

## SECTION IX

# COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING AND RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is an educational system that has gained traction over the past few years. The framework for RTI is based upon the public health model of tiered intervention with its roots in special education: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 describes RTI as “a process based on a child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention.” On the other hand, RTI has evolved into an integral part of general education as we become more adept at defining student outcomes and assessing progress. Understanding RTI’s purpose and dynamics will help “frame your thinking” as you develop your comprehensive guidance program to support the student development and instructional efforts operating within your school.

The Response to Intervention (RTI) Action Network website succinctly states that RTI is a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Students' progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or both.” RTI involves regularly assessing proficiency in a skill, determining which students are behind, providing additional support for those students below benchmark, then adjusting the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness. Delivering scientifically based interventions with integrity, while frequently monitoring how the student responds and provides an invaluable data base of important information about the need to change or sustain the intervention. Program Essential Elements include: High Quality Classroom Instruction, Tiered Instruction and Intervention, On-going Student Assessment and Family Involvement. RTI holds the promise of ensuring that all children have access to high quality instruction and that struggling learners are identified, supported, and served early and effectively. Adopting an RTI model is about adopting best professional practice and insisting that we do what is best and necessary for all students.

The familiar triangle (Figure IX-1) depicts the 3-tiered model of RTI. This triangle also represents the famous generalization of 80-15-5. A school example would be that typically 80% of your students will “get it” or successfully understand as a result of your initial instruction/intervention. And 15% of your students will need additional strategic support or different strategies to “get it” while the final 5% will need more intensive, personalized interventions to be successful.

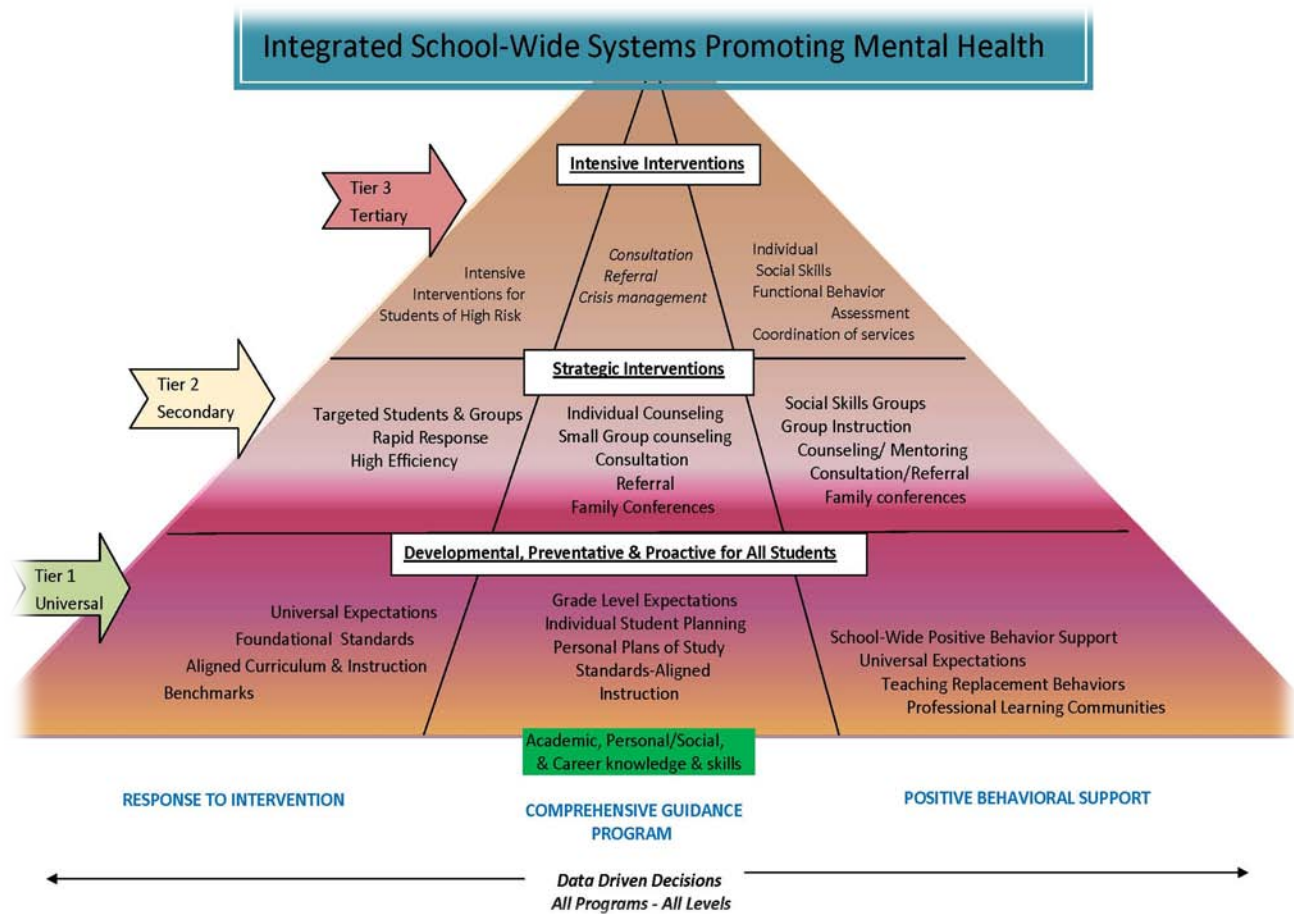
In simplistic terms, this is the basic premise on which RTI is constructed. This generalization obviously has a multitude of variables, including the percentages of student success and is not intended to be a specific rule. One elementary building using RTI began by assessing student reading levels. Much to their surprise, over 40% of their students needed Tier 3 interventions! Needless to say that revelation completely altered their thinking and efforts.

The right side of this triangle represents the tiered framework that can be applied to multiple programs addressing academic achievement and behavior, such as special education, math, reading, comprehensive guidance and counseling, and behavioral intervention programs. Using student behavior as an example, Tier 1 refers to the expectations, rules, policies, practices and interventions that are provided for ALL students. School wide and classroom expectations, consequences, and



supports are examples. Tier 2 represents the interventions used to help students who demonstrate barriers to achieving Tier 1 expectations. What corrective actions do we provide to help these children learn and succeed? Tier 3 interventions apply to that small percentage of students who need yet more personalized support. If we believe that all students can learn (and behave) then we must continually assess and improve how we support that learning. RTI provides a structure to evaluate and enhance adult behaviors and actions.

Figure IX-1



How does this apply to you, the counselor? Missouri’s Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program naturally frames itself in this RTI model. When fully implemented, a comprehensive program proactively addresses the personal/social, academic, and career needs of all students while addressing their barriers to learning.

**Tier One** consists of *universal* programming for all students based on the Guidance and Counseling Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and includes the Guidance and Counseling Curriculum, Individual Student Planning with Personal Plans of Study and Responsive Services. In the broader context of school, this can include all programs and efforts that address the developmental needs of all students. Advisory programs, character education and PBIS are examples. Intuitively, Tier 1 is the key. The effectiveness of lower tier initiatives directly impacts the need for upper tier interventions.

**Tier Two** consists of strategic efforts to identify students who demonstrate barriers to learning and support them with targeted interventions. Responsive Services includes individual and group counseling, family conferences, and referrals to outside agencies along with multiple school based interventions designed to help students personally achieve the goals established in the Guidance and Counseling GLEs. Partnership for Results Based Evaluation (PRoBE) projects typically are Tier 2 interventions as they apply specific interventions with a targeted group of students over a relatively short period of time. (Examples of Partnership for Results Based Evaluation (PRoBE) Projects can be found at the Guidance eLearning Center website under Evaluation.)

**Tier Three** consists of intensive interventions for students who have not yet positively responded to prior initiatives. Crisis management, coordination of district and community resources, referrals for intensive support, and intervention coordination are examples of specific Responsive Services.

The RTI model is an extremely helpful way to systematically evaluate what adults, do to provide the appropriate support for every child's learning. David P. Prasse, Ph.D. from Loyola University states that "RTI is a cornerstone of a problem-solving service delivery system." Note the key words, problem solving and system. Both are on-going. Evaluation of the guidance program and interventions provides timely data to continually assess effectiveness and better support each student's ability to succeed.

Providing definitive structures, programs, and practices to facilitate student success requires collaborative effort from every adult in the school. It is essential that leaders of the comprehensive guidance and counseling program, it is essential that you understand and champion the key guidance and counseling program components that support the academic, career, and personal/social development of your students. Using the RTI model of tiered intervention provides a solid framework to not only evaluate individual students but also to define, plan, and assess the effectiveness of your efforts while creating a shared mental model that is needed to effectively communicate and work with your administrators and teachers. Together, we can!