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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and Principals
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D., *Sally*
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: Response to Intervention Guidance Materials

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has completed Michigan's definition and vision for the Response to Intervention (RtI). The attached materials will provide guidance for continuity and alignment in the implementation of a research-based system of RtI. In addition, the collaborative planning or braiding of initiatives, is recognized as an essential component for improvement of academic achievement in all learners.

In the past, traditional plans for School Improvement, RtI, Special Education, etc., were created and implemented independently of each other resulting in well-written, but competing initiatives for schools and districts. This approach divides resources and can have a negative impact on effective achievement for all learners.

The Michigan RtI vision, definition, and essential components were developed by a statewide team of Michigan educators, experts, and stakeholders in collaboration with the MDE, the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, and the National Center for RtI. These defining elements, along with additional guidance materials and research-based resource links, will be coming soon to the RtI tab on the MDE Teaching for Learning website.

Questions regarding MDE's RtI guidance materials should be directed to Jan Oord in the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation at oordj@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

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Michigan Department of Education’s Vision for Response to Intervention Implementation within the Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process:

The focus of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is to improve achievement for all learners through support of Michigan schools. Experience has demonstrated that in order to increase achievement, successful schools plan collaboratively. Often, traditional plans for improvement have been written and implemented in silos, for example: School Improvement, Response to Intervention (RtI), Special Education, and others, have written and implemented their plans in isolation. While the plans may be well-written and solid in their own right, the lack of collaboration and common planning often results in them becoming competing initiatives in a school/district. These competing initiatives have a negative impact on improving achievement for all learners.

To streamline a school’s efforts and resources to maximize improvement for all learners, the MDE has outlined how a school district can break down barriers and plan collaboratively to develop one common plan for improvement. The Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process serves as the process to organize staff to analyze data (achievement, perception, process, and demographic) and to develop a comprehensive, continuous improvement plan. The improvement goals are developed as a result of a comprehensive data analysis, leading to the identification of the improvement needs and the development of school improvement goals. Through the development of their school improvement plan, the staff may recognize that their school has key systems missing resulting in a negative impact on student achievement. This realization may lead them to recognize that implementing a system of RtI would help to fill the void in their school systems. In addition to identifying the need for an RtI system, the School Improvement process will assist in development and implementation of the system of RtI.

When braided together, the Michigan Continuous School Improvement process and a system of RtI will enhance and strengthen each other, a mutually beneficial relationship, as opposed to when planned and implemented in separate silos, competing for staff time and resources, leading to a dysfunctional and sporadic implementation of improvement strategies. A well implemented system of RtI will enrich and enhance the school improvement process. The main purpose of this document will be to define the MDE’s definition and vision of RtI. An integral part of defining RtI for Michigan will be to clarify the connections between and braiding of, essential elements of RtI and the school improvement process.

Michigan has defined RtI and included eleven essential elements to help clarify the definition. In order to be an RtI system, all eleven elements must be present.

MDE Definition of Response to Intervention (RtI): RtI is an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral needs of all learners.

Essential Components of Michigan's RtI Framework

1. **Implement effective instruction for all learners** – A unified system of comprehensive service delivery requiring significant general and special education system change that meets the needs of all learners.
2. **Intervene early** – All learners are screened through assessments several times per year, identifying learners who are not making expected progress. These learners are provided with targeted interventions and monitored for progress on an ongoing basis.
3. **Provide a multi-tiered model of instruction and intervention** – Levels of intervention will be used to meet the learning needs of all learners. Level/Tier 1 is the research-based core curriculum and classroom interventions that will be available to all learners and effectively meet the needs of 80-85% of them. Level/Tier 2 are targeted group interventions serving approximately 15% of the learners, that learners will receive in addition to the continuation of Level/Tier 1. Learners will move fluidly between Level/Tier 1 and Level/Tier 2. Level/Tier 3 interventions serve approximately 5% of the learners. Learners at this level receive intense individual interventions while continuing to receive Level/Tier 1 instruction. Based on their performance, learners move fluidly between this Level/Tier and 1 and 2.
4. **Utilize a collaborative problem solving model** – A structured, systematic problem solving model based in general education to identify student learning needs, analysis of learning problems, and use of the analysis to guide instructional decisions.
5. **Assure a research-based Core Curriculum (aligned with Michigan's state standards)** – The curriculum is aligned with the Michigan standards to ensure that learners are exposed to curriculum that has demonstrated effectiveness in meeting the learning needs of at least 80% of the student population.
6. **Implement research/evidence-based, scientifically validated, instruction/interventions** – The district, school, and teachers use instruction/interventions that have been validated through research/evidence as having a substantial impact on student achievement.
7. **Monitor student progress to inform instruction** – Teachers use relevant data to measure, on an ongoing basis, student progress to inform their educational decision making and impact what they are doing to improve student achievement.
8. **Use data to make instructional decisions** – The district, school, and staff use data to guide all of their instructional decisions.
9. **Use assessments for three purposes: universal screening, diagnostics, and progress monitoring** – The staff uses an assessment to screen the instructional needs of all learners. As learners are identified for more intensive instruction or interventions, the staff uses diagnostic

assessments to identify the specific learning needs of all learners. The staff monitors the progress of the student to inform their ongoing decision making.

10. **Implement with fidelity** – Staff implements instructional and/or intervention practices according to the intent of the research base.
11. **Engage parents and community** – Parents and community are engaged and informed in the instructional process.