Denton ISD Board Report: Response to Intervention

January 25, 2011

What is a Response to Intervention (RtI) model? Based on our belief that all students can learn, RtI is the practice of providing high quality, evidenced-based instruction that is matched to student needs. For some students to find academic or behavioral success, intervention(s) may be necessary. Interventions may be academic or behavioral in nature. The type, intensity, and duration of an intervention for a student is made through a problem-solving process by a team of professional staff members using individual student performance or behavioral data. Denton ISD uses a three-tiered intervention model that is best represented by a pyramid most commonly known as a *Pyramid of Intervention*. The Pyramid of Intervention is a visual representation of how the three tiers are organized. As you go up the pyramid, the interventions are more intense and are required for fewer students. See attached diagram of the Pyramid of Intervention.

How was the Denton ISD RtI plan (model) developed? Denton ISD had been using an RtI plan for several years that did not prove as effective as desired. So, in January 2010, Dr. Mike Mattingly placed Ms. Stacey Kockler, Elementary Social Studies Coordinator on special assignment to oversee the RtI Design Team. All campuses had the opportunity to have volunteers participate as members of the Design Team. They were given eight months to complete their work. The work was to be substantially finished by June 2010 with minor revisions made prior to the launch in August 2010. Several audiences were presented with the plan and were given the opportunity to give feedback as revisions were considered. The Design Team divided the work into four subcommittees to develop three plans: Elementary, Secondary (a. middle school and b. high school) and Behavioral. RtI systems which have a combined and balanced focus on academic and behavior supports yield greater student gains than do disjointed systems.

 Although many folks were involved in the Design Team, some of the primary crafters were the following: Elementary—Gennifer Smith, Sandy Brown, Karen Spalding, Cecilia Holt; Middle School— Gwen Perkins; High School—Regena Little; Behavioral—Larry Mankoff, Steve Rousseau, Rene Shelton, Rhonda Banks, Rachel Thomas, Ginger Ester, Holly McCuller, and Kati Willis. We based our plan on the works of Andrea Ogonosky, educational consultant and past president of Texas Association of School Psychologists, George Batsche, Co-Director for School Reform at the University of South Florida, and Randy Sprick, Lead Consultant for Safe and Civil Schools in Eugene, OR.

What is the purpose of a Behavioral RtI Plan? The Behavioral RtI Plan is used to foster improvements in the social, emotional and academic functioning of students. The

Behavioral RtI Plan is intended to provide campuses with a stepwise set of procedures to proactively address common student challenges. Development of social and emotional skills facilitates the greatest opportunities for cognitive growth and academic success. RtI is more than forms. It is a process by which we collect good data on the overall academic and behavioral functioning of students. This data is used to drive decision making related to implementation of interventions.

How does an RtI Plan work? You will be receiving hard copies of the handbooks that detail significant guidelines about how the plan operates including flow charts, suggested tiered interventions, forms, and other relative points. However, the purpose of this report is to give you an overall understanding of how RtI works in Denton ISD.

RtI is a general education process and all interventions are provided by general education teachers. *Universal screeners* (brief assessments) are used to predict which students may have difficulty learning. Teachers then differentiate their day-to-day instruction to assist all students. When a student begins to struggle even with a teacher's assistance at Tier I, a committee or team of educators is brought together to review collected data and other pertinent information related to the student. The team may recommend that the student needs additional assistance beyond Tier 1—a Tier 2 Intervention.

A Tier 2 Intervention is delivered outside of and in addition to the regular instruction in a small group of 3-5 students. It typically lasts 20-30 minutes, 3-5 times per week. Some examples of Tier 2 academic or behavioral interventions could be READ 180, tutorials, Classworks, Leveled Literacy Intervention, group counseling plus many, many others. Only 10-15% of students would be expected to receive Tier 2 intervention.

Progress monitoring is the method of frequent monitoring of student progress in a brief, reliable, valid way. Progress monitoring occurs at predetermined intervals so that the intervention has been administered for a period long enough that teachers are better equipped to determine if adjustments, if any, must be made for student success. Again, referring to guidelines and the flow chart, a team may determine that a student is making adequate progress, needs more of the same intervention, a different intervention, or a more intense intervention known as a Tier 3 Intervention.

With Tier 3 Interventions, a student receives one-on-one intensive assistance on a daily basis. Only about 5% of any school's population would ever need this level of intervention. In the event after attempts at finding appropriate assistance through individualized intervention a student does not demonstrate adequate progress, further assistance may be pursued for special education services.

How are RtI records kept? The Design Team developed a method of retrieving and storing forms and records in our Technology software system called Aware. This will allow the decision-making teams to be more efficient in accessing testing information and other critical data that may be impacting student performance or behavior, as well as, monitoring past decisions. The ease of moving information from school to school helps eliminate gaps in service to students in the event a student changes schools.

Is the Denton ISD RtI Model finalized? The system was primarily designed by campus staff members, with the focus on meeting the individual needs of students to ensure that no student in Denton ISD falls through the cracks. And, at the same time, use technology to assist teachers with efficiency and access. As we move through our initial year, we are gathering on-going feedback for the purpose of refining our RtI Plans for the future. Best practice calls for us to never be satisfied and always be on the search of ways to ensure academic and behavioral success for all of our Denton ISD students.