

Component 4:  
Tier III Procedures  
(Pending State Board of Education Approval)

DRAFT

## 4.1 Description of Tier III Interventions

### **Tier III in K-2 ELA & Mathematics:**

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II interventions and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and require the most intensive services immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group intervention targeting specific area(s) of deficit in addition to interventions received in Tier II.

### **Tier III in 3-5 ELA & Mathematics:**

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading, mathematics, and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and require the most intensive services immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group intervention targeting specific areas of deficit in addition to interventions received in Tier II.

### **Tier III in 6-12 ELA:**

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading and writing skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and require the most intensive services immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group intervention targeting specific areas of deficit in addition to interventions received in Tier II.

### **Tier III in 6-12 Mathematics:**

Tier III addresses 3-5 percent of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary mathematics skill(s). It could also include students who are 1.5 to 2 years behind or are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and require the most intensive services immediately. Students at this level should receive daily, intensive, small group interventions targeting specific areas of deficit in addition to interventions received in Tier II.

### **Tier III Description:**

**Tier III** is in addition to the instruction provided in Tier I and interventions in Tier II and should meet the needs of 3-5 percent of students. School RTI<sup>2</sup> teams will decide the best placement for students in Tier III. Students can receive Tier III interventions in addition to Tier II interventions or just Tier III interventions. However, the total number of minutes in Tier III interventions should be those reflected in section 4.2. Tier III interventions must be more intense than Tier II intervention.

Students who score below the designated cut score on the universal screening will receive more intense intervention in Tier III. These cut scores should be based on National Norms, at a minimum, and identify students who are at-risk. As a guideline, students below 25th percentile would be considered "at-risk." Students who exceed grade level expectations may be considered advanced. When teachers and school level RTI<sup>2</sup> support teams are making placement decisions for Tier III interventions, it may be necessary to consider other assessments, data and information on the student. Such examples may include past retention or performance on TCAP. (See Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 3.4 for more information on universal screening and data-based decision making.)

**Tier III** interventions will be systematic, research-based interventions that target the student's identified area of deficit (basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression). Interventions will be developed based on the unique needs of students. Interventions that have been researched to have the greatest chance of addressing the area of need should be selected. There will be evidence that interventions are more intense than Tier II.

There will be a clear description of the problem-solving approach to intervention being used for each of the areas (reading, math, or writing). A problem-solving approach within an RTI model is used to individually tailor an intervention. It typically has four stages: problem identification, analysis of problem, intervention planning, and response to intervention evaluation.

Scientifically research-based interventions are interventions that produce reliable and valid results. When these interventions are used properly, adequate gains should be expected. To be considered research-based, they must have a clear record of success.

Scientifically research-based interventions have the following characteristics according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi)]. Scientifically-based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs and includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;
- Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;
- Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
- Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

An effective intervention is:

- Implemented by trained personnel
- Implemented with fidelity
- Progress monitored to ensure outcomes are being met

The school level RTI<sup>2</sup> support team will determine which students will be placed in Tier III. See section 4.5 on data-based decision making for more information.

#### 4.2 Tier III Configuration

In grades K-8, the interventions in Tier III should be provided daily. The following charts illustrate the recommended minimum [*daily-recommended*] intervention times for **Tier III** in grades K-8:

ELA	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
Tier II	20 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	20 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	40 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes

Mathematics	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
Tier II	20 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	20 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	40 minutes	40 minutes	60 minutes

ELA	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Tier II	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	60 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes

Mathematics	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Tier II	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	60 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes

ELA	6-8 (traditional)	6-8 (block)
Tier II	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	60 minutes	60 minutes

Mathematics	6-8 (traditional)	6-8 (block)
Tier II	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	60 minutes	60 minutes

In grades 9-12, it is recommended that the interventions in Tier III should be provided daily. The following charts illustrate the *daily-recommended* intervention times for **Tier III** in grades 9-12:

ELA (daily recommended)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Tier II	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	60 minutes	60 minutes

Mathematics (daily recommended)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Tier II	30 minutes	30 minutes
Tier III	30 minutes	30 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	60 minutes	60 minutes

While it is recommended that students in **grades 9-12** receive Tier III interventions for 30 minutes daily, in some instances this may not be possible. However, students in need of Tier III interventions should receive a minimum of 120 minutes each week in addition to Tier II interventions. The following charts illustrate the *weekly* minimum intervention times for Tier III in grades 9-12:

ELA (weekly minimums)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Tier II	150 minutes	150 minutes
Tier III	120 minutes	120 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	270 minutes	270 minutes

Mathematics (weekly minimums)	9-12 (traditional)	9-12 (block)
Tier II	150 minutes	150 minutes
Tier III	120 minutes	120 minutes
<b>Total Tier III Intervention Time</b>	270 minutes	270 minutes

<b>Time</b>		
-------------	--	--

Intervention groups should be small. Research supports small groups for interventions. The following are suggested ratios of trained personnel to students during Tier III interventions:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
K-5	1:3
6-12	1:6

The interventions need to be delivered by highly trained personnel. Highly trained personnel are people who are adequately trained to deliver the selected intervention as intended with fidelity to design. When possible, Tier III interventions should be taught by qualified, certified teachers. Research supports the most trained personnel working with the most at-risk students.

4.3 Progress Monitoring Procedures in Tier III

Progress monitoring is a data-based method of carefully tracking the student’s growth to provide the intervention that will put him or her on a path to success. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier III, the effectiveness of the instructional intervention should be monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through administration of probes that are parallel forms of the ones used in universal screening. Students in Tier III should be progress monitored at least every other week in grades K-12. Progress monitoring will be done in the area of deficit using an instrument that is sensitive to change.

Progress monitoring must be conducted with measures that are at the same instructional level as the goal. The grade/skill at which a student should be progress monitored is determined through a survey level of assessment. A survey level of assessment is a process of determining the most basic skill area deficit and at which grade/skill level a student has mastered. It is effective in determining appropriate, realistic goals for a student and helps identify the specific deficit in order to determine accurate rate of improvement and growth. Survey level of assessment is necessary for students suspected of being 1.5 to 2 years behind or who fall below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Progress monitoring in Tier III may include:

- Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes
- Assessments from intervention materials/kits (Requires: National percentiles, allow for repeated measures, it must be sensitive to change and it must be

specific to any area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, it must plot or give information so that rate of improvements (ROI) can be transferred to graph form.

- Computer-based assessments (Requires: National percentiles, allow for repeated measures, it must be sensitive to change and it must be specific to any area of deficit including basic reading skill(s), reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving and written expression). In addition, it must plot or give information so that rate of improvements (ROI) can be transferred to graph form.

Typically students should be progress monitored at least every other week in K-12 for a minimum of 15 weeks and 7 data points. If a student is 1.5 to 2 years behind or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and is moved to Tier III immediately, the student typically must receive a minimum of 27 weeks of intervention. It typically requires a minimum of 13 data points.

Highly trained personnel should administer the progress monitoring in Tier III and classroom teachers should continuously analyze the progress monitoring data.

#### 4.4 Data-based Decision Making Procedures

Teachers must show knowledge and evidence of setting goals for each child. Expected growth can be determined by using measures provided by or created through the progress monitoring instrument. It should be related to each area of need.

For example, if the student has high error rates in reading fluency, additional assessment is completed that includes phonics assessments. If the student has phonics skills deficits, the teacher would intervene first in phonics before addressing fluency. If the student is in third grade, he/she may need measures on first grade fluency probes or phonics probes to determine an accurate rate of improvement (ROI).

Teachers must show how students are progressing toward these goals using a rate of improvement (ROI) or performance level description to determine adequate progress. Teachers must use the data from progress monitoring to make instructional decisions.

A student's rate of improvement (ROI) on progress monitoring is the number of units of measure (e.g., words read correctly [wrc], correct responses, correct digits) a child has made per week since the beginning of the intervention. To discover this rate, teachers should divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. The rate of improvement (ROI) is compared to the rate of improvement of a typical peer and is one of the factors considered in determining whether a student has made adequate progress. The at-risk student's rate of improvement must be greater than the rate of improvement of a typical student in order to "close the gap" and return



to grade level functioning. Many intervention materials and/or progress monitoring materials/assessments calculate the rate of improvement.

A performance level description is a statement describing the student's performance level in terms of what the student has learned and can do. They can also be a range of scores or scaled scores that define a specific level of performance.

School RTI<sup>2</sup> teams can meet to analyze data, measure the effectiveness of interventions and check student progress toward goals. School RTI<sup>2</sup> teams will decide the best placement for students in Tier III. Students can receive Tier III interventions in addition to Tier II interventions or just Tier III interventions. However, the total number of minutes in Tier III interventions should be those reflected in section 4.2. Tier III interventions must be more intense than Tier II intervention.

A plan should be in place for when students are and are not making adequate progress within Tier III. If students are not making adequate progress in Tier III, the intervention may need to be changed. Students should have at least four data points during Tier III interventions before a change is considered. Only one or two variables should be changed at a time to measure effectiveness of the change. Changes can include:

- Increasing frequency of intervention sessions
- Changing interventions
- Changing intervention provider
- Changing time of day intervention is delivered

# RTI<sup>2</sup> Decision-Making Process Tier III

**Tier I Core Instruction 80–85%**

- ▶ High quality instruction aligned to Common Core Standards
- ▶ Instructional decisions driven by ongoing formative assessment
- ▶ High quality professional development and support

Ongoing Assessment

Does <b>not</b> meet grade-level expectations	Meets grade-level expectations	Exceeds grade-level expectations
---	--------------------------------	----------------------------------

**Tier II Targeted Intervention 10–15%**

- ▶ Addresses the needs of struggling and advanced students
- ▶ Additional time beyond time allotted for the core instruction
- ▶ High quality intervention matched to student-targeted area of need
- ▶ Provided by highly trained personnel
- ▶ Typically 12 weeks before moving to Tier III

Progress Monitoring

Does **not** meet grade-level expectations

**Tier III Targeted Intervention 3–5%**

- ▶ Addresses small percentage of students who have received Tier I instruction and Tier II interventions
- ▶ More explicit and the most intensive intervention targeting specific area of need
- ▶ Intervention provided by highly trained personnel
- ▶ Typically 15 weeks of intervention

Progress Monitoring

Does <b>not</b> make significant progress	Makes significant progress
---	----------------------------



#### 4.5 Professional Development for Tier III

Professional development will cover specific content pertaining to Tier III interventions, Tier III progress monitoring, Tier III data-based decision making, and Tier III fidelity monitoring. All personnel involved in Tier III interventions, including administrators, will receive professional development.

The Tennessee Department of Education will provide high quality professional development for interventions in grades K-3, 4-5, and 6-12. This yearlong course will be provided during the 2013-2014 school year through regional CORE centers across the state.

In August 2013, the Tennessee Department of Education will provide high quality professional development for the identification of a Specific Learning Disability through the RTI process for all certifying specialists (school psychologist K-12).

#### 4.6 Fidelity Monitoring

Fidelity is the accuracy or extent that Tier II materials and other curricula are used as intended by the author/publisher. Fidelity monitoring is the systematic monitoring by a responsible instructional leader (i.e. principal, instructional coach) to determine the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models as originally developed. In Tier III, fidelity monitoring will focus on the intervention specific to each student.

LEAs must have a process for monitoring fidelity. This process must include a description of who is responsible for fidelity monitoring and how often fidelity in Tier III intervention will be monitored. Attendance and documented reasons for absence should be taken during interventions in Tier III.

The fidelity of implementation per intervention will be assessed throughout the process; however, the minimum requirement is a combined total of 8 checks: 3 checks in Tier II where 2 must be a direct observation, and 5 checks in Tier III where 3 must be direct observations and two must be a review of implementation data (i.e., attendance, lesson plans, progress monitoring results). Ongoing fidelity documentation of intervention should include: interventions used, student attendance, progress monitoring results, and any other anecdotal information that might account for the student's progress. The direct observations should be unannounced. Tier III fidelity monitoring must be focused on individual students to ensure that each student is receiving interventions as prescribed.

Examples of personnel who can do fidelity monitoring:

- Principals, administrators or other appointed designees
- Instructional coaches, literacy/numeracy coaches
- RTI Coordinators, fidelity monitors, or fidelity teams
- School psychologists, special education teachers or guidance counselors

#### 4.7 Consideration for Special Education

A referral for special education for a specific learning disability (SLD) in basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics problem solving, or written expression will be determined when the data indicate that Tier III is ineffective. Information from additional screenings as well as Tier II and Tier III will be required for the identification of students. Consent for an evaluation may be requested or received during Tier III interventions, but evidence from Tier III must be a part of determination, and a lack of response to Tier III interventions may not be pre-determined. An evaluation for SLD may be in conjunction with the second half of Tier III but may not be concluded before Tier III interventions are proven ineffective at the end of Tier III.

Team members involved in making a decision to refer for special education may include:

- School psychologist
- Principal or other designee
- Intervention/Support team members

Parents must be invited to a meeting to discuss a referral for special education evaluation.

See Component 5 for more information.

