

RTI² Framework for Special Education Evaluations Revisions September 2023

Overview

In order to better align federal and state guidance, the department has revised guidance regarding data-based decision-making in the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) Framework in relation to evaluating students with a specific learning disability. These minor revisions clarify how LEAs can ensure that RTI² is not delaying or denying evaluations or eligibility determinations for a specific learning disability. See [U.S. Dep't of Educ., *Memo to State Directors of Special Education \(Jan. 21, 2011\)*](#). No changes are being made to the State Board of Education's Standards for Evaluation and Eligibility for a special learning disability. All revisions align with best practices, ensure students receive the appropriate interventions promptly, and align with federal and state standards for special education evaluations and eligibility criteria. Below is a summary of the revisions.

Summary of Revisions

In order to allow educators the flexibility to make individual data-based instructional decisions in a timely manner for students, guidance in the RTI² Framework was revised in September 2023. These revisions reflect the need for professional judgment when making decisions based on a student's unique learning needs.

- Students are not required to exhaust all tiers of intervention before a referral for special education evaluation can be made. A student receiving Tier II services may be considered for a referral for special education evaluation.
- Students are not required to obtain a specific number of progress monitoring data points or receive a certain number of weeks in intervention before to considering a change in intervention or conducting an evaluation for special education and related services.
- Referrals for initial evaluations should not be solely based on assessment score cutoffs.
- Other data, such as observations, standardized assessments, informal assessments, student work samples, parent input, teacher input, or student input, at the discretion of the student's team, should be considered in combination with RTI² progress monitoring data to identify a student with a specific learning disability.
- RTI² progress monitoring and initial evaluations for a specific learning disability can occur concurrently. While a special education evaluation is being conducted, students can continue to receive intervention support and weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring.

If at any time a student is suspected of having a disability, a request for an initial evaluation must be initiated. Always keep in mind, RTI² cannot be used to deny or delay a request for an evaluation. See [U.S. Dep't of Educ., *Memo to State Directors of Special Education \(Jan. 21, 2011\)*](#).

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