



District and School Success Center RtI² Model

The District and School Success Center (DSSC) at Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) utilizes a consulting model designed to assist schools and districts in developing a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) model. The purpose of this work is to increase the academic achievement of ALL students. DSSC RtI² model focuses on assisting schools with establishing best first instruction (Tier One), use of data, strengthening grade level or department collaboration on implementation of school wide intervention systems through professional development and coaching. Building local internal capacity is core to the model and is achieved through the following essential operating principles:

Principle 1: Focus on System-Wide Improvement: Building Coherence Across the System

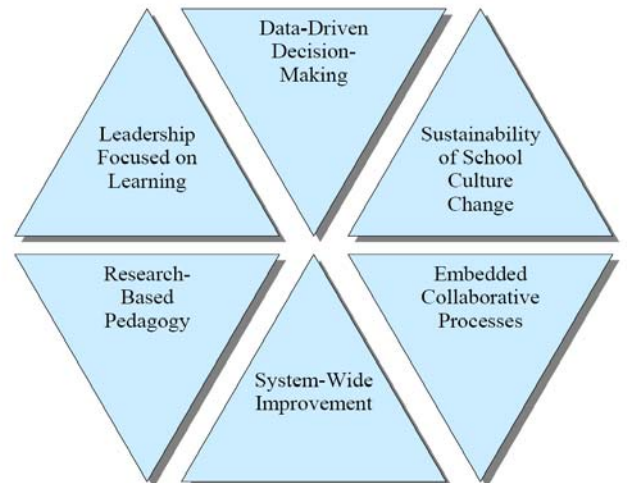
Principle 2: Leadership Focused on Learning and RtI²

Principle 3: Embedded Collaborative Processes Within the School Infrastructure

Principle 4: Accountability and Transparency: Data-Driven Decision-Making

Principle 5: Research-Based Pedagogy

Principle 6: Sustainability of School Culture Change



Principle 1: Focus on System-Wide Improvement: Building Coherence Across the System

Building comprehensive systems to address the increasing complexity of student learning needs requires a commitment to continuous improvement, clearly defined organizational structures, strong leadership, and closely aligned resources. Coherence is defined as “a common instructional framework that guides the curriculum, teaching, assessment, and learning climate. This framework combines specific expectations for student learning with specific strategies and materials to guide teaching and assessment. (Newmann, et al., 2001)

Coherence across the system intentionally develops best first instruction and targeted intervention models. In order to establish coherence, the DSSC team facilitates alignment around goals, values, principles, and practices that generate a redirection in the system to focus on achievement for all students while simultaneously closing the existing gaps for specific subgroups. The role of site and district leadership teams is essential to this end, not only in initiating the systems changes, but in assuring sustainability of the system itself.

Principle 2: Leadership Focused on Learning and RtI²

The concept of leadership has changed over the past few decades. As accountability for academic performance in all student subgroups increases, the roles of district and site leaders must also shift in order to meet current and future targets. Leadership is absolutely essential to create significant improvements in student achievement. Therefore, DSSC has a strong focus on building leadership skills in principals and teacher leaders. Team members work with education leaders to develop knowledge and expertise in the areas of high-quality, research-based instruction; universal screening; diagnostic and timely interventions; and systems thinking.

Principle 3: Embedded Collaborative Processes Within the School Infrastructure

The major component of RtI² is a collaborative culture that focuses on learning and providing additional support when students are not learning. However, the real issue is not simply getting educators to collaborate; it is getting them to

collaborate on the right things. Improving collaborative processes within a school can have a dramatic impact on intervention systems. DSSC provides training in content, process, and communication skills as well as protocols to focus collaboration.

Collaborative teams are guided to meaningful conversations around academic content standards, common student assessment data, instructional strategies, and interventions. The key issue is for educators to hold each other accountable for best practices through collective inquiry and sharing of instruction that works. Grade level/department teams focus first on Tier I strategies. The goal of the team is to create a learning environment that guarantees at least 80% of the students will master the content after the best first instruction. Through this process teams also assure that students who did not get it the first time are provided more time to master the content. Finally, the team can look to the school for the smallest group of students that continue to need more time on a particular standard. The natural sense of urgency that this work creates will allow schools to refine their learning communities and systems in order to ensure that ALL students master standards.

Principle 4: Accountability and Transparency: Data-Driven Decision-Making

More than ever, we must be strategic in our efforts to improve student learning. Use of assessment data to identify specific student learning needs is the foundation of a results-oriented intervention model. In working with schools, DSSC supports the development of comprehensive data systems that provide teachers and students with targeted feedback to accelerate learning. Instruction in each layer of a site intervention model should be driven by the use of diagnostic and formative data. All efforts should be focused on aligning the student learning deficit with the appropriate instructional response. Teachers are led through a protocol that assists them into figuring out the cognitive disconnect that a group of students may have with a particular standard. Once the confusion is identified by the team, then the group can refocus their Tier I efforts or provide a directed Tier II response to the student's misconception.

In addition to assessment data, factors such as attendance, involvement in extracurricular activities, suspensions and expulsions, master scheduling issues, and other factors are examined to shed light on system-wide practices that either help or hinder student achievement. In working with schools, DSSC keeps the focus on data to assess progress so that appropriate interventions are implemented based on student needs.

Principle 5: Research-Based Pedagogy

DSSC personnel focus on improving instructional practices by providing training in pedagogy and collaborative processes for planning and refining instruction when students are not learning. The quality of instruction in the classroom has a direct effect on student achievement. A deep understanding of the academic content standards and the prerequisite skills necessary to demonstrate proficiency, is the entry point for a meaningful conversation regarding best practices. Through core curriculum (Tier I) trainings for the language arts and mathematics state-adopted curricula, the DSSC team facilitates the planning of intentionally designed instructional cycles that include lesson design, monitoring points, corrective feedback, assessment of the learning objectives, and added time for reteaching (Tier II). Demonstration of effective delivery of these instructional cycles allows for higher levels of mastery within the core program. Student achievement results provide the impetus for changing “what we’ve always done” to “whatever it takes” to improve learning. By far, the most important component of any intervention model is the relentless pursuit of best first instruction. Ideally, we are working with schools to create a prevention-intervention model.

Principle 6: Sustainability of School Culture Change

The real challenge with creating any successful intervention system is that it requires us to engage in substantial change, rather than the simple implementation of a new program. DSSC believes that sustainability is not a function of changing the structures or processes in the school alone. Rather, it is inextricably embedded in the values and beliefs of school personnel, and the commitment to the purpose of student learning and to the changes necessary to fulfill that purpose. A major component of sustainability involves building the internal capacity of the system to continue the process of improvement. In fact, once an organization has achieved a certain level of success, the temptation is strong to relax and ease up on the new practices. Usually, the old culture still has roots that will start to grow once the sense of urgency is gone. For that reason, change must be an ongoing process and the leaders must continually be setting the bar higher and higher as time goes by. The rewards associated with higher levels of student learning serve as a catalyst for increased ownership, group motivation, and ultimately, sustainability.

Conclusion:

The successes of Riverside County schools are based on the belief that ALL

students can learn. This change does not come about through mandates and a focus on raising test scores. It comes about with a true belief that ALL students can learn and if they don't the consequence is great. Therefore, the goal of any school *system* is to guarantee that ALL students will be successful. It is not a *program* that will bring about the success but it is a system filled with individuals that truly believe that they can not give up on any student.