Trying to Get Them to Drink: School Change, RTI, and Identification of SLD
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Acknowledgements
• Many thanks to all colleagues working around the country who have generously offered to share their knowledge so that all may learn.
• Specific thanks to:
  – Joe Kovaleski, Professor, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
  – Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network
  – Barbara Slaga, St. Lucie Schools, Florida

Key Points
• Elaboration of key elements for RTI implementation
• Brief review of model of SLD Determination in Pennsylvania
• Handling the PSW question
• Lessons Learned in PA – the evaluation data
• National trek to RTI

Consensus Building: District
1. Analysis of how existing policies support RtI
2. Analysis of which policies must be modified to incorporate PSM/RtI
3. Analysis of how RtI concepts interface with currently existing initiatives within district
   – Positive Behavior Support
   – Early Intervening Services

Stages of RtI Implementation
I. Consensus Building
II. Infrastructure Development
III. Implementation

Consensus Building: District
4. Analysis of how to fit PSM/RtI into district school improvement framework
5. Critical stakeholders have been identified
   – General Education
   – Special Education
   – Student Services
   – Administration
   – Parents
NASDSE Blueprint: School Level

- Consensus Building
  - Action 1: Provide information and coordinate with district administration
  - Action 2: Provide information to school staff and others about RtI
  - Action 3: Identify consensus level among staff necessary for implementing RtI.
  - Action 4: Determine next steps.
  - Action 5: Plan to support change initiative.

Stages of RtI Implementation

I. Consensus Building
II. Infrastructure Development
III. Implementation

NASDE, 2006

Infrastructure Development: District

- District policies/procedures clearly define how to implement problem-solving/RtI
- Data management systems are developed to support RtI implementation
- Existing Federal, State, and District initiatives are re-examined and integrated to support RtI
- Connections are made with existing RtI-related initiatives (e.g., Reading First)
- District develops clear plan to support RtI implementation via professional development and technical assistance

Infrastructure Development: School

- Infrastructure developed by leadership team answering a series of questions regarding instructional programs
- Address building-specific scheduling and resource needs
- May need building-specific professional development

The 10 Basic Questions

- Q1: Is our core program sufficient?
- Q2: If the core program is not sufficient, what led to this?
- Q3: How will the needs identified in the core program be addressed?
- Q4: How will the sufficiency and effectiveness of the core program be monitored?
- Q5: Have improvements to the core program been effective?
The 10 Basic Questions

- Question 6: For which students is the core instruction sufficient or not sufficient? Why or why not?
- Q7: What specific supplemental and intensive instructions are needed?
- Question 8: How will specific supplemental and intensive instruction be delivered?
- Question 9: How will the effectiveness of supplemental and intensive instruction be delivered?
- Question 10: How will you determine which students need to move to a different level of instruction?

The Third Leg: Implementation

- Without careful implementation, the best laid plans can go astray!

- National Implementation Research Network

The third leg: Implementation

- Implementation has two discrete parts -
  - Discriminate implementation outcomes
    - Are they doing the program as intended
    - Implementation effectiveness
      - Yes, they are, and it is/is not resulting in good outcomes
    - Only when effective practices and programs are fully implemented should we expect positive outcomes

Implementation: District

- The district has a multi year implementation and professional development plan to provide ongoing sustained support for RtI
- The district has an evaluation plan to assess the impact of RtI on student, building, district, and personnel outcomes.

Implementation: School

- Professional development and ongoing supports for those conducting assessments and those providing instruction
- Implement logistics of assessments and periodic data analysis
- Implement logistics of core, supplemental and intensive instruction
- Monitor implementation of instruction/intervention
  - School-based “coaches”
- Adjust as needed

Example of the Process: Overlook Elementary Abington School District Abington, PA
School Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K-6 Enrollment</th>
<th>401</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Free/Reduced</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient on Reading PSSA</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Proficient on Math PSSA</td>
<td>83%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Planning Process - Building Consensus and Infrastructure

- Planning began in January
- Principal formed school committees
  - Membership involved core team members, teachers, support personnel, administrators
- Committees examined
  - Core curriculum
  - Available supplemental instructional programs
  - Chose universal screening and progress monitoring methods
  - Identified membership of key teams
  - Identified professional development needs

Core Team Members

- Reading Specialists (3)
- Psychologist
- Psychology Intern
- Elementary Curriculum Specialist
- Principal

Core Team Data Decisions

- Core team initially sorts students into tiered interventions based on universal screening data
- Core team decisions are discussed with grade level teams for teacher input
- Core team monitors fidelity of instruction for tier intervention and core program delivery
- Supports and recommends revisions to instructional program

Core Team Responsibilities

- Review Grades, Test data
- Review Progress Monitoring Data
  - Make initial recommendations
- Behavior Infractions
  - Decide who needs Tier 2
- Makes Recommendations for Evals
- Meets Monthly

Overlook Process – Local Context Considered

- Universal screening 3x per year
  - DIBELS (K-6)
  - 4Sight (3 – 6)
- Core Team
  - Meets monthly
- Grade Level Teams
  - Meets about every 8 weeks
- Tier Time Interventions Daily
- Professional Development - Ongoing
- Parent Involvement
  - Letter notification at each benchmark period
  - Letter notification for any change in tier
  - Meeting with school PTO
A Three-Tier Model – Local Context Considered

Tier 1
• Core Curriculum Only

Tier 2
• Targeted Reading Interventions
• 30 min/day for 5 days/week

Tier 3
• Targeted Intensive Interventions
• 30 min sessions, 7 times/week

Overlook Elementary School - RtI Instructional Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTI Level</th>
<th>Curriculum Component</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin Invitations to Literacy</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Open Court Phonics</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Breakthrough to Literacy</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency of Progress Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>Three times per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Bi-weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Universal Screening (reading & behavior only)

• DIBELS taken fall, winter spring – all grades
• 4Sight benchmark assessments – gr 3-6, taken fall, winter, spring
• Behavior infractions

Progress Monitoring

• We use DIBELS
• We use end of unit tests
• Goals are identified for learning that will take place over time
• Depending on the tier … progress is monitored weekly, bi-weekly.
• Progress is measured by comparing expected outcomes and actual rates of learning
Data examined at Team Meetings

- Universal screening (DIBELS triennial)
- Unit (curriculum) test scores
- Unit (curriculum) weekly assessment
- 4-Sight scores (triennial)
- PSSA (annual state assessment)
- Rate of progress (slope of PM data)
- Length of time at a tier level
- Instructional program at T2&3
- Behavior infractions

Tier Assignment Decisions

- First look at DIBELS recommendation
  - K-2
    - Then examine Unit test scores
    - Put students in T2 or 3
    - Sub-groups decoding/fluency/comp
  - 3-6
    - Then examine Unit tests, PSSA, 4-Sight
    - Sub-group fluency/decoding/comprehension

SWEBS - School-Wide Effective Behavior Support

- Data Collection System
- Data driven decisions
- School-wide Rules
- Behavior Training Days
- Committee Decides Tier 2 & 3
- Rewards
  - School Store
  - Open Gym
  - Raffle
  - Gold Card Night

Making RTI Work

- Creation and implementation common of templated lesson plan by teaching staff
- District wide support with itinerant schedules to then support the design of the building schedule
- Grade level team meeting rehearsal
- Tier transition practice prior to implementation of TIER time to decrease transition time.
- Positive reinforcement provided to staff- breakfast, special gifts etc.
- PTO support of RTI
- SWEBS summer team meeting
- 100% staff attendance at June extended training days
- Extensive parent communication piece – web site link, Open House presentation, PTO presentations(2), informative mailings, newsletter
- Tier 2 teachers volunteered rather than be appointed
- Staff support of SWEBS

Shifting to Questions of SLD Eligibility

- The Pennsylvania (and others ) Model
  - All based on the same law - IDEA
Four Considerations

- There are four criteria to consider when identifying a student as eligible for special education under the category of SLD.
  - 2 Inclusionary
  - 2 Exclusionary

- Three of the four criteria are the same regardless of which identification model used
- One of the four criteria requires a choice
  - Discrepancy Model
  - Response to Intervention Model

Four Questions for Eligibility

1. Adequate achievement: Does the child achieve adequately for the child’s age or meet State-approved grade level standards?

2. Eligibility Model: Does the child demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses OR has the child shown a lack of response to scientifically based instruction?

3. Have other factors or conditions been ruled out?

4. Are the student’s academic concerns the result of a lack of instruction?

Criterion #1: ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

- Does the child achieve adequately for the child’s age or meet State-approved grade level standards?

IDEA Language

(1) The child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to 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:
  (i) Oral expression.
  (ii) Listening comprehension.
  (iii) Written expression.
  (iv) Basic reading skill.
  (v) Reading fluency skills.
  (vi) Reading comprehension.
  (vii) Mathematics calculation.
  (viii) Mathematics problem solving.
Determining SLD

To ensure that underachievement is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math the group must consider:

- Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings delivered by qualified personnel
- Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the child’s parents

§ 300.309(b)

Exclusionary Criteria

Determining SLD

Observations – the public agency or group must:

1. Ensure that a child is observed in their learning environment to document their academic performance and behavior in areas of difficulty
2. Decide to use information from
   • an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the child’s performance that was done before the child was referred for an evaluation
   Or
   • Have at least one member observe academic performance in regular classroom after consent has been given
3. Observe younger than school-age children in an environment appropriate for a child of that age

§ 300.310(a), (b), (c)

Sources of Data to Document Lack of Achievement

- Existing Data
  - Performance on benchmark assessments
  - Terminal performance on progress monitoring measures
  - District wide state assessments

- New Data to Collect
  - Norm-referenced tests of achievement

Normative Comparisons

- Normative group is important decision
- National normative data sets
  - AIMSweb
  - Hasbrouck & Tindal
  - DIBELS
- Local normative data set by SES
  - Shapiro (2004)
- Norm reference set from national standardized achievement test

Lack of achievement is in relation to age or grade-level standards.

- The student’s assessed achievement on all measures should be significantly behind age or grade-peers.
- Measures should be reflective of state standards.
- Achievement here is related to age or grade, not intellectual level

9/14/2009 47

9/14/2009 46

9/14/2009 48
May we use norm-referenced tests of academic achievement in determining the extent of the deficiency?

- May we?
- Yes! There is nothing legally that prevents a team from doing so.
- Should we?
- How secure you are with other data sources?
- A preponderance of other data, you may choose not to use other norm-referenced measures.
- If you don’t, or if there are other questions that can be answered with norm-referenced measures, use them.

2 Implications to consider

- Students with intelligence levels in the “slow learner” range may not be excluded from having SLD if they display significantly inadequate academic achievement and if they meet the other criteria (e.g., RTI)
- Conversely, students with high levels of intelligence must display inadequacies in relation to their age or the state standards for their grade in order to meet this criterion.

Does the child demonstrate a pattern of strengths and weaknesses or a lack of progress in response to scientifically based instruction?

Criterion #2

Choice: RTI Model or Discrepancy Model

Factors using RTI in Decision Process

- Response to Tier 1
- Response to Tier 2 and/or 3
- Gap analysis –
  - Benchmark assessments
  - Progress monitoring

Factors to consider for Tier 1

- Was the core program aligned to the state standards?
- Was the curriculum in place for a sufficient amount of time?
- Were the teachers trained in how to use the curriculum?
- Were the teachers using effective instruction methodologies?
- Were data analysis teams used to support the delivery of core instruction?
Factors to consider for Tier 2 and 3

- Were the Interventions used supported by scientific research?
- Were standard treatment protocols followed for the interventions with students? [fidelity checks]
- Were the teachers/staff implementing the interventions trained in delivering the intervention with fidelity?
- Were the interventions delivered for a sufficient amount of time?
- Was a team used to help design and support the interventions?

Gap Analysis

- Discrepancy between expected and attained performance translated into empirical value
  - Divide performance at point of referral to the expected benchmark performance of same age/grade peers
  - Can be done for both benchmark assessments and rate of improvement

How low is low? How slow is slow?

How deficient does the student need to qualify?

- There is not a research consensus on this issue at this time.
- Note that there never was a research consensus on the extent of the ability-achievement discrepancy.
- However, there is a good deal of research underway addressing this question (e.g., Christ, Ardoin, et al.).

Discrepancy Parameters

- Evaluation teams using PSW must determine the discrepancy relative to age or grade
- Federal or state regulations do not delineate the extent of the discrepancy that is needed under the SLD designation

Factors using decisions based on PSW

- Administer a test of intelligence to determine a student’s IQ
- Administer norm-referenced tests of academic achievement
- Calculate discrepancy between scores from the two measures can be appraised
- Identify processing strengths and deficits based on the assessment

Translating to Reality

- Few districts are using RTI now
- Move toward RTI decisions will be gradual
- One example of the integration of the data sources from PA
**Decision to Evaluate**
- Rate of progress is below target and typical rate
- History of failure in curriculum
- In targeted instructional support for at least 9 months with multiple data-driven changes using research-proven techniques and programs
- PM shows significantly below peers
- BB or B on PSSA’s

**Eligibility Decisions**
- LEA decided to use discrepancy
- Augment ER with RtI data
- Slope scores can help support decision
- Helps in making recommendations
  - Type and quantity of program
- Sometimes data is conflictual:
  - Discrepancy rules
- Always helps with ED classification

**Total Evals across 4 years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>LEA</th>
<th>All Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comparisons – Gap Analysis**
- Target Rate of Improvement
  - Attained Rate of Improvement
    - Target = slope of line from first measure to benchmark at end of year
    - Attained = slope of line using all PM data
    - Higher scores indicate that their rate of improvement is farther from their target
    - 2.0 indicates target rate is twice the attained rate

**Average T/A: Differences between Referral Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>T/A School</th>
<th>T/A Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**T/A vs IQ-Ach Discrepancy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>&gt;2.0 &amp; Discr</th>
<th>&gt;2.0 &amp; Not Discr</th>
<th>&lt;2.0 &amp; Discr</th>
<th>&lt;2.0 &amp; Not Discr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

• 80% of students get full inclusion
• Line blurred between Special Education vs Reg Ed Support
• Allocation of Resources
  – LS and ES aides in other classes than their teachers and sometimes 1:1 aides
• Some teachers were trained, and now are Tier 2 or 3 teachers
• Now at Team meetings staff don’t ask about evaluations, they ask about interventions
• We have a mandate to reduce the number of minority special education students

The National Trek toward RTI

• State Database
• National RTI Training Center
• National Center for Learning Disabilities
• Tigard-Tualatin School District
• What works clearinghouse
• Best evidence.org

Thinking Differently

• “All Education Initiative”
• Focus on interventions not placement
• Aim of assessment is to identify effective interventions
• Effective interventions are identified prior to eligibility
• Student outcomes drive decisions
• PS & RtI is continual and fluid

Show Me the Data!

THANKS SO MUCH!

HAVE A GREAT DAY – GO FORTH AND DO GREAT THINGS.