



Response to Intervention (RtI) and Gifted

The New Mexico Association for the Gifted would like to support and highlight the information provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED; 2009) in their recent publication *The Student Assistance Team (SAT) and the Three-Tier Model of Intervention: A Guidance and Resource Manual for New Mexico's Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework*.

According to NMPED (2009):

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a **framework** being used across the country and specifically encouraged by the federal government as school systems seek ways to ensure success for **all** students, and provide early assistance to students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral challenges, or need opportunities for advanced learning. **It is a continuum of school-wide support that seeks to maximize the odds of student success and contributes to overall comprehensive school improvement efforts.** (p. 6)

Advanced learners and gifted students can be found in all student populations regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or English language proficiency. The RtI framework is well suited to providing appropriate interventions for students who are learning beyond the general curriculum (e.g., advanced learners who need additional challenge or higher-level thinking skills). In some instances, a student's true abilities are not recognized so they may not receive appropriate educational services, and then show underachievement or social skill challenges. Research shows that gifted students who are not recognized, formally identified, nor placed in a gifted education program may begin to develop at-risk behaviors in the third grade or even earlier. (NMPED, 2009, p. 75)

Differentiated instruction, tiered assignments, and/or curriculum compacting are strategies that should be integrated into Tier I instruction for all students as appropriate. Continuous progress monitoring and short cycle assessments should also be integrated into Tier I instruction to ensure that all students are developing new skills. Students who are demonstrating mastery of grade level standards based on such assessments may not be appropriately challenged and may require acceleration in order to meet their needs. Such students should be referred to the SAT.

Districts using state-approved alternative assessments for students with certain "factors" may bypass the SAT process. Such "factors" include low socioeconomic status, cultural and/or linguistic diversity, and disability. For more information regarding alternative assessments for gifted, please refer to the *Technical Assistance Manual for Gifted Education in New Mexico* available at: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/Humanities/Gifted/dl09/GiftedEducationTA2008.pdf>

Potentially gifted students referred to SAT should receive appropriate targeted instruction in Tier II, which may include strategies such as subject level acceleration. The determination to refer a

student for gifted services is different from students with disabilities, in that for students with disabilities, it is their lack of response to interventions in Tier II that indicates a referral for special education may be appropriate. For potentially gifted students, it is their positive response to interventions in Tier II that indicates a referral for gifted services may be appropriate.

Students identified for gifted services should receive intensive interventions in Tier III, which may include strategies such as grade skipping, online courses, and testing out for credit. In addition to academic services, gifted students frequently require social-emotional services to address motivation and organization skills. According to Coil (2008), appropriate social-emotional strategies should address the following topics:

- Fear of Failure
- Goal Setting
- Group Work/Clustering
- Learning Preferences
- Listening Skills
- Negative Peer Pressure
- Overexcitabilities (Intensities and Sensitivities)
- Perfectionism
- Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

References

- Coil, C. 2006. *What Can Teachers and Parents Do to Help Underachievers?* E-Zine, Vol. 1, 4. Retrieved from <http://www.carolyncoil.com/ezone14.htm>
- New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED). (2009). *The Student Assistance Team (SAT) and the Three-Tier Model of Intervention: A Guidance and Resource Manual for New Mexico's Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework*. Santa Fe, NM: Author.