New Hampshire Department of Education

Response to Intervention Strategic Plan

2009 - 2013

Goal

The goal of the NH Response to Intervention[1] (RTI) Task Force is to lead the transformation of instruction in New Hampshire school districts in accordance with the principles and practices of RTI.

Vision

New Hampshire educational systems continually evolve in response to consensus on effective instructional practices. All students' academic and behavioral needs are addressed in a timely manner through effective and targeted supports that enhance student outcomes.

The **NH RTI Strategic Plan** provides a map for the design and implementation of a systematic state and district framework. (The model is further described in Appendix A). It outlines a process for scaling up evidence-based practices statewide informed by local district experiences with RtI and coordinates with the US Department of Education's four reform priorities:

- o Adopting internationally-benchmarked standards and assessments;
- o Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals;
- o Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve their practices;
- o Turning around low-performing schools.

The NH RTI Strategic Plan also aligns with key initiatives of the New Hampshire Department of Education's (NH DOE) Statewide Systems of Support (SSOS) including High School Redesign, Focused Monitoring Process, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), NH RESPONDS, NH preK - 16 Literacy and Numeracy Action Plans for the 21st Century, and

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[1] Response to Intervention *is the practice of providing high-quality instruction matched to student need, using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions. (NASDSE, 2008)*

identifies how the NH DOE will lead the transformation of local school districts in implementing RTI.

As with any map for a change process, this strategic plan is seen as a living document. It is written based on our current understanding of implementation science and RTI - in the context of current educational priorities. It should be updated as new insights from science and practice arise. With these strategic goals and action items it is the aim of the NH RTI Task Force to develop an infrastructure aligned with our theory of action (presented in Appendix A) that can take full advantage of the resources and expertise available to us today and in the future.

Three groups are referenced throughout the goals and action items of this strategic plan: State Leadership Team; Professional Learning Community & Systems Change Advisory; and Implementation Teams. These are defined as:

> *State Leadership Team* is comprised of decision makers (e.g., Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Division Directors, Bureau Administrators) who can actively support capacity expansion and align current policies, structures, roles, and functions.

> The State Leadership Team is directly informed through participation in a **Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Systems Change Advisory (SCA)** group with stakeholders from key professional organizations, institutes of higher education, and school/district implementation teams. (The NH RT I Task Force would evolve into this role.)

> *Implementation Teams* are comprised of administrators, teachers, staff, and community partners who are actively engaged in implementing and sustaining RTI in local schools and districts.

This plan does not address all that is needed for transformation. Other initiatives in NH are already addressing some key components (e.g., NH RESPONDS is working on RTI Competencies and teacher certification).

The NH RTI Task Force acknowledges that the ultimate success or failure of efforts to transform instruction in NH schools, to align with the principles and practices of RTI, relies on guidance from state and local leaders and their consensus with this vision.

Goal 1 – Operational Infrastructure

By September of 2012 the NH DOE will have an **operational infrastructure** that integrates the RTI Framework with the State System of Support (SSOS) at the local level.

Operational Infrastructure Action Items:

- Establish a position in the Division of Instruction to support the implementation of RTI, oversee the alignment of multiple initiatives within the NHDOE and to foster connections among New Hampshire schools, school communities, Regional and National technical assistance centers.
- Establish the **Professional Learning Community (PLC)[2] and Systems Change Advisory (SCA)** made up of representative education community members (including members from the State Leadership Team, Implementation Teams, and the NH RTI Task Force – see Figure 2, Appendix A). This workgroup will act in an advisory capacity to review, distill, and disseminate current and historical research, data, and make recommendations regarding RTI systems. (The PLC- SCA will replace what is currently known as the NH RTI Task Force.) . The NH RTI Task Force joins with others in the NHDOE to form this cross-division workgroup.
- Maintain and expand the partnership with the New Hampshire School Administrators Association's (NHSAA) regional system that supports NHSAA members in the development of curriculum, instruction and assessment (CIA). At least one member of the statewide NHSAA/CIA Committee will participate in the PLC-SCA (Figure 2, Appendix A). The integration of the NHSAA/CIA within the PLC-SCA will enhance communication between the field and the NHDOE. A focus of the NHSAA/CIA regional groups will be to support the development of RTI systems throughout the state.
- Maintain and expand the operational infrastructure necessary to promote the work of the NH RTI Task Force through the PLC- SCA
  - o NH RTI Task Force (PLC-SCA) Activities -
    - Maintaining and sustaining membership composition
    - Scheduling and managing NH RTI Task Force meeting
    - Organizing and presenting conferences

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[2] *Professional Learning Communities are groups of educators, administrators, community members, and other stakeholders who:* collectively, systematically, and aggressively identify and solve problems as they emerge; create places of action and experimentation; and, are willing to test ideas that seem to hold potential for improving student achievement. Dufour et al?

- Managing the transition from the NH RTI Task Force to the NHDOE-embedded PLC-SCA and disseminating information through the NHSAA/CIA structure
- Continue to <u>develop</u> support materials that Implementation Teams (schools and districts) can use to achieve consensus, develop infrastructure, and implement effective RTI principles and practices
- <u>Develop and disseminate</u> exemplars of effective RTI Implementation to NH school districts including:
    - Sample school schedules
    - Use of staff and space for capacity building.
    - Professional development models that have resulted in advanced and successful RTI systems.
    - Practices in gathering and analyzing student outcome data.
- Conduct long-range planning that aligns NH RTI with other school reform efforts and the SSOS such as, NH Literacy/Numeracy Action Plans, Focused Monitoring, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation, High School Re-Design, NH RESPONDS, Effective Teacher and Leader Frameworks, etc.

Goal 2 - Communications

By September 2010 the NH RTI Task Force/PLC-SCA will establish a mechanism to ensure **transparent and reciprocal communication** among all relevant stakeholders about its work and outcomes.

Communications Action Items:
- Foster understanding and consensus among the State Leadership Team/NH DOE, PLC-SCA, and Implementation Teams with the framework for statewide implementation of RTI (as presented in Appendix A).
- Create and use a NH TI logo.
- Establish regular, ongoing correspondence to and from the NH RTI Task Force, the field and key stakeholders. Multiple formats of correspondence will include:
    - Manage and maintain the NH RTI website content.
    - Develop newsletters, email updates, and other forms of communication. (This will include public newsletters on the activities of the State Leadership Team and Local Implementation Teams. See Figure 2, Appendix A.)
    - Use NH DOE *Key Messages* and web calendar to share information and important events
    - Other communication venues as they become available such as Wikis, moodle sites, etc.

- Ensure that NH Task Force RTI communications, website, and resources (e.g., *Interactive Guide*) are accessible to all.
- Create a schedule for reviewing and updating the NH RTI *Interactive Guide*
- Disseminate links to the RTI *Interactive Guide* to key New Hampshire educational organizations.
- Promote deepened and shared understanding of high-quality professional development as it relates to RTI. High-quality professional development is student-focused, data-driven, research-based, intensive, sustained, and job-embedded and characterized by collaboration, practice, and reflection.
- Communicate regularly with state professional organizations (e.g., New Hampshire School Administrators Association, New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators, New Hampshire Association of School Principals, NH Teachers of Mathematics (NHTM), NH Council of Teachers of English (NHCTE), Granite State Reading Council, Parent Information Resource Center, New Hampshire School Boards Association, New Hampshire Association for Supervision and Curriculum) to support the work of the NH RTI Task Force, State Leadership Team, and Local Implementation Teams.
- Ensure that local and state data on effective national and state model RTI programs are identified and distributed to educators and leaders.

Goal 3 - Teacher and Leader Education

By July 2011, in order to support the development of effective teachers and leaders, a **professional development** plan will align the state's multiple school improvement initiatives to support the design and implementation of RTI systems at the local level.

Teacher and Leader Education Action Items:
- Collaborate with stakeholders (e.g., professional organizations, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), agencies that provide professional development, etc.), State Leadership Team, Local Implementation Teams, and regional/national centers to:
    - Create a professional development master plan to support and scale-up statewide capacity building and implementation that support effective RTI models.
    - Offer differentiated professional development that is student-focused, data-driven, research-based, intensive, sustained, and job embedded and characterized by collaboration, practice and reflection to support the education of effective teachers and leaders and the NH Effective Teacher and Leader Frameworks

- Integrate the concepts and practices inherent in an RTI instructional approach into mentoring and coaching efforts.
- Promote parent understanding of RTI and support for district efforts in developing comprehensive problem-solving models for educational decision making.
- Communicate and support the pre-service needs of the educational field to IHEs regarding the understanding and implementation of an effective RTI model.

Goal 4 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

By September 2012 the PLC-SCA will act in an <u>advisory capacity</u> to the NH DOE and to Implementation Teams (schools and districts) regarding the **efficacy of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices** that support effective RtI implementation.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Action Items:

- **Curriculum**
  - Support the alignment of district curricula with the Common Core State Literacy and Numeracy Standards through NH DOE technical assistance and professional development as outlined in the professional development master plan
- **Instruction**
  - Promote evidence-based instructional practices at the Tier 1, 2 and 3 levels to support high quality instruction for all New Hampshire learners through the NH DOE technical assistance and professional development master plan related activities.
  - Review and recommend, through the NH RTI website and NH DOE endorsed professional development offerings, evidence-based resources at the Tier 1, 2 and 3 levels to support school efforts in reading, mathematics, written language, behavior, and other targeted instructional areas.

- **Assessment**
  - Support evidenced-based assessments and practices at the Tier 1, 2 and 3 levels in order to provide high-quality assessment practices that benefit all New Hampshire learners through NH DOE technical assistance and professional development as outlined in the professional development master plan.
  - Review and recommend, through the NH RTI website, evidence-based resources and efficient assessment tools to enhance practice in Tier 1, 2 and 3 levels.

- o Support and disseminate via the NH RTI website successful New Hampshire educational models which are driven and informed by valid and reliable assessment data at the state, SAU, district, school, grade, classroom, and individual student levels.

Goal 5 – Use of Data

By September 2012 the NH DOE, PLC-SCA, and Implementation Teams (schools and districts) will fully access and use **longitudinal student data** to advance and support RTI systems.

Data Action Items:
- Ensure that the NH DOE's Comprehensive Data System (new longitudinal data warehouse) makes student outcome data available and accessible to schools, districts, parents, and students.
- Train educators and leaders to become skilled in the effective use of district, school, grade, and student comprehensive data profiles.
- Provide ongoing support to educators and leaders in accessing and using state-sponsored databases (e.g., Performance Plus and i4see) to use student outcome data for instructional decision making
- Conduct analyses of process and outcome data from Implementation Teams (NH districts) with advanced and successful RTI models.
- Create and disseminate effective data use practices with improved student results.
- Support the development of data-informed instructional decision making in Implementation Teams (school and district) and grade-level collaborative teams.

APPENDIX A

Model for Transformation to Statewide RtI Implementation

The NH RtI Task Force recognizes the lofty nature of our goal, stated at the opening of this document:

… to lead the transformation of instruction

in New Hampshire school districts

in accordance with the principles and practices of RtI.

To achieve such a transformation, a clear theory of action is required. Such is found in the work of the State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP, www.scalingup.org) and the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN, www.fpg.unc.edu/~nirn/).   This work, supported by extensive empirical evidence and practice, provides:

- a logic model for the outcomes of RtI;

- a framework for implementing RtI at the school and district level; and,

- a framework for developing the infrastructure to support statewide implementation and long-term sustainability of RtI.

Each is reviewed, briefly, below. For more thorough descriptions, readers are directed to the websites (above) and the references at the end of the document.

Logic Model for Outcomes of RtI

In their brief, *Designing projects based on up-to-date knowledge from implementation research and effective practice,* Fixsen and Blase (2009) present a logic model addressing the connection between interventions and their implementation. The following is summarized and adapted from that brief.

Students are expected to benefit from evidence-based practices and other innovations (the WHAT) delivered by teachers and staff with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities. In the delivery of the innovation, adults need to change their practices (the HOW) in order to support the full and effective implementation of the evidence-based practice or other innovation (For our purposes, the *innovation* is RtI). Teachers and school staff are the adults who interact directly

with children. *All of the benefits to students are derived from those adults using RTI fully and effectively.*

The teachers and staff learn how to deliver RtI from members of an Implementation Team. This Team, for example, may include leadership members of the school community (principal, general educators, special educators, reading specialist, paraprofessional, parent, etc.) in partnership with RtI professional development providers and those with implementation expertise. (Implementation expertise, or a conceptual framework for implementation, is described below.) The Implementation Team may occur at multiple levels in the system – school, district, region, and state. *All of the benefits to teachers are derived from implementation infrastructures that support teachers, staff, and administrators in their uses of RtI.*

By starting with our ultimate outcome (student benefit) and identifying the intermediary changes in practice required for the ultimate outcome to occur (adults use RTI fully and effectively), and identifying the actions required for the intermediary changes in practice to occur (School/District Implementation Team with professional developers), we begin to see a logic model emerge:

Improved student outcomes ◀━Full, effective use by adults◀━ Implementation Team

The Implementation Team is guided by a conceptual framework that articulates what drives a system toward full and effective implementation of RTI which in turn, results in improved student outcomes.

School and District Implementation Framework

A conceptual framework for school and district implementation is designed to address WHAT will be the focus of Implementation Teams' efforts and HOW schools will proceed from *exploring* RTI to *fully implementing* RTI and, ultimately, to *sustaining* RTI. As Fixsen and Blase (2009) explain, "Effective and sustained implementation [of RTI] occurs when staff *competence*, *organization* supports, and *leadership* are aligned, *integrated,* and focused on effective education for each and every student." (p.4) The framework for implementation developed by NIRN is shown in Figure 1 and further described below.

> As shown in this framework, teacher/ staff selection, training, coaching, and performance assessment are critical features for developing *competent usage* of an innovation. Having data available to support decision making by teachers, staff, and administrators; administrators who remove barriers and find ways to facilitate teachers' use of new practices; and administrators who can help align external systems with the new ways of education are essential components that define *effective organization supports* for evidence-based interventions. Technical and adaptive *leadership* (e.g. Heifetz & Laurie, 1997) also is necessary for managing

the day to day operations of a school/ LEA and for solving some of the more complex and vexing problems faced by educators. (Fixsen & Blase, 2009, p.4)
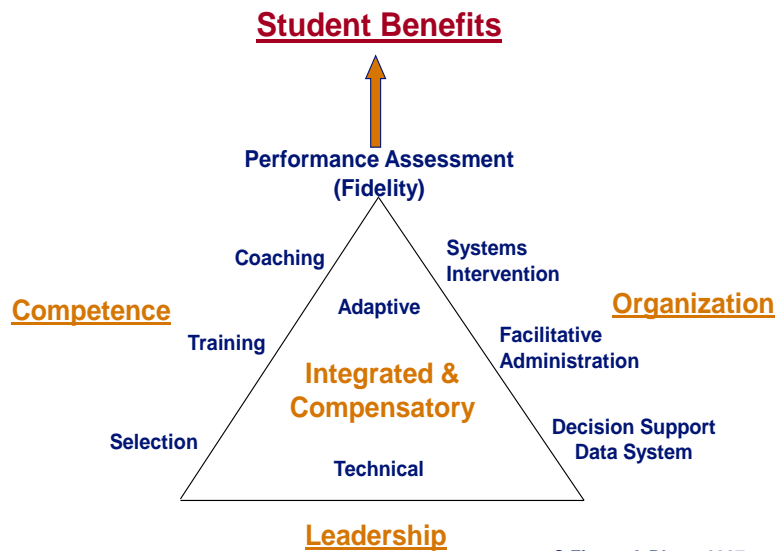
Figure 1. Implementation Framework

In addition to a local implementation framework (i.e., theory of action for school and district implementation teams), we must "use the available research and knowledge regarding the deliberate and systematic development and effective use of an implementation infrastructure" to fulfill the goal of this strategic plan and to accomplish educationally significant outcomes for all NH children and youth. That is, a statewide implementation infrastructure is necessary to achieve transformation of instruction in New Hampshire school districts in accordance with the principles and practices of RTI.

State Infrastructure and Implementation

Such transformation requires an explicit connection among state leaders (decision-making body) and local schools (implementers) during the process. Figure 2, adapted from Fixsen, Blase, Horner, & Sugai (2009) shows the model to develop and refine a statewide implementation infrastructure. In this model, a *State Leadership Team* is comprised of **decision makers** (e.g., Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Division Directors, Bureau Administrators) who can actively support capacity expansion and align current policies, structures, roles, and functions. The State Leadership Team is directly informed through participation in a P*rofessional Learning Community (PLC) and Systems Change Advisory (SCA)* with stakeholders from key professional organizations, institutes of higher education, and school/district implementation teams. (The NH RTI Task Force would evolve into this role.) The *Implementation Teams* are comprised of administrators, teachers, staff, and community partners who are actively engaged with

implementing and sustaining RTI in local schools and districts. The PLC and Systems Change Advisory provides a forum to help the NH DOE align current and establish new roles and structures to support the effective implementation of RTI as a continuing part of how the state system will operate in the present and future. In this way, refinements in policy and practice are developed collaboratively by the state team and local implementation teams. The capacity building needed for statewide RTI implementation also requires a connection to regional and national technical assistance (TA) centers (and other national RTI trainers) that provide additional expertise, coaching, and advice to the Leadership and Implementation teams during infrastructure development and the change process.
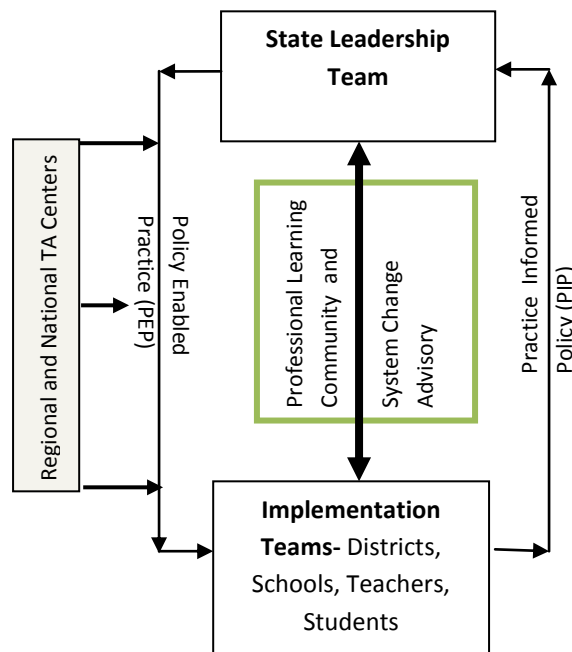
Figure 2. Transformation Model to Guide State-wide RtI Implementation (adapted from Fixsen, Blase, Horner, & Sugai, 2009)

References:

1. Batsche, Elliott, et.al, (2005).*Response to Intervention: A Working Definition*. National Association of State Directors of Special Education, NASDSE. Alexandria, VA.

2. Fixsen & Blase (September, 2009). *Designing projects based on up-to-date knowledge from implementation research and effective practice.* National Implementation Research Network. www.nirn.fpg.unc.edu

3. Fixsen, Blase, Horner, & Sugai. (2009). *Scaling-up brief.* Retrieved December 29, 2009 from: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC.

4. SISEP: *State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices.* Http://www.scalingup.org.