

West Hartford Public School District

Agenda Item: Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) Update

Meeting Date: May 6, 2014

From: Nancy M. DePalma, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Through: Karen L. List, Superintendent of Schools

Background

In 2008, the Connecticut State Department of Education adopted the term Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) which is synonymous to the nationally used term Response to Intervention (RTI). Both describe the practice of providing high-quality instruction and early ongoing intervention(s) best matched to individual student needs. The underlying intent is to ensure that **all** students learn and acquire the requisite academic and behavioral competencies necessary for success in school, in life, and in society.

SRBI Overview (*Connecticut's Framework for Response to Intervention, 2008*)

Scientifically Research Based Interventions are a way to provide support and instruction to struggling learners. A child's progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about instructional strategies and other learning supports. A "continuum of support" is developed by a collaborative team of teachers as part of the Student Success Team (SST) process.

The key elements of SRBI include:

- comprehensive core general education curricula that address essential competencies in each academic domain, are culturally relevant, and are research-based
- a comprehensive system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports
- strategies for assuring the modeling of respectful and ethical behaviors to foster a safe school climate in which students experience physical, social-emotional, and intellectual safety
- the use of research-based, effective instructional strategies across academic domains
- differentiated instruction for all learners
- universal common assessments to monitor academic and social progress
- early intervention for students experiencing academic, social-emotional and/or behavioral difficulties in efforts to prevent increasing educational difficulties
- educational decision making which is data driven and collaboratively analyzed by teams of educators
- a continuum of support (see Tiered Interventions Triangle)
- systemic core practices implementing grade level/content common formative assessments

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Underlying Principals and Critical Features of SRBI

- The assumption that scientific research should be used to inform educational practice as much as possible
- A belief in collective responsibility, accountability, and the power of effective instructional practices.
- A willingness to be transparent with a relentless focus on continuous improvement
- A focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Schoolwide/districtwide (systemic approach) high-quality core curricula, instruction, and comprehensive social/behavioral supports
- Monitoring fidelity of implementation.
- Culturally responsive teaching
- A comprehensive assessment plan* with universal common assessments and ongoing progress monitoring
 - *assessment tools are sensitive indicators of overall student growth
 - *assessment tools are reliable and valid
 - *assessment tools are relatively quick and easy to administer
 - *universal measures (assessments) are common to (the same for) all students within grade/content area, administered on a routine basis (e.g., fall, winter, spring)
- Data analysis, not just data collection
- Data-driven decision making with clear decision rules (e.g., effective for 80%)

A Four-Tiered Model of Implementation (see SRBI Triangle Graphic)

The West Hartford SRBI framework has 4 “tiers” each providing differing kinds and degrees of support. Parental involvement is critical. The frequency and intensity of collaboration between school and parents increases at each level. Good communication must be established in Tier 1 and continued (as are interventions) in Tier 2, 3 and 4.

Tier 1 – refers to the general education’s core curriculum and instruction, the overall school climate, and the system of schoolwide social-emotional learning and behavioral and physical health supports for all students. High quality, evidence based practices that build foundational skills and knowledge for all students must be provided in Tier 1.

Summary of Essential Features of Tier I

Focus	General education core practices
Setting	General education classrooms
Curriculum and instruction	Research-based, comprehensive and aligned with state standards/student outcomes; culturally responsive; positive and safe school climate; must include a comprehensive system of social emotional learning and behavioral supports
Interventions	Differentiation of instruction within the general education classroom, e.g., through flexible small groups and appropriate instructional materials matched to students’ needs and abilities
Interventionists	General education teachers with collaboration from school specialists
Assessments	Universal common assessments of all students at least three times per year (benchmark data) to monitor progress and identify students in need of intervention early; common formative assessments to guide and differentiate instruction; data to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the behavioral system (e.g., attendance rates, discipline referrals), overall quality of school climate, and social-emotional learning (e.g., school attachment, 40 Developmental Assets, graduation rates); additional assessments of certain individual students (e.g., checklists, observations, diagnostic assessments) as warranted

Data analysis and decision making	District, school and grade/content area data teams; district data team analyzes data across schools within a district; school data team analyzes benchmark data within a school to establish the overall efficacy of curriculums, instruction, school climate and system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports for all students, and monitors fidelity of implementation; grade-level/content area data teams analyze common formative assessments to improve and differentiate instruction within a grade or course, and identify individual students in need of Tier II academic or behavioral intervention
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Tier 2 – for students who, based on collected and analyzed data, do not attain important benchmarks despite the services provided in Tier 1. Interventions are short term (8 – 20 weeks) and remain part of the general education program with support from specialists. Interventions are supplemental to the core academic instruction delivered in the classroom, are consistently scheduled, and of sufficient duration to impact performance (e.g. 30 minutes, 2-3 times weekly). Can be delivered 1:1 or in small groups (e.g. 4-6 students with same profile of difficulty). Honoring the fidelity of the intervention is critical.

Summary of Essential Features of Tier II

Focus	Students failing to meet important academic benchmarks or social/behavioral expectations, who have not responded to Tier I core practices
Setting	General education classrooms or other general education locations within a school (e.g., library, reading lab, math lab, writing center)
Interventions	Appropriate short-term (e.g., eight to 20 weeks) interventions, well matched to students’ specific academic, social-emotional, and/or behavioral needs; delivered to homogeneous groups (i.e., students with similar needs); with a teacher : student ratio up to 1:4 or 1:6; implemented with fidelity; supplemental to core program
Interventionists	General education teachers, specialists or other interventionists trained for Tier II intervention
Assessments	Frequent progress monitoring (e.g., weekly or biweekly) using assessment tools that accurately target students’ focus area for improvement; progress monitoring tools must be feasible and technically adequate to administer multiple times to assess student growth; additional assessments of certain individual students (e.g., observations, diagnostic assessments)
Data analysis and decision making	Teacher support/intervention teams that may overlap with Tier I data teams; should include core team members (e.g., school principal, general educators, reading/language arts consultant, school psychologist and a special educator) as well as additional members depending on individual student’s needs (e.g, ESL teacher, math specialist, school social worker); teams match appropriate Tier II interventions to students’ needs; select appropriate progress monitoring tools; analyze progress monitoring data; modify or substitute new interventions as needed; identify students not responding to Tier II efforts; conduct extensive analysis and application of data from Tier II interventions to document effectiveness of interventions; and help monitor fidelity of implementation of Tier II interventions

Tier 3 – interventions become more specialized, increased in intensity and/or individualization; that is, smaller teacher-student ratio, a longer duration of instruction/services, and more frequent progress monitoring.

Summary of Essential Features of Tier III

Focus	Students failing to meet important academic benchmarks or social/behavioral expectations who have not responded to Tier I or Tier II efforts
Setting	General education classrooms or other general education locations within a school (e.g., library, reading lab, math lab, writing center)
Interventions	Appropriate short-term (eight to 20 weeks) interventions, well-matched to students' specific academic, social/behavioral needs; more intensive or individualized than Tier II interventions; delivered to homogeneous groups (i.e., students with similar needs); with a teacher : student ratio up to 1:3; implemented with fidelity; supplemental to core program
Interventionists	Specialists or other interventionists trained for Tier III intervention (including general educators with appropriate training)
Assessments	Very frequent progress monitoring (e.g., twice per week) using assessment tools that accurately target students' focus areas for improvement; progress monitoring tools must be feasible and technically adequate to administer multiple times to assess student growth; additional assessments of certain individual students (e.g., diagnostic assessments, comprehensive evaluation) as warranted
Data analysis and decision making	Teacher support/intervention teams (as in Tier II); teams decide how to choose, individualize and intensify interventions for students receiving Tier III interventions; select appropriate progress monitoring tools; analyze progress monitoring data; modify or substitute new interventions as needed; identify students not responding to Tier III efforts; conduct extensive analysis and application of data from Tier III interventions to document effectiveness of interventions; and help monitor fidelity of implementation of Tier III interventions

Tier 4 – incorporates the provision of special education services as an integrated and inclusive delivery model of specialized educational services for students with disabilities. The fourth tier provides for a continuum of educational resources/supports which reduces the silos and results in the effective integration of general and special education services.

Summary of Essential Features of Tier IV

Focus	The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) utilizes student performance/progress data and the students' response to Tier 3 interventions coupled with a comprehensive evaluation to determine disability identification and eligibility for special education/IEP services
Setting	General and special education classrooms within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
Curriculum and instruction	The PPT develops standard-based individualized educational plans (IEP's) aligned with the Common Core grade level standards, and the students' individual needs to support their access to the general education curriculum and classroom that results in educational benefit
Interventions	Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is defined as adapting the content, methodology or the delivery of instruction to appropriately meet the needs of the student. A cross-categorical model and inclusive instructional practice support the access and achievement for <u>all</u> students
Interventionists	Special education and general education teachers, related services staff (psychologists, social workers, speech/language therapists) specialist consultants (Assistive Technology, BCBA, psychiatrist, Bilingual/Language)
Assessments	Comprehensive/standardized evaluations, curriculum-based and criterion-based assessments, clinical/diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, and targeting specific needs to assess students' performance and response to intervention and instruction
DATA analysis and decision making	The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) assess and analyze students' performance and progress on their IEP goals and objectives to determine appropriate modifications to the IEP and/or adaptations to the delivery of educational services or program placement

SRBI provides a framework for ensuring successful student learning and opportunities to refine and improve instructional practice. It is essential to focus on the **whole child**, which includes not only academic functioning but also all components affecting the child's well-being and overall health (i.e., social and emotional, behavioral and physical health).

Dr. Nancy DePalma, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Kerry Jones, Director of Elementary Education, and Mr. Paul Vicinus will be available to answer questions.

