

FAQs

How do I use the Houghton Mifflin Anthology?

The anthology is used to teach reading skills and strategies, including phonics/decoding, word learning and comprehension strategies. The teacher models the strategies and skills and leads the class in guided practice using a variety of shared reading techniques including teacher modeling, choral reading, partner reading, popcorn reading, SQRR (Scan, Question, Read, Respond), pyramid reading, numbered heads and cloze reading.

How do the Leveled Readers fit into my literacy program?

The leveled readers are used during guided reading to practice the skills and strategies introduced in the anthology lesson. If students are below benchmark in decoding, they should use the phonics readers, instead of the leveled readers to work on phonics/decoding skills and be brought up to grade level.

When do I use the HM student practice books?

The student practice pages include a wide variety of materials. Some of the pages are designed to be used as guided practice, while others are designed to be independent work. The pages vary in difficulty, too. Before assigning a page, ask yourself the purpose of the assignment. Is it for review? Extra practice? Assessment? Are the instructions clear, or do you need to guide students through the material? Remember, you do not need to do all or even most of the pages. Pick and choose wisely, according to the abilities and needs of your students.

What is RTI?

Response to Instruction (RTI) is a districtwide early detection and prevention system that will support adjustment of instruction to meet the needs of all students. RTI involves:

- (1.) The delivery of systematic, high-quality, research-based core instruction that is aligned to standards and grade level expectations;
- (2.) Universal screening with all students to inform instructional decision making;
- (3.) The delivery of additional research-based targeted interventions based on student need; and
- (4.) Progress monitoring to examine the effects of interventions and inform instruction for students who are at-risk.

Why does DDS call RTI Response to 'Instruction' rather than 'Intervention?'

While RTI is nationally referred to as Response to Intervention, the DDS intentionally changed intervention to instruction because the foundation of RTI is providing high-quality instruction to **all** students based on need, not just intervention.

Why is DDSD implementing RTI?

Implementing RTI will assist teachers in shining a light on every child and provide the opportunity to support that child with specific instruction that will meet their needs.

DDSD is committed to providing an equitable education that meets all students' needs regardless of which school they attend. Standardizing the implementation of RTI provides individual support for each child within our school district.

How does RTI fit in with other district initiatives?

RTI is the district's education service delivery model to help all students achieve college and career readiness and graduate from high school.

All district initiatives should support the implementation of RTI for academics and social emotional learning to achieve this goal.

How does RTI apply to students who are above proficient or advanced?

RTI is not just about providing instructional support to students who are struggling. RTI is about meeting the needs of ALL students.

When we universally screen three times per year, we can examine the growth of all students. If advanced students are not making gains, then the team must investigate why and provide instruction that will meet their needs.

RTI is about accelerating the learning of all students.

Isn't RTI for special education?

The misconception that RTI is only for special education stems from language that is found in special education law. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) encourages schools to begin using a process that determines if a student responds to "scientific, research-based intervention" prior to or as part of the evaluation procedures to determine whether a student has a specific learning disability (SLD) and needs special education. However, RTI is an early detection and prevention system for screening, instructing and monitoring all students, not just students with suspected disabilities.

The goal of RTI is to provide the right amount of supports based on need so all students achieve grade level expectations. The addition of the aforementioned language in IDEA better aligns special education law with general education.

Who is responsible for implementing RTI?

Shared ownership is a critical component within an RTI service delivery model. In other words, all staff assume an active role in instruction and assessment for all students.

One teacher does not implement all of the RTI components (e.g., screening, instruction, intervention, monitoring, decision-making, etc.) by him/herself without schoolwide and districtwide supports.

RTI involves a collective group of education professionals working together to implement a continuum of supports.

What is the role of entitlement programs such as Title I, Special Education and ELL in an RTI service delivery model?

RTI is about matching instruction to student needs and monitoring the effect of that instruction for all students regardless of the entitlement program for which a student qualifies.

In an RTI service delivery model, all staff and departments within a school work cooperatively, pool resources, and share expertise to meet shared goals for instruction and assessment.

Entitlement programs provide extra funds for staff, training and resources for identified populations of students, which can support implementation of RTI.

Why are we starting with reading?

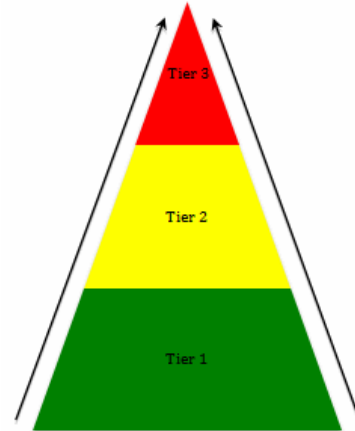
Most districts and schools start implementing RTI in the area of reading because there is a strong research base for instruction and assessment in this area and because reading impacts all other subject areas, including math.

Once a district builds the infrastructure for and implements RTI in reading, it is a natural transition to other academic areas. However, DDS has been implementing PBIS for several years, which is the social/emotional multi-tiered instructional model.

What are ‘tiers’?

In an RTI service delivery model, some students receive more intensive instruction based on need. These different levels of instructional intensity are referred to as ‘tiers.’

From Tier 1 to Tier 3 the continuum of instructional intensity increases, while the percentage of students requiring intensive support decreases.



Tier 3: Few Students

Additional intensified instruction /intervention for students who are significantly below grade level

Progress monitor weekly

Individualized learning projects for highly advanced students

Tier 2: Some Students

Additional targeted instruction/intervention for students who are at-risk

Progress monitor 1-2 times per month

Accelerated learning opportunities for advanced students

Tier 1: All Students

Standards-aligned core instruction

Universal screening 3 x a year

What is universal screening?

In the context of an RTI model, universal screening is the first step in evaluating the effectiveness of core instruction for all students. It is also the mechanism for targeting students who struggle to learn when provided a scientific, evidence-based general education (Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007).

Although most research on universal screening is in the area of reading, there is also research support for the utility of universal screening in the areas of writing, math, and behavior (Fuchs et al., 2007; Jenkins et al., 2007).

Why are all students screened three times per year?

In a prevention approach, all students are screened:

- to examine the effects of standards-aligned core instruction on student performance;

- to proactively identify students who need instructional interventions and enrichment in a timely manner rather than waiting for students to fail before providing assistance; and
- to monitor progress throughout the school year to determine whether all students are making growth, from the struggling student to the advanced student.

What do we do with the information from universal screening and progress monitoring?

The data from the universal screening will assist us in answering three interrelated questions:

- (1) Is there a problem and what is it?
- (2) Why is it happening?
- (3) What are we going to do about it? and

The problem-solving method can be applied to all students in a preK-12 system, including small groups and individual students. Each school will analyze universal screening data for growth after each benchmark period (fall, winter, and spring) to determine the following:

- rate of growth from fall to winter, winter to spring, and fall to spring for individual students, classrooms, and grade levels;
- students in need of further intervention and/or assessment on specific target areas, as established by pre-set benchmarks; and
- progress toward goals for classrooms, grade levels, schools, and district.

What is progress monitoring?

In the context of an RTI prevention model, progress monitoring is used to assess student progress or performance in those areas in which they were identified by universal screening as being at-risk for failure (e.g., reading, mathematics, social behavior).

It is the method by which teachers or other school personnel determine if students are benefitting appropriately from the typical instructional program, identify students who are not making adequate progress, and help guide the construction of effective intervention programs for students who are not profiting from typical instruction (Fuchs & Stecker, 2003).

According to the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, progress monitoring has the following benefits when it is implemented correctly:

1. students learn more quickly because they are receiving more appropriate instruction;
2. teachers make more informed instructional decisions;
3. documentation of student progress is available for accountability purposes;

4. communication improves between families and professionals about student progress;
5. teachers have higher expectations for their students; and, in many cases,
6. there is a decrease in special education referrals.

Are we still doing the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) at the elementary level?

No. Universal screening will replace the DRA district requirement.