

Chapter 2: Next Steps

Please complete the following next steps as you consider changes that may be appropriate for your school or district so you can prevent challenges by predicting them.

1. Examine current practices by considering the following questions.
 - To what extent do documentation demands (although important) inhibit the timeliness of supports for students?
 - To what extent do all staff (across the collaborative team, the school, and special education and general education) assume collective responsibility for all students' learning?
 - How clearly do staff understand the purposes of tiers?
 - Are the sets of supports that the three tiers represent (based on the definitions provided in chapter 3, page 47) present in your school?
 - Do all students have access to the tiers of support that evidence reveals they need?
 - What evidence suggests that all students are positively and adequately responding to instruction and, when required, intervention?
 - To what extent do staff consider RTI something that someone else does or something that is for only some students?
2. Discover research- and evidence-based common-sense practices by doing the following.
 - Consider ways in which you could both better systematize and streamline the processes for initiating Tier 2 and 3 supports (from identifying students, to determining needs and supports, to monitoring effectiveness, to making adjustments).
 - Strive to ensure that documentation demands do not act as a barrier or gatekeeper to students' receiving supports in a timely manner.
 - Revitalize and recommit to universal screening processes. Ensure that you provide differentiated Tier 1 supports and intensive Tier 3 supports to students in need at the very beginning of the school year; base these supports on evidence gathered toward the end of the previous year (or prior to the beginning of the year for incoming students).
 - Consider initiating or re-energizing RTI efforts by providing Tier 2 buffer supports. To do this, have teams agree on priorities within an upcoming unit for which they will gather common evidence of learning, to determine which students have and have not yet demonstrated mastery and provide collective supports (intervention and enrichment) during common times. Ideally, no new Tier 1 instruction or Tier 3 supports will occur during these common times.
 - Consider focusing Tier 3 academic supports on reading in the beginning; after identifying students in need, determine whether their needs exist in the areas of phonological awareness, multisensory awareness (if an auditory processing need is suspected), simple phonics, advanced phonics, fluency, or comprehension. Then

provide and monitor the effectiveness of targeted supports in the domain (or set of skills) of most immediate need.

- Be mindful that you do not discontinue Tier 3 supports prematurely. Students with significant reading, writing, numeracy, or behavioral needs will need time (possibly more than six weeks) to catch up; if students are making adequate progress, continue the supports, even across school years. You may find it appropriate to refer a student for comprehensive assessment so you can determine his or her eligibility for special education services. However, a student may not need the assessment (or not need the referral for assessment yet) if monitoring shows the student has positively responded to the supports and they have placed the student on track to close the gap between current and desired levels of achievement.
3. Identify what you will stop doing, and develop a stop-doing plan.
 4. Identify what you will start doing, and develop a start-doing plan.