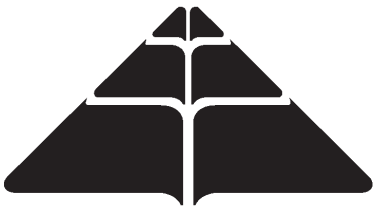
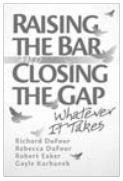
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools

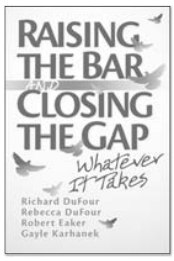
Juie A. Schmidt



Solution Tree

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools





Boones Mill Elementary School, VA
Highland Elementary School, MD
Kildeer Countryside Elementary D96, IL
Stults Road Elementary School, TX
Sanger Unified School District, CA

For other information on other PLCs at Work go to www.AllThingsPLC.info.

ALLTHINGSPLC
ALL INFORMATION, NO COMMERCE

Objectives for This Session

- Clarify the why, what, and how of schoolwide systems of intervention and extension.
- Consider schedules that support learning for *all.*
- Experience how common assessment results drive systems of intervention and extension.
- Assess your school's current response when students don't and do learn.
- Make an action plan to strengthen your school's system of intervention and extension.

Critical Corollary Questions: If We Believe All Kids Can Learn

- What is it we expect them to learn?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- **How will we respond when they don't learn?**
- **How will we respond when they already know it?**

Rethinking Our Assumptions

The assumptions, beliefs, expectations, and habits that constitute the culture for most schools go largely unexamined.

We act in accordance with our understanding of traditional practice and conventional wisdom.

Rethinking Our Assumptions

If culture reflects, "the way we do things around here," we face the challenge of making conscious that which typically is unconscious.

Core Beliefs

- **We believe that all students can learn to high levels.**
- **We take collective responsibility for the learning of *all*.**

Examining Your Current Beliefs
Think—Pair—Share

All students can learn at high levels.

1. We strongly believe this is true.
2. We believe this is true.
3. We believe this is true, but …
4. I'm not sure we believe this is true.
5. We do not believe this at all.

Examining Your Current Beliefs
Pair and Share

We must take collective ownership for *all* students.

1. I strongly believe this is true.
2. I believe this is true.
3. I believe this is true, but …
4. I am not sure I believe this is true.
5. I do not believe this at all.

Put Your Heads Together
Seat Talk–Shoulder Partner

Share the "aha's" from your conversation …

Specifically, how do your practices align with your belief statements?

Step One of the PLC Process: Learn Together!

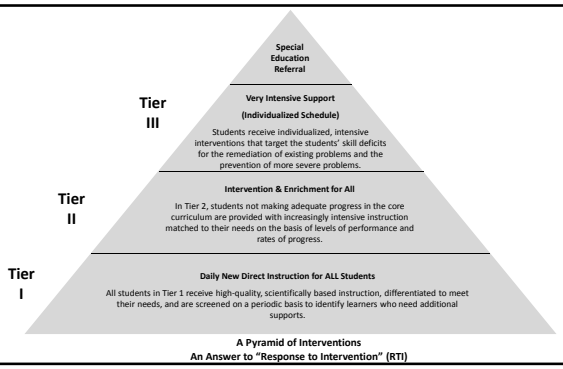
A cardinal rule: Professional learning communities always attempt to answer critical questions by first building shared knowledge—engaging in collective inquiry—learning together.

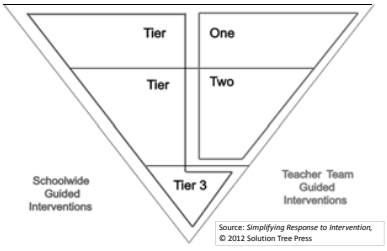
If people make decisions based on the collective study of the same pool of information, they increase the likelihood they will arrive at the same conclusion.

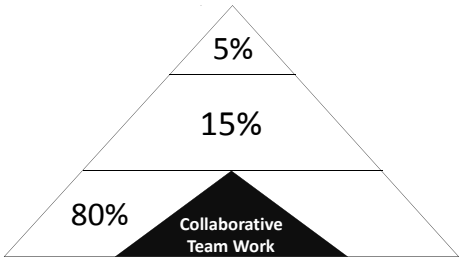
Let's learn together!

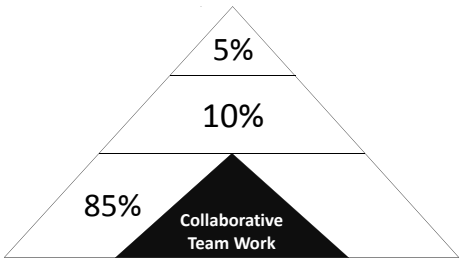
A Broad Look at the Pyramid of Interventions

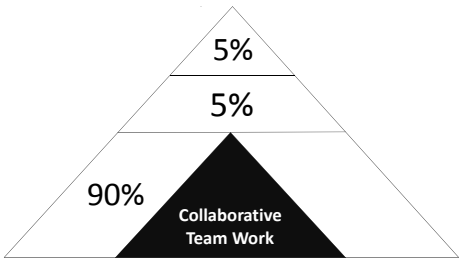
- Where do your current practices match?
- What are your disconnects?
- What are your opportunities?

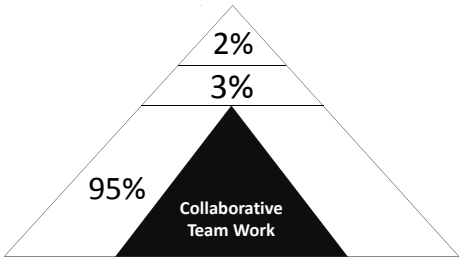


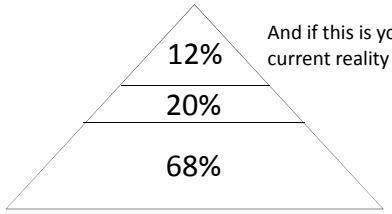












And if this is your current reality …

Is it feasible to develop systems to support 32% of your student population in Tiers 2 and 3?

Challenging Assumptions

If your team, school, or system is stuck at *why* intervene?

Or if you just need a vitamin …

Please see some outside perspectives on *why*!

Which rationale best responds to your current (or loudest) resistor?

How might you use this to help move the resistor along?

Necessary Cultural Shifts

In traditional schools, each teacher in isolation:

- Decides what to teach and when to teach it
- Administers infrequent summative assessments
- Focuses on inputs of teaching
- Practices the "if only" model of improvement—looking out the window
- Determines what to do when students do not learn

Necessary Cultural Shifts

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- Decides what to teach and when to teach it
- Administers infrequent summative assessments
- Focuses on inputs of teaching
- Practices the "if only" model of improvement—looking out the window
- Determines what to do when students do not learn

In professional learning communities, teams of teachers:

- Build shared knowledge about essential learning and pacing.
- Administer frequent common formative assessments.
- Focus on results—evidence of learning.
- Practice the "what if" model of improvement—looking in the mirror.
- Create systematic responses that ensure learning support for every student.

Ten RTI Mistakes

On your own …

- Skim the mistake titles, select one that resonates most with you and read carefully.

Turn to talk with others …

- Briefly share your thoughts and reflections.
- Be sure to get to a *so what*! ☺

Changing the Way We Do Things Around Here

How can our school better allocate **existing resources (i.e., time, people, materials, and money)** to provide additional support for ***all*** students to learn at higher levels than ever before?

Aligning School Structure to Support Our Culture: Learning for *All*

Designate blocks of time to deliver first and best instruction each day.

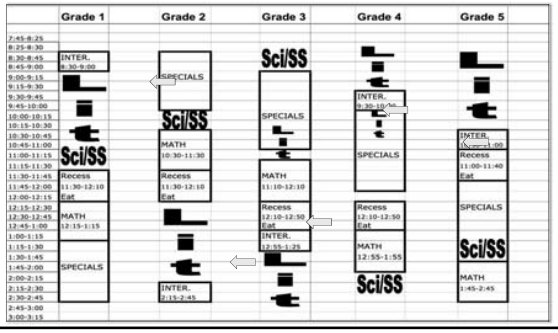
Aligning School Structure to Support Our Culture: Learning for *All*

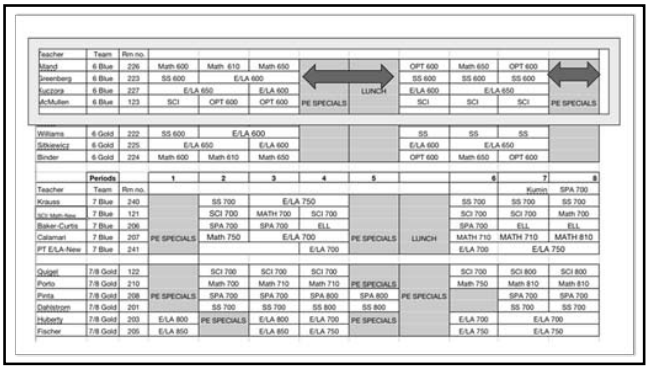
- Designate a block of collaborative time each week for teams to:
  - Clarify essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
  - Develop common pacing guides or curriculum maps.
  - Create common formative and summative assessments.
  - Establish a common standard of proficiency.
  - Use common assessment results to identify students who need additional time and support and to inform and improve teacher practice.

Aligning School Structure to Support Our Culture: Learning for *All*

Designate a daily block of time for intervention and enrichment *during the instructional day* that does not remove students from new direct instruction.

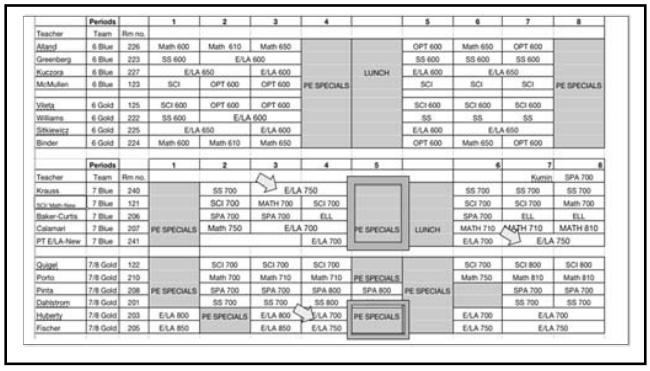
Sample Elementary Schedule





Teacher	Team	Rm no.									
Aland	6 Blue	226	Math 600	Math 610	Math 650			OPT 600	Math 650	OPT 600	
Greenberg	6 Blue	223	SS 600	E/LA 600				SS 600	SS 600	SS 600	
Kuczora	6 Blue	227	E/LA 650		E/LA 600		LUNCH	E/LA 600	E/LA 650		
McMullen	6 Blue	123	SCI	OPT 600	OPT 600	PE SPECIALS		SCI	SCI	SCI	PE SPECIALS
Williams	6 Gold	222	SS 600	E/LA 600				SS	SS	SS	
Sitkiewicz	6 Gold	225	E/LA 650		E/LA 600			E/LA 600	E/LA 650		
Binder	6 Gold	224	Math 600	Math 610	Math 650			OPT 600	Math 650	OPT 600	

	Periods		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Teacher	Team	Rm no.							Kumon	SPA 700
Krauss	7 Blue	240		SS 700	E/LA 750			SS 700	SS 700	SS 700
SCI Mah-New	7 Blue	121		SCI 700	MATH 700	SCI 700		SCI 700	SCI 700	Math 700
Baker-Curtis	7 Blue	206		SPA 700	SPA 700	ELL		SPA 700	ELL	ELL
Calamari	7 Blue	207	PE SPECIALS	Math 750	E/LA 700		PE SPECIALS	MATH 710	MATH 710	MATH 810
PT E/LA-New	7 Blue	241				E/LA 700		E/LA 700	E/LA 750	
Quigel	7/8 Gold	122		SCI 700	SCI 700	SCI 700		SCI 700	SCI 800	SCI 800
Porto	7/8 Gold	210		Math 700	Math 710	Math 710	PE SPECIALS	Math 750	Math 810	Math 810
Pinta	7/8 Gold	208	PE SPECIALS	SPA 700	SPA 700	SPA 800	SPA 800	PE SPECIALS	SPA 700	SPA 700
Dahlstrom	7/8 Gold	201		SS 700	SS 700	SS 800	SS 800		SS 700	SS 700
Huberty	7/8 Gold	203	E/LA 800	PE SPECIALS	E/LA 800	E/LA 700	PE SPECIALS	E/LA 700	E/LA 700	
Fischer	7/8 Gold	205	E/LA 850		E/LA 850	E/LA 750		E/LA 750	E/LA 750	



	Periods		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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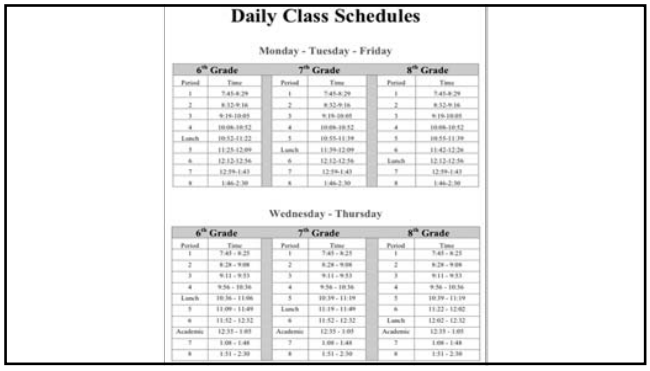
Krauss	7 Blue	240		SS 700	E/LA 750			SS 700	SS 700	SS 700
SCI Mah-New	7 Blue	121		SCI 700	MATH 700	SCI 700		SCI 700	SCI 700	Math 700
Baker-Curtis	7 Blue	206		SPA 700	SPA 700	ELL		SPA 700	ELL	ELL
Calamari	7 Blue	207	PE SPECIALS	Math 750	E/LA 700		PE SPECIALS	MATH 710	MATH 710	MATH 810
PT E/LA-New	7 Blue	241				E/LA 700		E/LA 700	E/LA 750	
Quigel	7/8 Gold	122		SCI 700	SCI 700	SCI 700		SCI 700	SCI 800	SCI 800
Porto	7/8 Gold	210		Math 700	Math 710	Math 710	PE SPECIALS	Math 750	Math 810	Math 810
Pinta	7/8 Gold	208	PE SPECIALS	SPA 700	SPA 700	SPA 800	SPA 800	PE SPECIALS	SPA 700	SPA 700
Dahlstrom	7/8 Gold	201		SS 700	SS 700	SS 800	SS 800		SS 700	SS 700
Huberty	7/8 Gold	203	E/LA 800	PE SPECIALS	E/LA 800	E/LA 700	PE SPECIALS	E/LA 700	E/LA 700	
Fischer	7/8 Gold	205	E/LA 850		E/LA 850	E/LA 750		E/LA 750	E/LA 750	



Daily Class Schedules

Monday - Tuesday - Friday

6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade	
Period	Time	Period	Time	Period	Time
1	7:45-8:29	1	7:45-8:29	1	7:45-8:29
2	8:32-9:16	2	8:32-9:16	2	8:32-9:16
3	9:19-10:05	3	9:19-10:05	3	9:19-10:05
4	10:08-10:52	4	10:08-10:52	4	10:08-10:52
Lunch	10:52-11:22	5	10:55-11:39	5	10:55-11:39
5	11:25-12:09	Lunch	11:39-12:09	6	11:42-12:26
6	12:12-12:56	6	12:12-12:56	Lunch	12:12-12:56
7	12:59-1:43	7	12:59-1:43	7	12:59-1:43
8	1:46-2:30	8	1:46-2:30	8	1:46-2:30

Wednesday - Thursday

6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade	
Period	Time	Period	Time	Period	Time
1	7:45 - 8:25	1	7:45 - 8:25	1	7:45 - 8:25
2	8:28 - 9:08	2	8:28 - 9:08	2	8:28 - 9:08
3	9:11 - 9:51	3	9:11 - 9:53	3	9:11 - 9:53
4	9:54 - 10:36	4	9:56 - 10:36	4	9:56 - 10:36
Lunch	10:36 - 11:06	5	10:39 - 11:19	5	10:39 - 11:19
5	11:09 - 11:49	Lunch	11:19 - 11:49	6	11:22 - 12:02
6	11:52 - 12:32	6	11:52 - 12:32	Lunch	12:02 - 12:32
Academic	12:35 - 1:05	Academic	12:35 - 1:05	Academic	12:35 - 1:05
7	1:08 - 1:48	7	1:08 - 1:48	7	1:08 - 1:48
8	1:51 - 2:30	8	1:51 - 2:30	8	1:51 - 2:30

Aligning School Structure to Support Our Culture: Learning for *All*

- Establish a common standard of proficiency.
- Use common assessment results to identify students who need additional time and support and to inform and improve teacher practice.

Grade	MAP	ECRA PARCC Predictor	R-CBM			MAZE			(QRI) Administered only if needed
3	Tier 2: 11th to 25th percentile	Below 750	Tier 2: Fall 43 to 76	Winter 65 to 104	Spring 84 to 118	Tier 2: Fall 7 to 11	Winter 9 to 13	Spring 10 to 14	"Frustrational" at 3rd grade level
	Tier 3: 1st to 10th percentile	Below 750	Tier 3: Fall 42 or below	Winter 646 or below	Spring 83 or below	Tier 3: Fall 6 or less	Winter 8 or less	Spring 9 or less	"Frustrational" at 3rd grade level

Grade	MAP	ECRA PARCC Predictor	R-CBM			MAZE			(QRI) Administered only if needed
4	Tier 2: 11th to 25th percentile	Below 750	Tier 2: Fall 68 to 104	Winter 87 to 119	Spring 103 to 135	Tier 2: Fall 8 to 12	Winter 13 to 18	Spring 13 to 18	"Frustrational" at 4th grade level
	Tier 3: 1st to 10th percentile	Below 750	Tier 3: Fall 67 or below	Winter 86 or below	Spring 102 or below	Tier 3: Fall 7 or less	Winter 12 or less	Spring 12 or less	"Frustrational" at 4th grade level

Grade	MAP	ECRA PARCC Predictor	R-CBM			MAZE			(QRI) Administered only if needed
7	Tier 2: 11th to 25th percentile	Below 750	Tier 2: Fall 95 to 135	Winter 110 to 149	Spring 131 to 170	Tier 2: Fall 16 to 21	Winter 18 to 24	Spring 21 to 28	"Frustrational" at 7th grade level
	Tier 3: 1st to 10th percentile	Below 750	Tier 3: Fall 94 or below	Winter 109 or below	Spring 130 or below	Tier 3: Fall 15 or less	Winter 17 or less	Spring 20 or less	"Frustrational" at 7th grade level

Grade	MAP	ECRA PARCC Predictor	R-CBM			MAZE			(QRI) Administered only if needed
8	Tier 2: 11th to 25th percentile	Below 750	Tier 2: Fall 113 to 137	Winter 123 to 150	Spring 131 to 160	Tier 2: Fall 16 to 22	Winter 15 to 20	Spring 23 to 27	"Frustrational" at 8th grade level
	Tier 3: 1st to 10th percentile	Below 750	Tier 3: Fall 112 or below	Winter 122 or below	Spring 130 or below	Tier 3: Fall 15 or less	Winter 14 or less	Spring 22 or less	"Frustrational" at 8th grade level

Math Problem-Solving Criteria

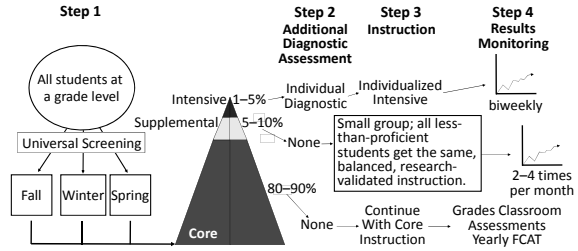
Grades	ISAT	MAP	MCAP	MCBM
1-8	Tier 2: "Below" or "Academic Warning"	Tier 2: 11th to 20th percentile	Tier 2: 11th to 25th percentile	Tier 2: 11th to 25th percentile
	Tier 3: "Below" or "Academic Warning"	Tier 3: 1st to 10th percentile	Tier 3: 10th percentile or below	Tier 3: 10th percentile or below

When thinking about putting into place structures for success …

What does your system need to:

- Keep doing?
- Start doing?
- Stop doing?

How Does It Fit Together?



Talk With a Partner …

Remediation versus Intervention

What is Remediation?
What is Intervention?

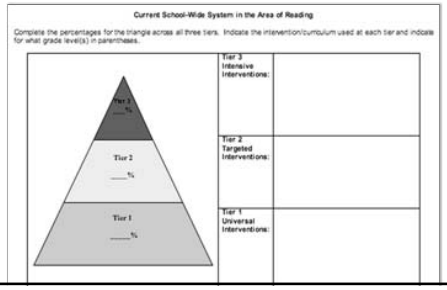
Remediation Versus *Intervention*

Remediation	*Intervention*
• More reactive • More long term • Address the big issues (i.e., when students have no understanding of the concept to be learned). • Students are usually identified as remedial through summative assessments (one-time assessments). • A student in remediation is suffering from a skill deficit. • Remediation is not usually linked to the curriculum. It is more of a compensatory program.	• More proactive • Short-term commitment • Address the small issues (i.e., when students understand the concepts but need support in a specialized skill within the concept). • Students are usually identified for interventions through common assessments (ongoing formal assessments). • A student in intervention simply needs help in refining a skill. • Interventions are closely linked to your classroom.

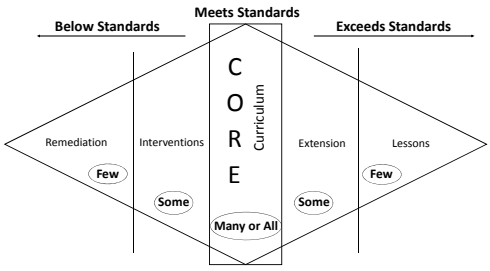
Key to Remember …

There is no easy recipe. The language of interventions must be developed locally so that teachers, administrators, parents, and students buy into the system and process.

Problem-Solving Self Study



How Do We Differentiate?



You be the team!

- Form a group of 5 with those sitting around you.
- Assign roles of Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, and Special Educator.
- You are in a collaborative team meeting, gathered to consider recent data generated from a common formative assessment (pp. 15–16).

Writing Standard - NW.3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Writing Target	Extends 4	Mastery 3	Developing Mastery 2	Not Mastering 1
W.3.3A: **Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.**	• Story has a clear plot with all events moving naturally through time. AND • Uses appropriate paragraphs to create an organizational structure to signal a shift between events, time frames, settings, and dialogue.	• Most events move naturally through time with no significant gaps. AND • Addresses the prompt and stays focused throughout.	• Most events move naturally through time with some significant gaps. OR • Events are in an order that does not flow naturally. OR • Attempts to address the prompt and stay focused throughout.	• Events do not move naturally through time and significant gaps in event sequence are present, plot line may be unclear or confusing to the reader. OR • Does not address the prompt.

THIRD GRADE COMMON ASSESSMENT SCORES (PROFICIENCY TARGET: 3/4)

Writing Standard - NW.3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

STUDENT	CLASS #1	CLASS #2	CLASS #3	CLASS #4
A	1	1	4	2
B	1	1	4	2
C	2	1	3	3
D	3	3	4	3
E	3	3	4	4
F	4	4	3	1
G	3	4	3	2
H	3	3	3	1
I	3	4	4	3
J	1	2	3	2
K	1	2	3	1
L	3	4	4	1
M	3	4	3	4
N	3	3	3	4
O	4	4	3	4
P	3	4	3	3
Q	3	3	3	3
R	4	3	4	3
S	3	3	3	3
T	3	3	3	2
U	3	3	3	1
V	3	3	4	2
W	3	4	3	1
X	3	3	3	3
Y	2	3	3	3
Z	1	3	3	
AA	3	3	3	
BB	3		3	
% Proficient & Above	77%	100%	100%	52%
# Below Proficient	6	0	0	12
# At Proficient	16	16	20	9
# Above Proficient	3	9	6	4

You be the team!

- Form a group of 5 with those sitting around you.
- Assign roles of Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, and Special Educator.
- You are in a collaborative team meeting, gathered to consider recent data generated from a common formative assessment (pp. 15–16).
- Use the Data Analysis Protocols (pp. 17 and/or 18) to drive your conversation.


REPRODUCIBLE

Protocol for Data Team Meeting


REPRODUCIBLE

In considering the data set, discuss and record your shared thoughts on the following...

Question 1: What do we want all students to know or be able to do? (Clarify standards/targets of focus)

Question 2: How will we know students if students have mastered the standard(s) of focus? (Determine proficiency indicators)

Question 3: How will we respond for students who have not yet learned? (Discuss interventions)

Question 4: How will we respond for students who have already demonstrated mastery or are ready to do more? (Discuss extension/enrichment)

Based on the data, how does data differ classroom to classroom? (Here's what...)

What are the implications of this information? Which instructional strategies helped students learn? What skills did the proficient students demonstrate in their work that set their work apart? (So what?)

So what's the plan? (Now what? Who? What? When?)

The Questions Facing Each Team

1. How will we provide additional support for students who experience initial difficulty in a way that is **timely**, **directive**, and **systematic**?
2. How will we **extend and enrich** the learning for students who already know it?

The Questions Facing Each Team

1. How will we provide additional support for students who experience initial difficulty in a way that is **timely**, **directive**, and **systematic**?
2. How will we **extend and enrich** the learning for students who already know it?
3. **Who is available to assist our team and our students?**

Extra Time and Support for Students in an Elementary School

- Schedule grade-level/content teachers, resource specialists, and other supports to work together during I/E time.
- Organize community volunteers, business partners, senior citizens, and high school and college interns to serve as mentors and tutors along with the school-based teams.
- **Develop buddy programs and peer tutoring.**
- **Redefine the focus of the Student Support Team (RTI Team) to plan additional interventions.**

p. 19

Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Tutor 1	Tutor 2	Teacher Assist.	Content Specialist	

Important Cautions

- Do not fall in love with a tree—embrace the forest.
- No system of intervention can compensate for weak and ineffective teaching.
- At the same time a faculty is working to create extra time and support for student learning, it must also take steps to create the powerful collaborative teams and common formative assessments that contribute to adult learning.

Assess your school's response when students do not learn or already know it.

- Are our students assured ***extra time and support*** for learning?
- Is our response ***timely***? How quickly are we able to identify the students who need extra time and support? Does our focus prompt intervention and extension rather than sluggish remediation?
- Is our response ***directive*** rather than invitational? Are students **invited** to put in extra time or does our system **ensure** they put in extra time?
- Is our response ***systematic***? Do kids receive this intervention or enrichment according to a schoolwide plan rather than at the discretion of individual teachers?

Assessing Your Response When Kids Don't Learn or Already Know It

The Professional Learning Communities at Work Continuum

This is a *great* tool for use during *team time* today! ☺

Build and Nurture Strong Parent Partnerships

- Conduct grade-level parent workshops.
- **Provide tools, tips, and materials for at-home practice during parent workshops and via frequent grade-level communication to parents**.
- Establish ongoing systems for two-way communication with each parent.
- Send student work folders home—with teacher feedback—for parent review, comments, questions, and signature.
- **See Chapter 14 in *Revisiting PLCs at Work* for more information on parent partnerships in a PLC at Work.**

To sustain the momentum, PLCs …

... celebrate small wins early and often!

What Are You Celebrating?

"Celebrations weave our hearts and souls into a shared destiny. People come together to celebrate beginnings and endings, triumphs, and tragedies."

—Bolman and Deal, *Leading With Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* (1995)

Actively promote a climate of achievement. Incentives and Celebrations

- Recognize improvement and achievement in daily school announcements and within classrooms.
- Create classroom, grade-level, and schoolwide celebrations linked to school and team goals. (Example: "Hand in Hand We All Learn" people chain to recognize books read)
- Celebrate using media—classroom, school, and district newsletters and broadcasts.
- Provide public recognition at awards assemblies, PTO and PTA meetings, family nights, and school board meetings.
- Share professional learning and achievements at team, vertical, faculty, and district-level meetings.

Celebrate learning on … www.AllThingsPLC.info

- Visit schools listed under "Evidence of Effectiveness."
- Apply to add **your** school or district to the **growing list of**:
  - **Inspirational stories**
  - **Celebration strategies**
  - **Evidence of effectiveness**

What happens when kids do not learn?

"High expectations for success will be judged not only by the initial staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the **organization's response** when some students do not learn."

—Lezotte, *Effective Schools Correlates: The First and Second Generation* (1991)

Thank you!

To schedule professional development at your site, contact **Solution Tree** at **800.733.6786**.

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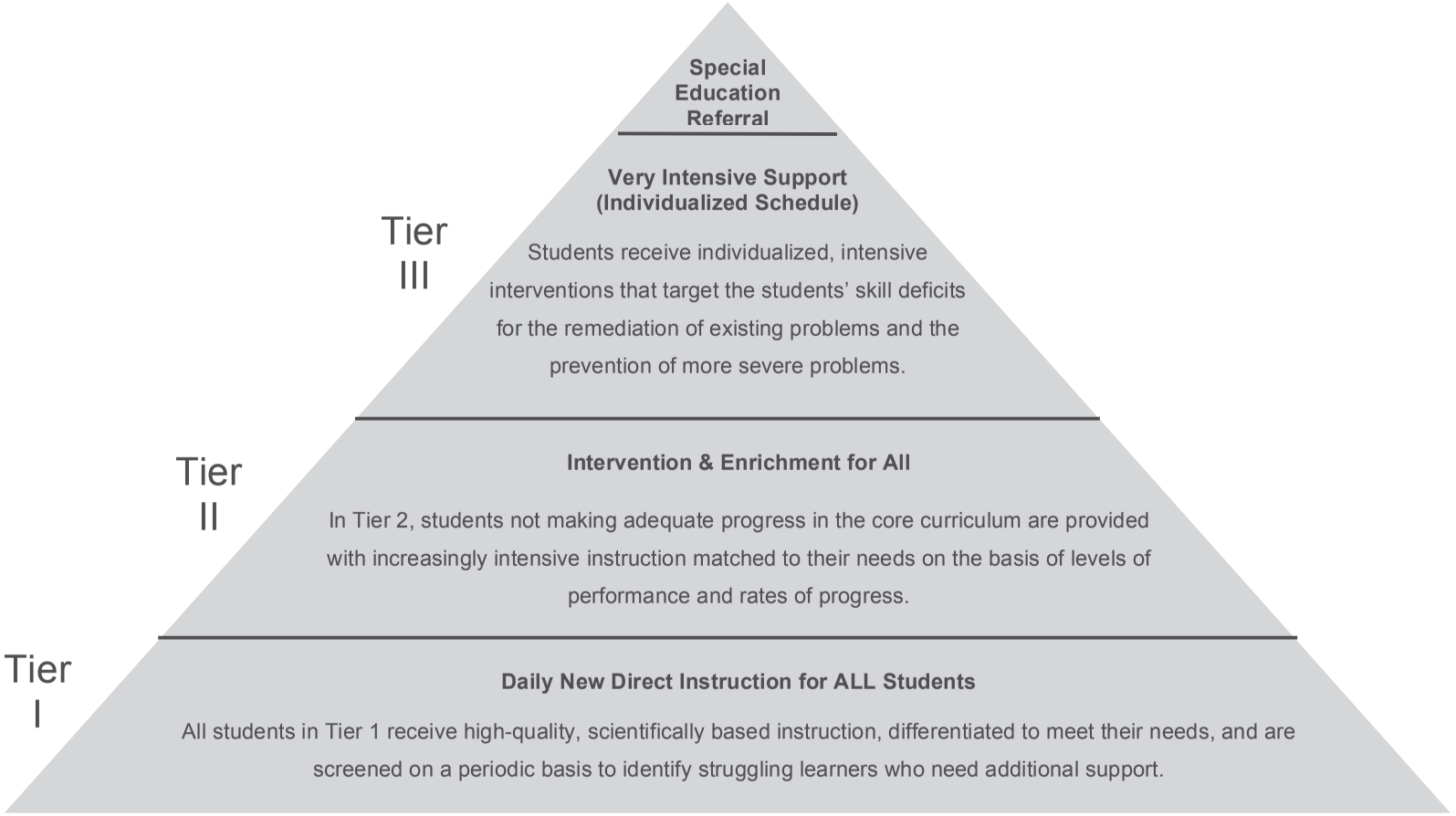


A Pyramid of Interventions
An Answer to "Response to Intervention" (RtI)

Why Should We Implement Systematic Interventions?

Characteristics of high-performing schools include setting high expectations for all students, using assessment data to support student success, and employing systems for identifying intervention (Ragland, Clubine, Constable, & Smith, 2002).

"Reforms must move the system toward early identification and swift intervention, using scientifically based instruction and teaching methods" (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 8).

"A criterion for schools that have made great strides in achievement and equity is immediate and decisive intervention. . . . Successful schools do not give a second thought to providing preventive assistance for students in need" (Reeves, 2006, p. 87).

"The most significant factor in providing appropriate interventions for students was the development of layers of support. Systems of support specifically addressed the needs of students who were 'stretching' to take more rigorous coursework" (Dolejs, 2006, p. 3).

"High-performing schools and school systems set high expectations for what each and every child should achieve, and then monitor performance against the expectations, intervening whenever they are not met. . . . The very best systems intervene at the level of the individual student, developing processes and structures within schools that are able to identify whenever a student is starting to fall behind, and then intervening to improve that child's performance" (Barber & Mourshed, 2007, p. 34).

In order to raise student achievement, schools must use diagnostic assessments to measure students' knowledge and skills at the beginning of each curriculum unit, on-the-spot assessments to check for understanding during instruction, and end-of-unit assessments and interim assessments to see how well students learned. "All of these enable teachers to make mid-course corrections and to get students into intervention earlier" (Odden & Archibald, 2009, p. 23).

In higher performing school systems, "teachers identify struggling students as early as possible, and direct them towards a variety of proven intervention strategies, developed at both the school and district level, that assist all students in mastering grade-level academic objectives" (National Center for Educational Achievement, 2009, p. 34).

"One of the most productive ways for districts to facilitate continual improvement is to develop teachers' capacity to use formative assessments of student progress aligned with district expectations for student learning, and to use formative data in devising and implementing interventions during the school year" (Louis et al., 2010, p. 214).

"If a school can make both teaching and time variables . . . and target them to meet each student's individual learning and developmental needs, the school is more likely to achieve high levels of learning for every student" (Mattos & Buffum, 2015, p. 2).

Ten RTI Mistakes

1. **RTI becomes an appendage to traditional schooling practices rather than a catalyst for the cultural changes effective intervention requires.**

   If teachers define their role as teaching rather than ensuring student learning, a system of intervention can provide yet another reason that classroom teachers avoid taking responsibility for student learning. In the wrong school culture, teachers can assume, "I taught it, they didn't get it, so let the system of intervention deal with them." If teachers continue to work in isolation—if what a student is taught, when content is taught, and how learning is assessed is left to the discretion of the individual classroom teacher—a system of intervention intended to promote a collective effort to raise student achievement will be ineffective.

   If educators continue to view assessments merely as a tool for assigning grades rather than a process for addressing student needs and improving professional practice, intervention will have little impact on enhancing student learning. Effective intervention must be integrated within the context of a guaranteed curriculum, informative assessments, and a process of continuous improvement (IRA Commission on RTI, 2009). Simply put, to implement systematic interventions successfully, "a school must not only provide its staff with a new set of 'tools' to help students learn, but must also help educators develop a new way of thinking about their roles and responsibilities" (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2011).

2. **RTI is viewed as a checklist to complete or a program to be purchased to comply with regulations rather than an ongoing process to improve student learning.**

   If educators believe that RTI simply requires completing the steps on a checklist, purchasing new curriculum, or assigning students who struggle to a computer-based program of learning in order to meet the stipulations of new regulations, the schools will fail to develop effective systems of intervention. As the leading authors on RTI have concluded, "If there is one thing that traditional special education has taught us, it's that staying compliant does not necessarily lead to improved student learning—in fact, the opposite is more often the case" (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2010, p. 13).

3. **RTI is reactive rather than proactive.**

   We have seen intervention plans that have no process for identifying and supporting students until they have failed a grading period. This "wait to fail" strategy offers the equivalent of an educational autopsy rather than the ongoing monitoring of student learning that RTI is intended to offer.

4. RTI does not provide additional time or differentiated support for learning.

Intervention plans that remove students from reading instruction to provide them with reading instruction may be offering students teaching in a different setting, but they are not offering additional time for learning. Plans that simply repeat the same instructional strategies that have already proven to be ineffective for particular students might provide those students with more time for learning, but "more of the same" is not effective intervention.

5. RTI invites students to access available interventions.

When educators claim that they have addressed the challenge of a systematic intervention by inviting students who need help to "stop in" before or after school for assistance if they are so inclined, they fail to grasp the meaning of either *systematic* or *intervention*.

6. RTI is based on seat time rather than proficiency.

When students are assigned to intervention for a designated length of time (for example, nine weeks or a semester) rather than until they demonstrate proficiency, the focus of intervention becomes ensuring students complete the allotted time rather than ensuring that they learn. Again, if educators concentrate on compliance rather than results, intervention will be ineffective.

7. RTI focuses on symptoms rather than causes.

When educators assign students to intervention because they are failing language arts, they are responding to a symptom; but, without greater clarity regarding what is causing the failure, they will be unable to intervene effectively. They are tantamount to a doctor prescribing a specific antidote based solely on the knowledge that a patient is experiencing chest pain. Chest pain can be caused by a myriad of factors—from heartburn to a heart attack. To treat the symptom effectively, more precise information is required. Effective intervention will be based on in-depth knowledge of the specific skill the student is lacking and the most effective strategies for helping the student acquire that skill.

8. RTI does not provide the channels of communication essential to effective intervention.

A collective and systematic approach to intervention requires effective communication between all those who contribute to the intervention process—classroom teachers, collaborative teams, special education teachers, instructional coaches, counselors, and school administrators. If key school personnel are unable to articulate the desired outcome for the student, the specific steps of the intervention plan, the responsibilities of all those who provide the intervention, how student

progress will be monitored, and the standard the student must achieve to no longer require the service, the intervention process will be ineffective. The process must ensure that all of the respective parties are provided with ongoing information regarding the specific needs and progress of individual students.

9. RTI assigns the least-skilled adults to work with the students most in need of expert teaching.

In many schools, students who struggle are assigned to well-intentioned people who lack the pedagogical skill and content expertise to resolve the students' learning difficulties. Too often intervention is provided by parent volunteers, paraprofessionals, teacher assistants, or special education teachers who may be trained in particular learning disabilities but lack an in-depth knowledge of the progression of skills a particular subject area requires. As Richard Allington, the former president of the International Reading Associate lamented, when schools assign people without expertise to the hardest kids to teach "you penalize children for the rest of their lives because of your decision," yet routinely "no one gets worse or less instruction than the kids who need it most" (in Rebora, 2010).

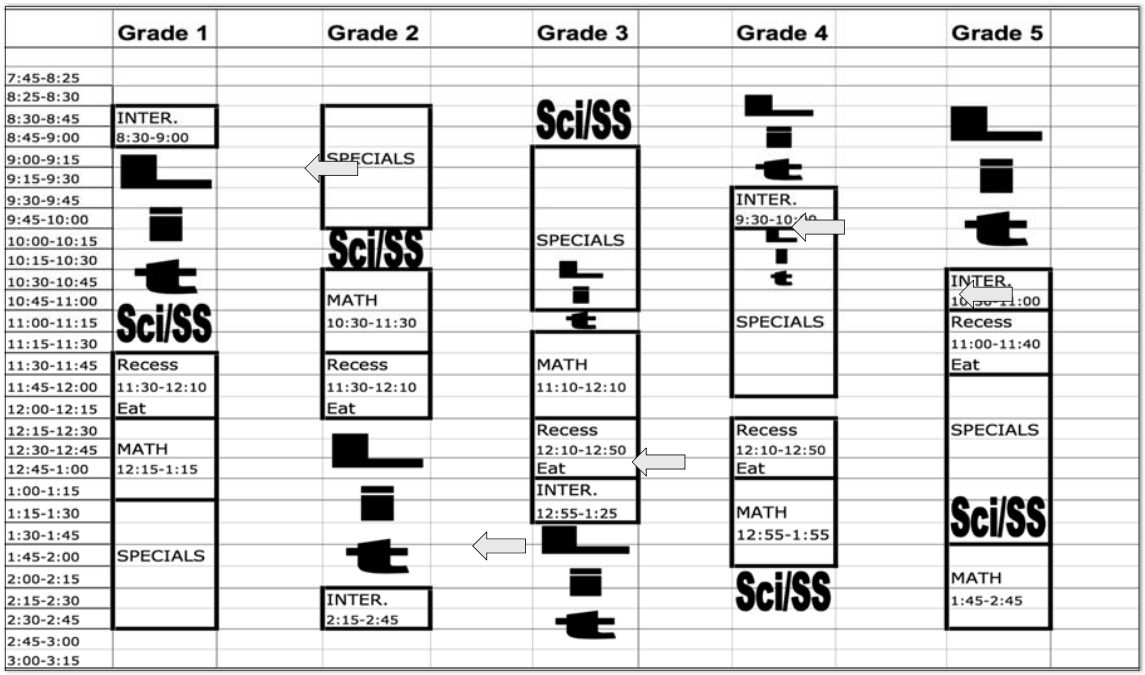
10. RTI is viewed as a special education program.

The most common mistake educators are making regarding RTI is viewing it as an extension of special education. RTI was specifically intended to address general education by strengthening classroom instruction and providing systematic intervention for *all* students in order to limit the number of students assigned to special education to those with a handicapping condition.

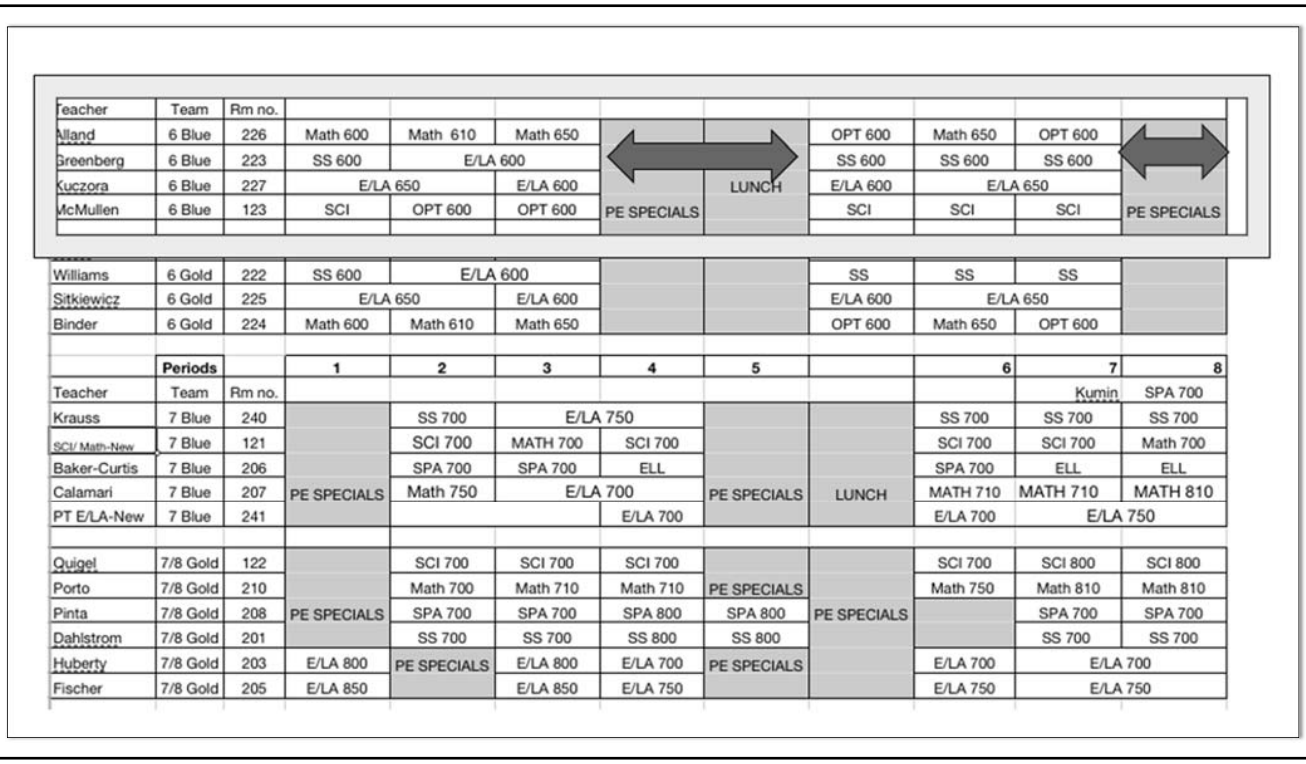
When done well, special education programs serve a vital purpose in our schools. Special education not only gives access to public schooling to students who in the past were denied such access, but it also provides the additional time and focused support to help those students acquire essential knowledge and skills. In many schools, however, the only way any student could get access to additional help was to place them in special education. Students were assigned to special education programs not because of a handicapping condition but because they were experiencing difficulty. As a result, well-intentioned special education personnel often struggled to provide the effective services their programs were designed to provide (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

If schools consider RTI a special education initiative to get more students into special education faster, it will do far more harm than good. It will merely reinforce rather than eliminate the artificial gap that often exists between general education and special education teachers. If general education teachers assume that students who experience difficulty have some neurological difficulty, and it falls to special education teachers to solve their problem, intervention will be ineffective.

Sample Elementary Schedule



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
7:45-8:25					
8:25-8:30					
8:30-8:45	INTER. 8:30-9:00		Sci/SS		
8:45-9:00		SPECIALS			
9:00-9:15					
9:15-9:30				INTER. 9:30-10:10	
9:30-9:45			SPECIALS		
9:45-10:00		Sci/SS			
10:00-10:15					
10:15-10:30					INTER. 10:30-11:00
10:30-10:45		MATH 10:30-11:30		SPECIALS	
10:45-11:00	Sci/SS				Recess 11:00-11:40
11:00-11:15					Eat
11:15-11:30					
11:30-11:45	Recess 11:30-12:10	Recess 11:30-12:10	MATH 11:10-12:10		SPECIALS
11:45-12:00	Eat	Eat			
12:00-12:15					
12:15-12:30			Recess 12:10-12:50	Recess 12:10-12:50	
12:30-12:45	MATH 12:15-1:15		Eat	Eat	Sci/SS
12:45-1:00			INTER. 12:55-1:25		
1:00-1:15				MATH 12:55-1:55	
1:15-1:30					MATH 1:45-2:45
1:30-1:45				Sci/SS	
1:45-2:00	SPECIALS				
2:00-2:15					
2:15-2:30		INTER. 2:15-2:45			
2:30-2:45					
2:45-3:00					
3:00-3:15					



Teacher	Team	Rm no.									
Alland	6 Blue	226	Math 600	Math 610	Math 650			OPT 600	Math 650	OPT 600	
Greenberg	6 Blue	223	SS 600	E/LA 600				SS 600	SS 600	SS 600	
Kuczora	6 Blue	227	E/LA 650		E/LA 600		LUNCH	E/LA 600	E/LA 650		
McMullen	6 Blue	123	SCI	OPT 600	OPT 600	PE SPECIALS		SCI	SCI	SCI	PE SPECIALS
Williams	6 Gold	222	SS 600	E/LA 600				SS	SS	SS	
Sitkiewicz	6 Gold	225	E/LA 650		E/LA 600			E/LA 600	E/LA 650		
Binder	6 Gold	224	Math 600	Math 610	Math 650			OPT 600	Math 650	OPT 600	

	Periods		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8
Teacher	Team	Rm no.								Kumin	SPA 700
Krauss	7 Blue	240		SS 700	E/LA 750				SS 700	SS 700	SS 700
SCI/ Math-New	7 Blue	121		SCI 700	MATH 700	SCI 700			SCI 700	SCI 700	Math 700
Baker-Curtis	7 Blue	206		SPA 700	SPA 700	ELL			SPA 700	ELL	ELL
Calamari	7 Blue	207	PE SPECIALS	Math 750	E/LA 700		PE SPECIALS	LUNCH	MATH 710	MATH 710	MATH 810
PT E/LA-New	7 Blue	241				E/LA 700			E/LA 700	E/LA 750	
Quigel	7/8 Gold	122		SCI 700	SCI 700	SCI 700			SCI 700	SCI 800	SCI 800
Porto	7/8 Gold	210		Math 700	Math 710	Math 710	PE SPECIALS		Math 750	Math 810	Math 810
Pinta	7/8 Gold	208	PE SPECIALS	SPA 700	SPA 700	SPA 800	SPA 800	PE SPECIALS		SPA 700	SPA 700
Dahlstrom	7/8 Gold	201		SS 700	SS 700	SS 800	SS 800			SS 700	SS 700
Huberty	7/8 Gold	203	E/LA 800	PE SPECIALS	E/LA 800	E/LA 700	PE SPECIALS		E/LA 700	E/LA 700	
Fischer	7/8 Gold	205	E/LA 850		E/LA 850	E/LA 750			E/LA 750	E/LA 750	

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Science 8:50–9:35 (45 minutes)	Social Studies/ Language Arts 8:50–9:40 (50 minutes)	Small Group Instruction for I/E and Guided Reading 8:50–9:40 (50 minutes)	Specials 8:50–9:35 Music, Art, PE, Library, Technology (45 minutes)	Science 8:50–9:35 (45 minutes)	Math 8:50–10:30 (100 minutes)
Language Arts/ Social Studies 9:40–10:40 (60 minutes)	Language Arts 9:40–11:00 (80 minutes)	Language Arts 8:50–10:05 (75 minutes)	Math 9:40–11:10 (90 minutes)	Specials 9:40–10:25 Music, Art, PE, Library, Technology (45 minutes)	
Language Arts 10:40–12:10 (90 minutes)	Small Group Instruction for I/E and Guided Reading 9:45–10:45 (60 minutes)	Social Studies/ Language Arts 10:05–10:50 (45 minutes)		Social Studies/ Language Arts 10:25–11:15 (50 minutes)	Specials 10:30–11:15 Music, Art, PE, Library, Technology (45 minutes)
Small Group Instruction for I/E and Guided Reading 10:50–11:50 (60 minutes)	Lunch/Recess 11:05–11:55 (50 minutes)	Science 10:50–11:35 (45 minutes)	Social Studies/ Language Arts 11:10–12:00 (50 minutes)	Lunch/Recess 11:15–12:05 (50 minutes)	Lunch/Recess 11:25–12:15 (50 minutes)
Lunch/Recess 12:10–1:10 (60 minutes)	Math 12:00–1:20 (80 minutes)	Lunch/Recess 11:35–12:25 (50 minutes)	Lunch/Recess 12:00–12:50 (50 minutes)	Language Arts 12:05–1:30 (85 minutes)	Science 12:15–1:00 (45 minutes)
Math 1:15–2:15 (60 minutes)	Specials 1:25–2:10 Music, Art, PE, Library, Writing (45 minutes)	Specials 12:35–1:20 Music, Art, PE, Library, Technology (45 minutes)	Language Arts 12:50–2:15 (85 minutes)	I/E 12:40–1:25 (45 minutes)	Social Studies/ Language Arts 1:00–1:50 (50 minutes)
Specials 2:15–3:00 Music, Art, PE, Library, Technology (45 minutes)	Science 2:15–3:00 (45 minutes)	Math 1:25–3:00 (95 minutes)	I/E 1:30–2:15 (45 minutes) Science 2:15–3:00 (45 minutes)	Math 1:30–3:00 (90 minutes)	Language Arts 1:50–3:00 (70 minutes) I/E 2:20–3:00 (40 minutes)
Students Depart 3:05–3:15	Students Depart 3:05–3:15	Students Depart 3:05–3:15	Students Depart 3:05–3:15	Students Depart 3:05–3:15	Students Depart 3:05–3:15

Figure 7.1: Sample master instructional schedule for grades K–5.

Intervention Team Daily Schedule

8:15 – 8:45	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning
8:50 – 9:40	Second Grade	Second Grade	Second Grade	Second Grade	Second Grade
9:45 – 10:45	First Grade	First Grade	First Grade	First Grade	First Grade
10:50 – 11:50	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Kindergarten
11:50 – 12:35	Lunch/Planning	Lunch/Planning	Lunch/Planning	Lunch/Planning	Lunch/Planning
12:40 – 1:25	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade
1:30 – 2:15	Third Grade	Third Grade	Third Grade	Third Grade	Third Grade
2:20 – 3:00	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade
3:05 – 3:15	Student Dismissal	Student Dismissal	Student Dismissal	Student Dismissal	Student Dismissal

	Monday					Tuesday					Wednesday					Thursday					Friday				
8:15–8:40	Student arrival (breakfast, Buddy Reading, morning work, and take-in procedures)																								
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, and start of instructional day																								
8:50–10:30	MATH																								
Specials	Lib	Tech	Art	Music	PE	Lib	Tech	Art	Music	PE	Lib	Tech	Art	Music	PE	Lib	Tech	Art	Music	PE	Lib	Tech	Art	Music	PE
10:30–11:15		5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	5-D		5-A	5-B	5-C	5-C	5-D		5-A	5-B	5-B	5-C	5-D		5-A	5-A	5-B	5-C	5-D	
11:25–12:15	Lunch and recess																								
12:15–1:00	SCIENCE																								
1:00–1:50	SOCIAL STUDIES AND LANGUAGE ARTS																								
1:50–3:00	LANGUAGE ARTS																								
2:20–3:00	INTERVENTION AND ENRICHMENT																								
3:05–3:15	Afternoon announcements and student dismissal																								

Lib = Library; Tech = Technology; PE = Physical Education.

Figure 2.2: Sample fifth-grade master instructional schedule completed by the fifth-grade team, in accordance with their district guidelines for allocating instructional minutes to each subject.

	Monday					Tuesday					Wednesday					Thursday					Friday				
8:15–8:40	Student arrival (breakfast, morning work, and take-in procedures)																								
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, and start of instructional day																								
8:50–9:40	**SOCIAL STUDIES AND LANGUAGE ARTS**																								
9:45–10:15	**GUIDED READING CLUSTERS 1, INTERVENTION AND ENRICHMENT (I/E) CLUSTERS 2**																								
10:15–10:45	**GUIDED READING CLUSTERS 2, I/E CLUSTERS 1**																								
10:45–11:00	**LANGUAGE ARTS**																								
11:05–11:55	Lunch and recess																								
12:00–1:20	**MATH**																								
Specials	Lib	Tech	Music	Art	PE	Lib	Tech	Music	Art	PE	Lib	Tech	Music	Art	PE	Lib	Tech	Music	Art	PE	Lib	Tech	Music	Art	PE
1:25–2:10	1-A	1-B	1-C	1-D	1-E	1-B	1-C	1-D	1-E	1-A	1-C	1-D	1-E	1-A	1-B	1-D	1-E	1-A	1-B	1-C	1-E	1-A	1-B	1-C	1-D
2:15–3:00	**SCIENCE**																								
3:00–3:10	Afternoon announcements and student dismissal																								
3:05–3:15	Students depart																								
3:10–3:30	Instructional staff planning																								

Lib = Library; Tech = Technology; PE = Physical Education.

Figure 7.2: Sample first-grade master schedule for instruction.

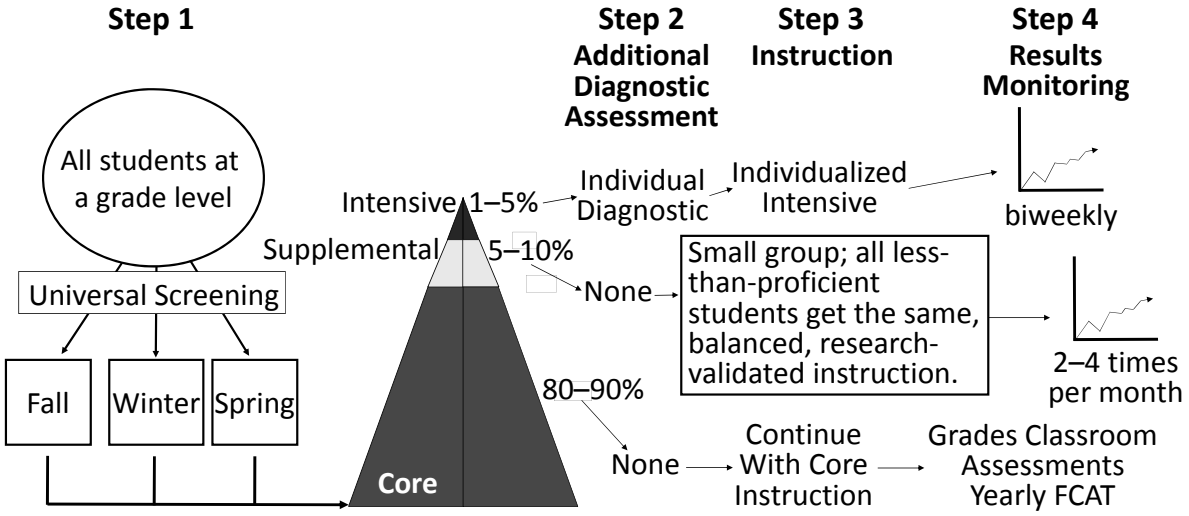
	Monday					Tuesday					Wednesday					Thursday					Friday				
8:15–8:40	Student arrival (breakfast, Buddy Reading, morning work, and take-in procedures)																								
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, and start of instructional day																								
Specials	Library	Technology	Music	Art	Phys Ed	Library	Technology	Music	Art	Phys Ed	Library	Technology	Music	Art	Phys Ed	Library	Technology	Music	Art	Phys Ed	Library	Technology	Music	Art	Phys Ed
8:50–9:35		3-A	3-B	3-C	3-D	3-A	3-B	3-C	3-D		3-B		3-D	3-A	3-C	3-C	3-D	3-A		3-B	3-D	3-C		3-B	3-A
9:40–11:10	MATH																								
11:10–12:00	SOCIAL STUDIES AND LANGUAGE ARTS																								
12:00–12:50	Lunch and recess																								
12:50–2:15	LANGUAGE ARTS																								
1:30–2:15	INTERVENTION AND ENRICHMENT TEAM																								
2:15–3:00	SCIENCE																								
3:05–3:15	Afternoon announcements, kindergarten and first-grade car riders and bus riders dismissal, 3:05 p.m. dismissal for second through fifth grades, 3:15 bus departure																								

Figure 7.3: Sample third-grade master schedule for instruction.

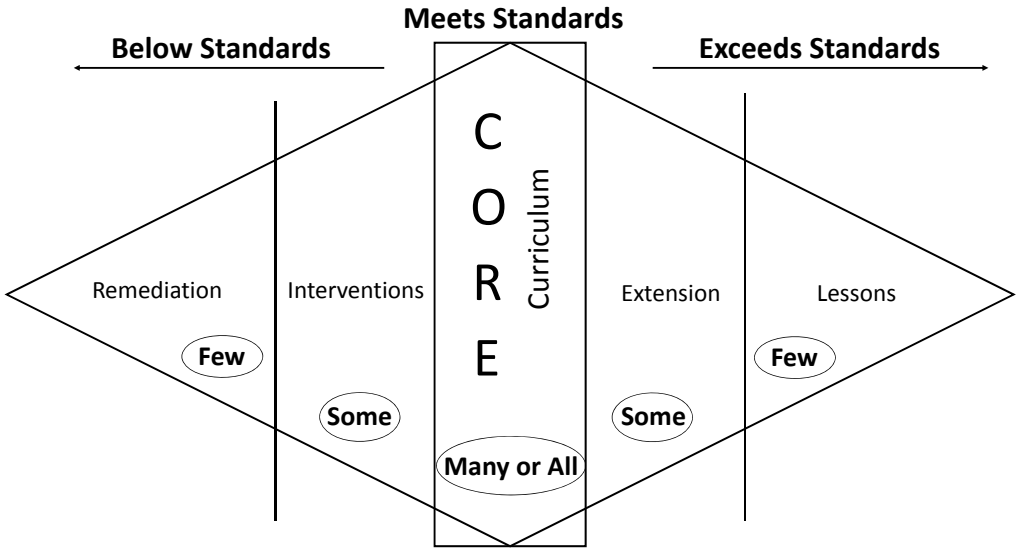
Third-Grade Master Schedule for Instruction

	Monday					Tuesday				Wednesday					Thursday						Friday				
8:00–8:15	Teacher work day begins.																								
8:15–8:40	Students arrive (breakfast, morning work, take-in procedures).																								
8:40–8:50	Tardy bell, morning announcements, instructional day begins																								
SPECIALS	**LIB**	**COM**	**GUI**	**MUS**	**PE**	**LIB**	**COM**	**GUI**	**PE**	**LIB**	**COM**	**GUI**	**MUS**	**PE**	**LIB**	**COM**	**GUI**	**MUS**	**ART**	**PE**	**LIB**	**COM**	**GUI**	**ART**	**PE**
8:50–9:20		3D		3J	3F	3J	3F		3D			3F	3D	3J	3J			3F		3D	3D		3J		**3F**
9:25–9:55			3D								3F				3F	3D				3J		3J			
9:55–11:45	Language Arts–Social Studies																								
11:45–12:15	Intervention–Enrichment																								
12:20–1:15	Lunch–Recess																								
1:15–2:15	Math																								
2:15–3:00	Science																								
3:00–3:10	Afternoon announcements and student dismissal																								
3:10–3:30	Instructional staff planning																								

How Does It Fit Together?



How Do We Differentiate?



The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Providing Students With Systematic Interventions and Extensions

DIRECTIONS: Individually, silently, and *honestly* assess the current reality of your school's implementation of each indicator listed in the left column. Consider what evidence or anecdotes support your assessment. This form may also be used to assess district or team implementation.

We acknowledge that the fundamental purpose of our school is to help all students achieve high levels of learning, and therefore, we provide students with systematic interventions when they struggle and extensions when they are proficient.

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
We provide a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he or she experiences initial difficulty. Students who are proficient have access to enriched and extended learning opportunities.	What happens when a student does not learn will depend almost exclusively on the teacher to whom the student is assigned. There is no coordinated school response to students who experience difficulty. Some teachers allow students to turn in late work; some do not. Some teachers allow students to retake a test; some do not. The tension that occurs at the conclusion of each unit when some students are proficient and ready to move forward and others are failing to demonstrate proficiency is left to each teacher to resolve.	The school has attempted to establish specific policies and procedures regarding homework, grading, parent notification of student progress, and referral of students to child study teams to assess their eligibility for special education services. If the school provides any additional support for students, it is either a "pull-out" program that removes students from new direct instruction or an optional after-school program. Policies are established for identifying students who are eligible for more advanced learning.	The school has taken steps to provide students with additional time and support when they experience difficulty. The staff is grappling with structural issues such as how to provide time for intervention during the school day in ways that do not remove the student from new direct instruction. The school schedule is regarded as a major impediment to intervention and enrichment, and staff members are unwilling to change it. Some are concerned that providing students with additional time and support is not holding them responsible for their own learning.	The school has developed a schoolwide plan to provide students who experience difficulty with additional time and support for learning in a way that is timely, directive, and systematic. It has made structural changes such as modifications in the daily schedule to support this system of interventions. Staff members have been assigned new roles and responsibilities to assist with the interventions. The faculty is looking for ways to make the system of interventions more effective.	The school has a highly coordinated system of interventions and extensions in place. The system is very proactive. Coordination with sender schools enables the staff to identify students who will benefit from additional time and support for learning even before they arrive at the school. The system is very fluid. Students move into intervention and enrichment easily and remain only as long as they benefit from it. The achievement of each student is monitored on a timely basis. Students who experience difficulty are required, rather than invited, to utilize the system of support. The plan is multilayered. If the current level of time and support is not sufficient to help a student become proficient, he or she is moved to the next level and receives increased time and support. All students are guaranteed access to this system of interventions regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned. The *school* responds to students and views those who are failing to learn as "undersupported" rather than "at risk."

Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet
Providing Students With Systematic Interventions and Extensions

Indicator of a PLC at Work	What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?	Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?	What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?	What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?
We provide a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he or she experiences initial difficulty. Students who are proficient have access to enriched and extended learning opportunities.				

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