

## Parent Communications October 2, 2014

The second meeting for the 2014-2015 school year was held on October 2, 2014, with 18 parent representatives attending. Dr. B. J. Worthington, Director of Schools, opened the meeting by introducing Dr. Patti Wilson, whose topic was RTI (Response to Instruction). RTI is a general education initiative with the purpose of improving educational outcomes for all students. Educational outcomes are improved by providing a collaborative problem-solving model that is data-based and focuses on prevention and systematic, targeted intervention opportunities. RTI provides academic intervention to any student who is struggling to succeed and should not be viewed solely as a path to special education eligibility. RTI is a state-driven initiative offered in 3 Tiers.

### Tier I: Instruction – an extension of what’s already done

- All students
- focus on grade-level Common Core State Standards
- incorporates ongoing universal screening and assessment to drive instruction
- includes whole group and differentiated small-group instruction, as well as center-based practice

### Tier II: Intensive Intervention

- approximately 10-15% of students identified through data
- focus on specific skill area(s) of deficit
- teacher : student ratios are smaller (1:5 in elementary; 1:6 in secondary)
- additional daily instruction time (time varies based on grade level, and ranges from 20-30 minutes each day)
- incorporates progress monitoring every week or every other week to drive intervention

### Tier III: More Intensive Intervention

- approximately 3-5% of students identified through data
- focus on specific skill area(s) of deficit; more explicit and intensive than in Tier II
- teacher : student ratios are smaller (1:3 in elementary; 1:6-12 in secondary)
- additional daily instruction time (time varies based on grade level, and ranges from 40-60 minutes each day)
- incorporates progress monitoring every week to drive intervention

In Tier I all students receive research-based, high quality general education instruction that incorporates ongoing screening and assessment to inform instruction. In Tier II, interventions are provided to students that fall below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on universal screenings and are struggling academically and/or behaviorally. Tier III is intended for students who have not made significant progress in Tier II, and are below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile. *\*Percentile rankings on universal screening measures are only one piece of data teams consider when assigning a student to intervention. Other sources of data considered include curriculum-based*

*performance, TCAP scores, benchmark performance, and historical data from DIBELS and Learning Links.*

In the state's RTI model, it takes approximately 10 weeks of intervention within each tier before a data-based decision can be made regarding tier movement (offering more or less intensive intervention), although students may also be placed directly in Tier III based on level of need. It is important to remember that within each tier, intensive and targeted instruction is occurring based on individual student data. Within each tier of intervention, the team must consider at least one intervention change that is focused on reading and/or math skill development, as improvement in these areas will support learning in content areas (i.e., science and social studies). Instruction at Tier I is focused on standards, while intervention at tiers II and III is skills-based. Focusing on skill deficits allow students to access multiple standards when they return to the classroom, as one skill will impact multiple standards (i.e. teaching a student to build reading fluency – skill – will allow them to access standards related to determining main idea, sequencing events, understanding cause and effect and so on). Dr. Worthington asked, "What is the difference between the two, standards and skill development?" Dr. Wilson's response was, "A skill will be needed to learn any/all content, whereas standards are specific ideas/concepts."

When questioned by a parent for evidence that this program is working, Dr. Wilson commented, "When a child is receiving tiered intervention, the team is constantly analyzing data to monitor intervention effectiveness and drive instructional changes. They look at factors related to the following: are we getting better at identifying students for intervention, referral rates for students suspected of having a disability, progression rates for students receiving intervention (both in tiers and through special education) and how quickly we are closing the gap." Although tiered intervention is separate from special education, RTI is a way to identify a student in need. The prevention built into RTI will reduce the identification of false positives, those students identified as needing specialized instruction that truly only require targeted skills-based remediation. Dr. Wilson explained that once a child is eligible for special education, the team continues to progress monitor a student and if they start to show a consistent rate of improvement that indicates they will be successful in the tiered system, the child is exited from special education services and enters tiered intervention. Parents will receive on-going data for their child (minimum of every 4.5 weeks) and all data will be reported to the schools. School-wide data is part of the updates that Dr. Worthington gives at the end of the school year.

Dr. Worthington commented that most interventions prior to this year were all standards-based. He pointed out and reinforced what Dr. Wilson indicated before -- that skill deficits could be present due to a lack of instruction. He also indicated that standards could be showing up as a skill deficit. Rossvie High, Northwest High, Rossvie Middle and New Providence Middle are pilot schools and have intervention time locked in. Interventions are provided every day.

Esperanza Soriano-McCrary provided the Parent Communication Group Calendar and Website Survey results. She indicated that there were only 13 responses out of 38 schools. The questions and top responses were as follows:

Q1: As a parent, what is the most important information in the current school calendar in order of importance? Answer: The monthly dates, which include report card schedules, open house, early dismissals, etc., school contact information and information about curriculum.

Q2: If you could include something not currently in the calendar, what would it be? Answer: TCAP scores that compares school within the district, pictures, and make the spaces for the dates larger, better format, and short to the point, maybe highlight main points and early dismissal dates highlighted.

Q3: How would you describe the monthly calendar features (photo and story)? Answer: Interesting – 66%, not interesting – 17%, and don't pay any attention to them – 17%.

Q4: How often do you use the calendar? Answer: Always 53.85%, Often 23.08%, not often 15.38%, I don't use the calendar 7.69% and one parent said the calendar was too small.

Q5: If you use another source for CMCSS calendar information, what is it? Answer: School website or CMCSS site, app, Northeast Middle School does a great job of reminding parents of events like half days, etc. and front office. One parent asked if the time for early dismissal could be added to the calendar. (Elise Shelton, Chief Communications Officer said it could be posted on the website).

Q6: Looking at the website, how easy is it for you to find the information you are looking for? Answer: Very easy 23.08%, easy 61.54%, average 15.38%, and difficult 0.00%

Q7: What is your overall impression of the site? Answer: Professional-exceed expectations 53.85%, informative-exceeds expectation 53.85% and visually pleasing meet expectations 53.85%

Q8: What is the primary reason you last visited the website? Answer: PowerSchool, Teacher Email Address, School related – looking updates to events, pictures of activities, finding out information, bus schedule, dismissal times and employment opportunities

Q9: Did you find what you needed? Answer: Yes, all of it 92.31%, some of it 7.69% and no, none of it 0.00%.

Q10: If you did not find what you needed, please tell us what information you were looking for? Answer: The transportation department is very difficult to get in touch with. When I have concerns I am transferred to several people before they find the right one. This happens every time I call.

Q11: What information on the individual schools' webpages would you like to see added? Answer: More school events information, after school programs times, TCAP information, easier navigation icons, and more information on what is going on in the school

Q12: Have you watched video on CMCSS Focus? Answer: Frequently 15.38%, sometimes 53.85%, and never 30.77%

Q13: If you have watched, how would you rate CMCSS' Focus web video? Answer: Professional-exceed expectation 55.56%, informative-meets expectations 55.56%, and visually pleasing-meets expectations 55.56%

Q14: Comments for improving the website: Answer: This website is very good in my opinion, I would like to be able access the staff website by a link from the CMCSS website, high school input, keep things easy and well labeled, and continue to make it more navigable to use through a smart phone.

Elise Shelton apologized for the errors on the calendars and said corrections are at the website.

Elise read the question of the month...Are school resources aligned with the system's mission and beliefs? (Resources include money, time, programs, personnel, etc.) If not, what are your concerns? Because of the time frame she asked the parents to write down their responses on a sheet of paper and leave it on the table.

Suggestions: Do not add the month to the 'question of the month' to avoid confusion.