

FROM THE COUNCIL

Welcome to the first Eaton County RtI Newsletter! The purpose of this newsletter is to provide Eaton County educators with up-to-date information regarding the various RtI implementation activities that are happening throughout the county.

Eaton ISD, has formed a RtI Council which consists of members representing the general and special education departments. The role of the EISD RtI Council is to develop and maintain a working action plan for county-wide implementation of RtI practices. Specifically, the council is charged with outlining a process which will provide local districts with the technical support needed to build sustainable infrastructure for the phase in of consistent RtI practices over the next three to

five years. We look forward to collaborating with Eaton County educators as we move forward with these endeavors!

RtI 101

What exactly is RtI? RtI stands for Response to Intervention and is quite simply a service delivery model for instruction.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) definition is as follows: RtI is an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral needs of all students.

Eleven essential components

of Michigan's RtI framework are as follows:

- Implement effective instruction for all children
- Intervene early
- Provide a multi-tiered model of instruction
- Utilize a collaborative problem-solving model
- Assure a research-based core curriculum aligned with Michigan Common Core Standards
- Implement research-based scientifically validated interventions and instruction
- Monitor student progress to inform instruction
- Use data to make educational decisions
- Use assessments for three purposes: universal screening, diagnostics, progress monitoring
- Implement with fidelity
- Engage parents and community

CHECK IT OUT!

Have you heard about the national Common Core Standards? The Common Core Standards represent a set of expectations which span across grades K-12 for student knowledge that culminates in skills high school graduates need to master to achieve in college or careers. These standards have been adopted by Michigan and as of now it is reported that districts will be assessed on these standards starting in 2015.

The standards are research and evidence based, aligned with college and work expectations, rigorous, and internationally benchmarked. As districts evaluate core curriculums as part of RtI implementation, alignment with the new standards will be another factor to consider. To learn more, check out the following websites:

<http://www.commoncore.org/>

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/common_core_QandA_311926_7.pdf

TOPIC OF THE MONTH—Why RtI?

Seven reasons to adopt an RtI Model:

1. RtI is one of the fastest growing educational reforms we have ever seen.
2. Estimates indicate that 70% of schools currently report using RtI practices.
3. Federal and State initiatives are moving in this direction.
4. RtI focuses on improving student outcomes for all students.
5. By identifying students early and providing research based interventions, school districts are able to better allocate resources to help many more students be successful in school.
6. 20 minutes of literacy intervention in Kindergarten yields the same or better results than 90-120 minutes of intervention in the 4th grade.
7. Many components of an RtI model are already observed in districts across Eaton County.

*“Watch for more
local district
highlights in “Hot
Spots”!*

HOT SPOTS

On a recent site visit to Maple Valley’s Maplewood Elementary school, I was given the extraordinary opportunity to be able to talk with and shadow their balanced literacy consultant while she worked with the teachers and students in the building.

While observing one classroom in particular, I began to feel like I was sitting in the “model classroom” according to Steven Layne. The phenomenal organization of her reading area encourages and excites her students to read both in class and at home. She also has suggested reading displayed throughout the room that would encourage even a reluctant reader to pick up a book and dive in.

This teacher has truly created a literacy rich environment where her students know

how important reading and writing is to their success.

After our observation, I watched and listened as the consultant praised the teacher for the great strides she was making and for how well she conducted her class. You could see the pride in both of these women’s eyes as they reflected on the hard work that was going into creating this fantastic educational environment.

What a great example of the excellent work going on at Maple Valley Schools! Thanks to Laura Ranville (consultant) and Kelly Murton (classroom teacher).

Submitted by Amy Henry, Eaton ISD Education Specialist

THE FIVE BIG IDEAS IN READING

1. *Phonemic Awareness*

Refers to the ability to recognize, consider, and manipulate the individual sounds of spoken words. Phonemic awareness involves understanding that words are composed of individual sounds, or phonemes.

2. *Phonics*

Refers to the relationship between the individual sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language. This is often referred to as letter-sound correspondence.

****Although phonemic awareness and phonics are related, they are commonly misunderstood as being the same thing. While phonemic awareness involves the understanding that **spoken** language is made up of individual sounds (phonemes), phonics involves an understanding that **written** language is made up of letters (graphemes) that represent sounds.**

3. *Fluency*

Refers to the ability to read text accurately and rapidly. Fluent readers do not rely on decoding skills and are able to recognize words automatically. Fluency also involves reading effortlessly and with expression.

4. *Vocabulary*

Involves having appropriate word knowledge in order to communicate effectively. This includes vocabulary used in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary knowledge is learned mostly indirectly, but some vocabulary requires purposeful instruction.

5. *Text Comprehension*

Refers to one's understanding of a text. Comprehension is the ultimate goal and reason for reading. Good readers are able to be purposeful and active as they process textual information.

“Effective reading instruction includes systematic, sequential, and explicit instruction in the “Big 5”.

Eaton County Reading Guarantee

All districts in Eaton County have signed on to the Reading Guarantee. The Reading Guarantee outlines “reading responsibilities” for the local school district, the student, the parent, and Eaton Intermediate School District. These responsibilities focus on research based strategies that enhance the chances children will become proficient readers. The instructional focus of the Reading Guarantee is aligned with Response to Intervention (RtI) practices. When the terms (responsibilities) of this guarantee have been successfully met, students not reaching grade level benchmarks or not demonstrating a year’s growth, will receive at no cost to the student, parent, or the local district, six weeks of additional summer reading instruction provided by the Eaton Intermediate School District. For more information and to read the entire Reading Guarantee document, go to eatonisd.org.



Universal Screening

Universal Screening is considered an essential component of any Rtl system,

Universal screening includes:

- Procedures designed to provide the early identification of students at-risk of learning difficulties
- Assessments which are administered to all students typically three times a year (fall, winter, spring)
- Individual or group administered assessments which are reliable, valid, low cost, brief, aligned with the curriculum, and sensitive to incremental growth,

It is recommended that universal screening data be used to inform curriculum and instructional decisions at several levels including the classroom, grade, building, and district levels.

DIBELS CORNER

For the purpose of Universal Screening for reading, EISD supports the use of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) with all students in grades K-6 three times per year. DIBELS meets the recommended Universal Screening criteria of being research based, cost effective, brief, sensitive to growth, and standardized.

- DIBELS is based on the 5 big ideas of reading (phonemic awareness, alphabetic principal, fluency, vocabulary, & comprehension.)
- DIBELS subtests are based on research proven key indicators identified for the big ideas.
- These key indicators are highly predictive– this is why we measure them!
- DIBELS is not intended to be used as a comprehensive reading measure or a diagnostic assessment, it is a valid screener.
- A single DIBELS score should not be the only piece of data used to guide instructional decisions.
- It's not about DIBELS, it's about what the indicator is suggesting about that child's performance at that time and how it relates to their future, does the child have the literacy skill or not?
- Reading trajectories are established early, students on a low trajectory tend to stay on a low trajectory and get farther and farther behind unless we identify them early and focus instruction on the big ideas of reading.
- Quite simply, we cannot wait to intervene, we need to identify and intervene early, DIBLES helps us do just that!

DIBELS Training update: Each district has been asked to send a team of 5 teachers for DIBELS training to the EISD in late April. These district teams will develop an implementation proposal for phasing in use of the most current form of DIBELS for the 2010/2011 school year. Ongoing support and coaching in administering DIBELS in a school wide fashion, analyzing the results, and setting up progress monitoring will be provided by the EISD.