

Tuscumbia City Schools  
**Deshler Middle School**

Problem Solving Team/ Response to Intervention Manual



*Effective August 2011*  
*Updated August 9, 202*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF RtI AND PROBLEM SOLVING TEAMS

Problem Solving Teams (PST) will play a central role in implementation of RtI and will replace Building Based Student Support Teams (BBSST) in Tuscumbia City Schools as we move toward full implementation of the RtI framework. The purpose of the RtI framework in Alabama will be to combine core instruction, assessment and interventions within a multi-tiered system to increase students' achievement and to reduce behavior problems. PST will help to guide general education interventions services for all students who have academic or behavior difficulties.

### Response to Instruction and Effective Teaching

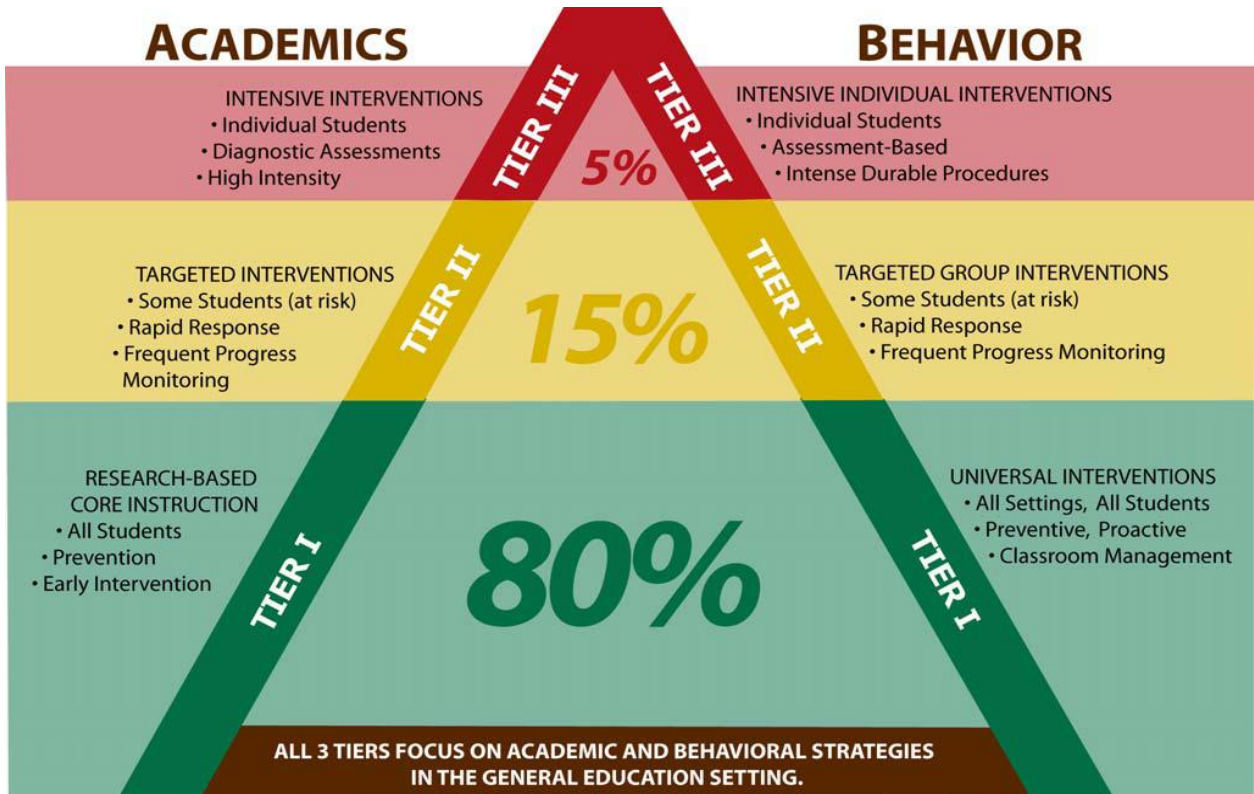
A good starting point in this process is to describe the connection between RtI and effective teaching practices by explaining what is meant by RtI. Simply put, RtI involves:

- Doing what is needed to teach students
- Teaching students using scientifically validated methods
- Checking regularly to see how well students are learning
- Adjusting instruction as needed to improve student outcomes

There are also some legal RtI connections. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) introduced the concepts of scientific research-based instruction with considerable emphasis upon positive outcomes for all students. Additionally, the individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) brought the ideas of scientific research-based instruction into the special education eligibility arena. The Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) provides the state framework for meeting the requirements of the Federal laws. The Problem Solving Team (PST) will be an essential component of the process in every school in Alabama. Tuscumbia City Schools will utilize Alabama's Tiered Instruction and Intervention Model. Response to Instruction is defined as: "an instructional framework that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, gifted, supplemental, and special education services in providing high quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. RtI combines core instruction, assessment, and intervention within a multi-tiered system to increase students' achievement and reduce behavior problems" (*Response to Instruction: Alabama's Core Support for All Students*, available online at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu))

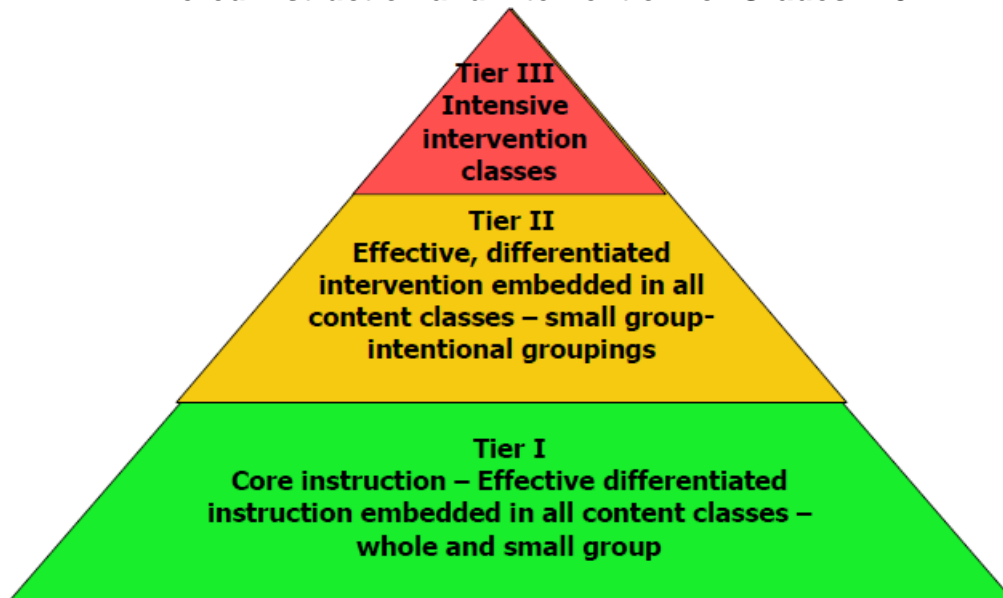
Providing scientific, research-based core instruction and interventions are key elements of the RtI framework. A graphic representation of tiers of instruction used by Tuscumbia City Schools (taken from *Response to Instruction: Alabama's Core Support for All Students*, available online at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)) is included in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Alabama's Tiered Instruction Model**

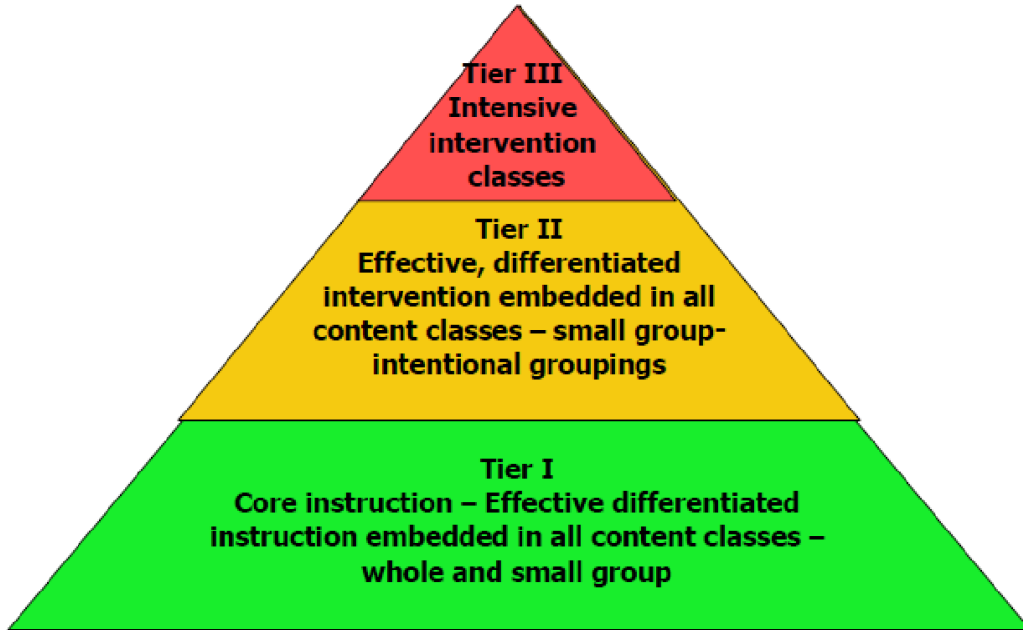


A model depicting tiers of instruction and intervention for use in grade K-3 is presented in Figure 2 and a similar model depicting these constructs for grades 4-12 is presented in Figure 3. Tiers of instruction and intervention designed to address behavior concerns are presented in Figure 4.

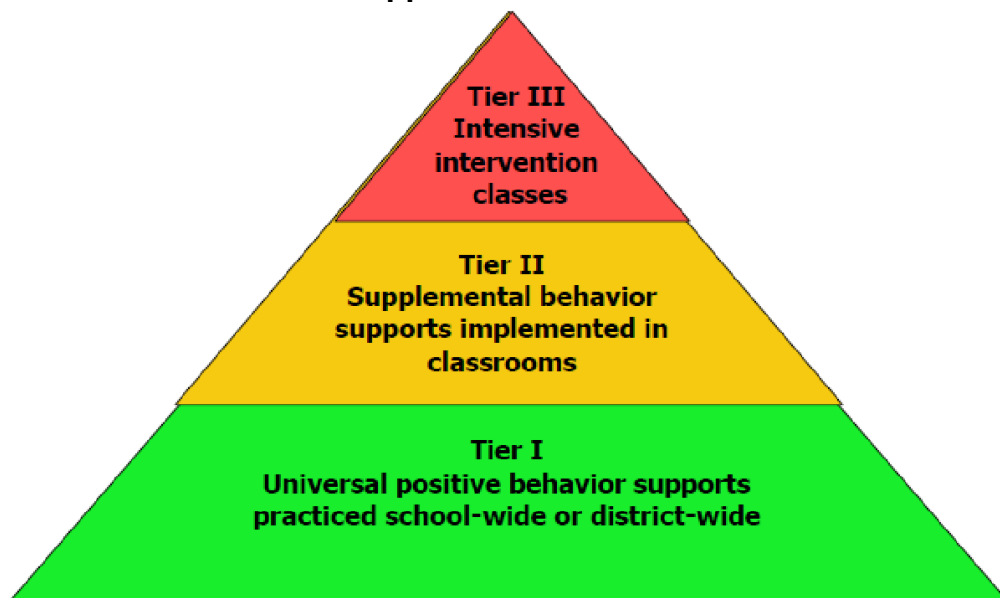
**Figure 2**  
**Tiered Instruction and Intervention for Grades K-3**



**Figure 3**  
**Tiered Instruction and Intervention for Grades 4-12**



**Figure 4**  
**Tiered Behavior Supports and Intervention for Grades K-12**



## **PROBLEM SOLVING TEAM DETAILS**

**PURPOSE OF PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAMS.** Problem Solving Teams (PST) are described on pages 12-13 of *Response to Instruction (Rtl) Alabama's Core Supports for All Students* which is available online at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu). The purpose of PST's is to help guide general education intervention services for all students who have academic or behavior difficulties. The PST is central to the schools' successful implementation of the Response to Instruction (Rtl) framework. The PST is responsible for the day-to-day decisions which ensure that (1) students receive instruction and interventions matched to their identified needs, (2) appropriate progress monitoring tools are utilized to provide evidence of students' response to instruction and intervention and (3) progress monitoring data are used to make timely instructional decisions which maximize student outcomes.

**NUMBER AND STRUCTURE OF PROBLEM SOLVING TEAMS.** Deshler Middle School will utilize individual grade-level PST's that will meet bi-weekly to monitor the students at that particular grade level. Then, at monthly meetings, a school-level PST including representatives from each grade level will review data from the weekly meetings.

**TEAM MEMBERS.** Team members include the following:

Classroom teachers- 1 from each grade level  
Assistant Principal  
Intervention Teacher  
Special Education Teacher  
School Counselor  
Principal  
System Rtl Facilitator

**TEAM MEMBER ROLES.** Team members should serve in the following roles to facilitate the work of the team:

- ❖ Chairperson (Assistant Principal)
  - o Determine which students will be reviewed during each meeting.
- ❖ Secretary
  - o Invite teachers of students who will be reviewed during each meeting.
  - o Record decisions made regarding each student reviewed.
  - o Generate parent progress reports.
- ❖ Timekeeper
  - o Allocate time available to discuss each student.
  - o Help to ensure that the team budgets time efficiently and that the meeting concludes at the agreed upon time.
- ❖ Data Manager (Instructional Coach)
  - o Share student lists with team members prior to the meeting.
  - o Present and explain progress monitoring data graphs for each student discussed by the team.
  - o Gather Student Intervention Documentation forms from intervention teachers for PST review.

## **IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS AND CHANGES**

**Scientific, research-based instruction and intervention.** The accommodations which were listed in the BBSST Manual will not meet the scientific, research-based intervention requirements included in current laws and regulations. The following points differentiate between scientific, research-based interventions and accommodations:

- Interventions are designed to improve student skills.
  - The student who struggles with reading may become more proficient in reading as the result of effective reading interventions (i.e. systematic, sequential multi-syllabic word phonics exercises which emphasize segmenting and blending syllables; systematic practice in chunking text to facilitate reading with proper inflection and rhythm; structured practice in summarizing text and identifying main ideas and details, utilizing Venn diagrams or other graphic organizers to compare and contrast aspects of vocabulary terms which are essential for text comprehension; etc.)
  - The student who struggles with math may become more proficient in math as the result of effective math interventions (i.e. structured daily practice in building fluent retrieval of basic arithmetic facts; guided practice in working with visual representations of mathematical ideas; daily guided practice in identifying common underlying structures in word problems; verbalization of thought processes during problem solving exercises; etc)
  - The student with behavioral difficulties may decrease inappropriate behaviors as a result of effective behavior interventions (i.e. implementation of a behavior plan or behavior contract; practice in using refocusing and self-control skills; participation in an anti-bullying curriculum; etc).
- Accommodations are designed to “level the playing field” and are not designed to improve student skills.
  - A student may make a better grade on a reading assignment because accommodations were implemented by the teacher (i.e. text was shortened, text was read to the student, extra time was allowed for the student to complete the reading assignment, etc.)
  - A student may make a better grade on a math test because accommodations were implemented by the teacher (i.e. fewer math problems were presented to the student; extra time was allowed for the student to complete the math assignment; etc.)

As accommodations do not represent scientific, research-based interventions; they are not to be included in the interventions considered by the PST. While accommodations do not improve student skills and are not considered to represent scientific, research-based interventions, any teacher may elect to employ accommodation when accommodations seem to be appropriate for use with any student.

**Continuous Instruction and Intervention Services.** When students begin the intervention process (Tier 2 or Tier 3), they will continue in that process until they have attained grade-level standards and skills or until they are referred to the next level. Unlike the BBSST process, Rtl interventions may be carried over from one school year to the next school year.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING TEAM'S WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The work of the PST will ensure the consistency and effectiveness of the school's implementation of the Rtl framework. Much of the work of the PST is documented by the materials included in the Student Intervention Folder which should include the PST Student Intervention Documentation Form; PST Student Intervention Plan, and copies of progress reports sent to parents (see appendix for all forms).

The following responsibilities detail the work to be accomplished by the PST in assisting with the implementation of the Rtl framework at the school level:

- 1. The PST ensures that academic and behavior screening data are gathered and utilized, as well as other important information to determine student needs for intervention and to verify the effectiveness of the school's Tier 1 instruction.**

**Students in Grade K-5.** Generally, all students in grades K-5 will be screened in the academic areas of math and reading as well as behavior at the beginning of each school year. Additionally, their progress will be monitored through benchmark assessments conducted at midyear and at year's end. This data should be reviewed by the PST to make sure that each student who needs intervention is provided that intervention in a timely manner.

- 2. The PST ensures that tiers of scientific, research-based instruction and intervention are provided with consistency.**

The consistent provision of scientific, research-based instruction and tiers of intervention is a key element of the Rtl framework. The PST's review of data from screening, benchmark assessments, and progress monitoring will provide initial information about the effectiveness of instruction and interventions. Information collected from observations will be used to evaluate the environment in the classroom and to document consistency of the school's implementation of scientific, research-based instruction and interventions.

- 3. The PST ensures that decisions to move students through the tiers are made with consistency based on the criteria established.**

The following are decision rules to determine the student's need for initial intervention, for movement into more or less intensive interventions, and for dismissal from interventions. These are generally based on data derived from screening procedures, benchmark testing, and progress monitoring:

### **Initial Intervention Screening Materials**

#### Reading

STAR Early Literacy  
STAR Reading  
STAR CBM  
Spelling Inventory  
Sight Word Test  
Sonday System Check ups  
ACAP  
IXL

#### Math

STAR Math  
IXL

#### Behavior

PBIS – School wide  
Classroom observation  
Data collection tool- 10 days min.  
Behavioral Intervention Plan

## Intervention Progress Monitor Materials

### Reading

STAR Reading  
STAR CBM  
IXL

### Math

STAR Math  
IXL

### Behavior

Positive Behavior Supports

If the student's progress monitoring data reflect 3 or more consecutive data points indicating no improvement, the PST will discuss the need to intensify or alter the intervention.

If the student progress monitoring data reflect less than 50% of the goal-based rate of improvement (ROI) after at least 8 weeks of intervention, the PST should consider the need to intensify or alter the intervention.

**4. The PST ensures that screening data and additional assessment data as needed are used in selecting specific interventions to meet individual student intervention needs.**

When screening results suggest a need for reading or math intervention, vision and hearing screening should be completed and those results will be considered by the PST. When screening results suggest a need for reading intervention, the PST will analyze screening results to determine the type of reading intervention which will best meet the student's needs (i.e. word-level intervention or comprehension intervention). If the decision regarding type of reading intervention needed is not obvious based on screening results and other available data, the PST may collect or request additional assessment information (i.e. phonics screener, word reading efficiency measure, vocabulary assessment, phonological processing assessment, etc).

When screening results suggest a need for math intervention, the PST will need to analyze results to determine the type of math intervention which will best meet the student's needs (i.e. basic operations interventions and math fluency or reasoning and concept application interventions). If the decision regarding the type of math intervention which will best meet the student's need is not obvious based on screening results and other data, the PST may collect or request additional assessment information.

**5. The PST ensures that an intervention plan which includes appropriate and measurable intervention goals is established for each student who receives intervention.**

The PST will develop an intervention plan for each student receiving intervention (See Appendix for an example of a Student Intervention Plan form). Intervention goals are set by determining the student's baseline level of performance on the task which will be used for progress monitoring and then by deciding the level of performance on the progress monitoring task which should be achieved by the student by the end of the year. Goals should be established to result in meaningful and measurable academic or behavioral gains.

**6. The PST will ensure that appropriate progress monitoring tools are selected to measure the student's response to the intervention.**

**7. The PST ensures that student progress monitoring is conducted on a specified schedule.**

Progress will be monitored weekly for students receiving intervention. Grade-level PST's will review weekly data.



**8. The PST reviews each student's accumulated progress monitoring data on a specified schedule.**

PST meetings will consist of a systematic review of the progress monitoring data accumulated for each student receiving intervention as well as discussion of factors related to the student's response to the intervention. Progress monitoring data will be graphed and the goal ROI and cumulative achieved ROI should be available for discussion. Examples of progress monitoring data graphs are included in Appendix. The PST will note specific recommendations for each student on the Student Intervention Documentation Form included in Appendix.

**9. The PST ensures that parents of students receiving intervention are provided with regular data-based intervention progress reports.**

The AAC and Federal laws and regulations specify that parents of students receiving interventions must be notified periodically of specific progress made by the student. The progress monitoring data discussed at the monthly PST meeting along with progress graphs and PST recommendations should be shared with parents. A Parent Notification of Intervention Letter should be sent to parents by the PST within 1 week of initiation of interventions. It is suggested that an Intervention Progress Report be sent to the parent at regular intervals. Copies of the Parent Notification of Intervention Letter and the Intervention Progress Report are included in Appendix.

**10. The PST ensures that as students transition out of interventions as a result of academic or behavior gains, the progress continues to be monitored for a period of at least twelve weeks to ensure a smooth transition into tiers of reduced instructional or behavioral support.**

When a student achieves Tier 2 intervention goals and grade-level standards are met, the PST may determine that the student should transition to Tier 1 instruction without intervention support. When students transition to Tier 1 without intervention support, progress monitoring should be continued for a reasonable period of time to ensure a successful transition and to monitor maintenance of gains achieved. When students achieve Tier 3 intervention goals and grade-level standards, the PST may determine that the students should transition to either Tier 2 interventions or to Tier 1 instruction with ongoing progress monitoring for a reasonable amount of time.

### **Special Education Completion Considerations**

When the IEP team finds that a student is no longer in need of special education services, the IEP team may determine that the student should transition to either Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. In coordination with the IEP team, the PST will ensure that appropriate intervention support and progress monitoring are provided to the student who is no longer in need of special education services.

### **PROBLEM SOLVING TEAM'S ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION**

The principal has the responsibility to ensure and document that all PST procedures are implemented with consistency. The principal has the responsibility to ensure and document that all tiers of instruction and intervention are provided with consistency. Maintaining all records of observations is one of the methods which should be utilized by the principal in documenting the consistency of instruction and intervention implementation. Consistent with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders, the principal has the responsibility to ensure that the *Alabama Administrative Code* (AAC) is observed. Some of the specific AAC requirements which impact the PST process include:

The Special Rule is a requirement for any child who is referred for an evaluation.

**(2) Special Rule. The public agency shall ensure that:**

- o AAC s290-8-9.02 (a), page 497

***“Prior to, or as part of the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel and”***

- o AAC s290-8-9.02 (b), page 497

***“Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction was provided to the child’s parents.”***

- o AAC s290-8-9.01 (4), page 498

***“Before a child is referred for a special education evaluation or concurrently during the evaluation process, intervention strategies must be implemented in the general education program and monitored by the PST for an appropriate period of time (a minimum of eight weeks), and be deemed unsuccessful. This rule may be waived for a child who has severe problems that require immediate attention, for three-and four-year olds, for five-year olds who have not been in kindergarten, for children with articulation, voice, or fluency problems, only, for children with a medical diagnosis of traumatic brain injury, and for a child who has been referred by his or her parents.”***

***The information below is required if using a response to instruction process for determining eligibility for a Specific Learning Disability.***

- o AAC s290-8-9.03 (10), page 514-

***“When determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a public agency will not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement. A public agency may use a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention.”***

- o AAC s290-8-9.02 (b) (c) (ii), page 515-

***The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in paragraph 2(i) of this section when using a process based on the child’s response to scientific research-based intervention.”***

***This is the evaluative component of the criteria listed above.***

- o AAC s290-8-9.03 (10) (d) (I-II), page 516-

***(ii) “Documentation that the child has participated in a process that assesses the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention including:***

***(I)The instructional strategies used and the student-centered data collected; and***

***(II)The documentation that the child’s parents were notified about:***

- I. ***The State’s policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data that would be collected and the general education services that would be provided,***
- II. ***Strategies for increasing the child’s rate of learning; and***
- III. ***The parents’ right to request an evaluation***

## SYSTEM-LEVEL REPORTING

Tuscumbia City School System's Central Office will collect Rtl data annually from each school. Examples of some of the types of Rtl outcome data are listed below and included in the sample form in Appendix.

1. Total number and percentage of students participating in Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions at the school.
2. Total number and percentage of students successfully completing interventions at the school.
3. Total number of students who have received interventions, total number and percentage of those students who subsequently are determined eligible for special education services.
4. Race/ethnicity data regarding students participating in interventions.

The Tuscumbia City Schools system's PST Facilitator will:

1. Work with principals at each school to ensure the consistency of the PST process.
2. Establish a mechanism to ensure consistent documentation of the work or PST's.
3. Collect needed information from each school regarding the number and percentage of students participating in and successfully completing interventions at Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels.
4. Collect needed information from each school regarding the number of students receiving interventions who subsequently receive special education services.
5. Collect needed information regarding race/ethnicity of students participating in Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

**Appendix A**  
**Deshler Middle School**  
**Rtl Student Referral Form**

**Student Information**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian contact prior to referral:  Phone Call  Note Home  E-mail  Conference

**Academic/Behavior Concern(s)**

Area(s) of Concern:  Academic  Behavior

Did not score benchmark on IXL/STAR/ACAP  Reading  Math

List and describe areas of concern with student's academic progress:


List and describe areas of concern with behavior:


Please check all that apply to this student:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Struggling/Failing         | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not complete assignments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive absences         | <input type="checkbox"/> Not prepared for class        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Motivation         | <input type="checkbox"/> ELL/Language problems         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor organizational skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Below grade level             |

**Classroom Accommodations**

Describe accommodations/strategies implemented in the classroom for this student:


**Assessment Data**

<b>STAR</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>
<b>IXL</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>

<b>STAR CBM</b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>WINTER</b>	<b>SPRING</b>
NWF			
ORF			

**Behavior Analysis**

Indicator	Never	Sometimes	Always
Listens to directions			
Follows classroom rules			
Transitions from one task to another			
Begins tasks promptly when instructed			
Is able to work cooperatively with peers			
Disrupts instruction			
Seeks attention from teacher/peers			
Fails to complete assignments			
Works cooperatively with peers			
Behavior results in office referral			

**Attachments**

Documentation should be provided when referring a student to the Problem Solving Team. Evidence should include:

1. Copy of ACAP Scores
2. IXL Diagnostic Reports
3. Reports in the area of concern
4. Student work samples
5. Other information available (attendance record, progress report, report card, discipline records etc)

# Deshler Middle School RtI Student Intervention Plan

## Section 1

### Student Information

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Hearing Screening</b>	<b>Vision Screening</b>
Date of last screening	Date of last screening
<input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Fail	<b>Near:</b> <input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Fail <b>Far:</b> <input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Fail

## Section 2

### Student Intervention Plan

**Types of Intervention Recommendations: Choose from either Tier 2 or Tier 3 Interventions**

<input type="checkbox"/> Tier 2 Intervention      Date Initiated: _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Reading: word-level intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Reading: comprehension intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Math: computation intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Math: reasoning/problem solving intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Other Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/> Tier 3 Intervention      Date Initiated: _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Reading: word-level intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Reading: comprehension intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Math: computation intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Math: reasoning/problem solving intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Intervention  <input type="checkbox"/> Other Intervention
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## Section 3

### Student Intervention Goal(s)

## Section 4

### Type(s) of Intervention

**Check as appropriate:**

- SPIRE
- IXL
- STAR CBM Progress Monitoring
- Behavior Interventions
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Deshler Middle School**  
598 North High Street  
Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674

Dear Parent/Guardian,

All students in Alabama schools are provided with standards-based, research-validated core academic instruction accompanied by classroom behavioral support. A tiered system of academic and/or behavioral assistance or intervention is provided based upon identified student needs. Interventions typically included specialized, research-based teaching strategies provided within the classroom or in small-group settings. As required by the Alabama Department of Education, a problem-solving team consisting of teachers, administrators, and other support personnel reviews student data regarding need for assistance; recommends the type of assistance to be provided, reviews data reflecting progress being made by students; and informs parents of this progress and of any recommendations regarding needed changes in interventions.

Deshler Middle is using the IXL diagnostic testing program, STAR Reading and Math Benchmarking and Progress Monitoring System, ACAP score results in addition to their classroom grades to monitor student performance in reading and math. This information helps us identify and provide help to students as needed. Based on the first assessment, we have decided that your child would benefit from assistance or intervention. We will be sharing this information with you by sending you a progress chart with the report card.

As a school staff, we look forward to working with your child and are pleased to be able to provide this additional help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read the above information about your child's academic progress.

---

(signature)

Deshler Middle School  
598 North High Street  
Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674

**(DATE HERE)**

Dear (Parent's Name),

We are providing (Student's Name) with extra assistance daily by using intervention strategies which target:

- \_\_\_\_\_ word-level reading skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ reading vocabulary skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ reading comprehension skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ math computation skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ math reasoning and problem-solving skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ behavior skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

We measure the progress being made weekly and the results of the progress measurements are graphed in the chart which is attached. Based on our progress measurements, we believe that, at this time, your child is:

- \_\_\_\_\_ making good progress and we plan to continue the intervention at this time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ making some progress and we plan to continue the intervention at this time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ making limited progress and we plan to consider changes in the intervention we are providing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ making insufficient progress and we are changing the intervention in an effort to assist your child achieve academic success.

As a school staff, we are pleased to have this opportunity to provide your child with this needed help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher.

**(\*\*MAINTAIN COPIES OF THESE LETTERS AND ATTACHED GRAPHS IN THE STUDENT INTERVENTION FOLDER\*\*)**