		
2. The school leadership provides training, support and active involvement (e.g., principal is actively involved in School-Based Leadership Team meetings).		
3. Faculty/staff support and are actively involved with problem solving/RtI (e.g., one of top 3 goals of the School Improvement Plan, 80% of faculty document support, 3-year timeline for implementation available).		

Figure 3: Section of SAPSI (Consensus)
http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/program_evaluation/ta_manual_revised2012/ta_manual_revised2012.pdf

Tool # 2: Critical Component Checklist

The Critical Components Checklist is a tool used for examining the integrity of RtI/MTSS. This integrity measure assesses the extent to which schools are implementing the critical components of the problem-solving process during their data meetings addressing Tier I (core instruction) and/or Tier II (small group instruction/intervention) and/or Tier III (individual student instruction/ intervention).

The checklist is completed by a trained reviewer who indicates the extent to which the components of the RtI/MTSS model are evident in permanent products (i.e. documentation such as charts/graphs, meeting notes, meeting worksheets). The instrument for Tier I & II contains 11 items (16 items in Tier III checklist) that examine the extent to which each of the 4-step problem solving process are evident, and can be applied to academic or behavior content areas.

Tiers I and II Critical Components Checklist

School: _____   Target Area: ☐ Reading ☐ Math ☐ Behavior

Window: ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   Grade Level (if applicable): _____

Directions: For each selected target area and grade-level, please use the scale provided to indicate the degree to which each critical component of a Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) model is present in paperwork (i.e., permanent products) derived from data meetings (i.e., meetings in which the PS/RtI model is used to examine Tier I and/or II instruction). See the attached rubric for the criteria for determining the degree to which each critical component is present in the paperwork.

Component	0 = Absent 1 = Partially Present 2 = Present N/A = Not Applicable	Evidence/Comments
Problem Identification		
1. Data were used to determine the effectiveness of core instruction	0 1 2	
2. Decisions were made to modify core instruction or to develop supplemental (Tier II) interventions	0 1 2	
3. Universal screening (e.g., DIBELS, ODRs) or other data sources (e.g., district-wide assessments) were used to identify groups of	0 1 2	

Figure 3 Critical Component Checklist
http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/program_evaluation/ta_manual_revised2012/sections/tier1_2ccc.pdf

In a nutshell, consensus development is one of the most important steps for RtI/MTSS implementation. The utilization of the Critical Component Checklist together with the SAPSI is a powerful combination to guide implementation at the school site. Additional tools are recommended and can be found in the PS/RtI Technical Assistance Manual http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/resources/program_evaluation/ta_manual_revised2012/ta_manual_revised2012.pdf.

Leadership is critical for effective implementation of RtI/MTSS.

The success of RtI/MTSS will be determined, to a great extent, by the degree to which school leaders are able to shift the focus from philosophical understanding to actual practice.