

# **Newton High School**

*Learnings from the Field*  
– Newton High School

*Dr. Roderick Sams, Principal*  
2009-2010

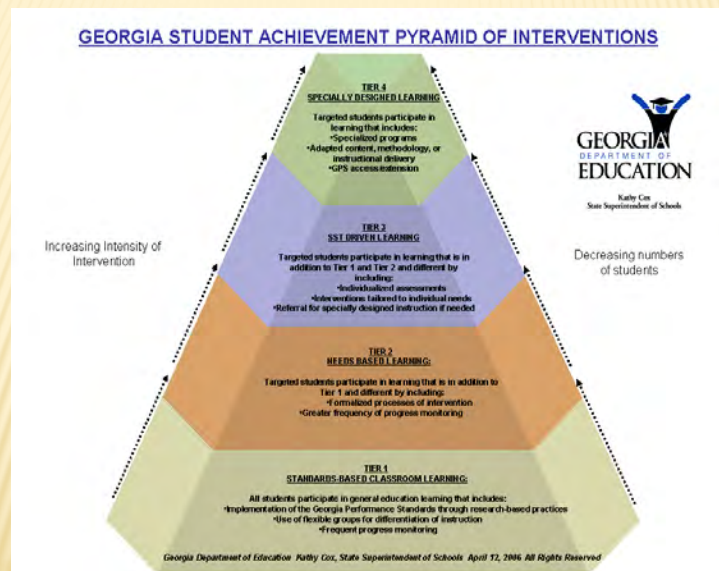
**All involved in education  
should continuously ask  
the question, “What  
happens in our school,  
when despite our best  
efforts in the classroom, a  
student does not learn?”**

Rick DuFour, 2004

# Newton County School System Pyramid of Intervention

Newton County Pyramid of Intervention (POI) is based upon the Georgia Department of Education Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions. Like the Georgia Pyramid, NCSS uses a four-tiered approach to best meet the needs of learners.

This conceptual framework was intended to serve as the guide for systems to develop and implement processes that meet student needs.



The POI focuses on standards-based instruction, and differentiation of that instruction, as needed, to help students experience greater levels of achievement.

The process is data-driven, and regular progress monitoring allows educators to determine whether students are making the expected progress, or whether additional instructional interventions are needed to help them improve their academic achievements.

It is important to note that the POI is a system whereby one level of support is layered upon the previous levels of support, and the levels of support become more intensive when students need greater assistance.

The POI represents a regular education function  
– **IT IS NOT SPECIAL EDUCATION!**

The focus of the system is on **instructional variables that may be altered.**

Further, individual student data determines whether interventions need to be intensified.

# **Newton High School POI Process Early Behavioral & Instructional Support (EBIS)**

## ***How the Pyramid of Intervention (EBIS/SST Team) Process Works at NHS***

**The POI/EBIS team process has three purposes:**

1. To review school-wide behavior and academic data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of core programs/Tier 1 instruction.
2. To screen and identify students needing additional academic and/or behavior support.
3. To plan, implement and modify interventions for these students. Depending on each student's "response to intervention," a formal referral for SST/special education evaluation may result.

Early Behavioral & Instructional Support (EBIS) is intended to be a structured, systematic process involving the following features and activities: team membership, school-wide planning, planning for the 20%, monthly meetings, and individualizing-intensifying interventions.

**Team membership:** Leadership by the principal is essential. EBIS Team membership is **grade-level based** and it should also **include** the **Literacy/Title I Specialists** assigned to a particular grade level, **the school counselor, specialists from Special Education and ELL programs, and the assistant principal for instruction.** Teams often benefit from including a member from the classified staff.



***Planning for the 80% (School-wide): Tier 1***

**Three times a year**, in the fall, winter, and spring, **EBIS teams review data** on student performance (e.g., academic, behavior, attendance) in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the core programs/classroom work. The EBIS model is predicated on the notion that *the core programs should meet the needs of at least 80% of the student population*. If this is not the case, the team needs to plan and implement professional development to shore up the core program.

***Planning for the 20% (Targeted groups): Tier 2***

**Students falling** below acceptable performance levels for Reading and Math on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade CRCT, and/or who have other, significant academic, behavioral or attendance problems, are identified and placed on the EBIS roster. EBIS team members brainstorm interventions for groups of students with similar needs. They also decide what progress-monitoring data should be collected, and the person who would be responsible for collecting the needed data.

***EBIS team meetings:*** **EBIS teams convene** to evaluate the progress of the students involved in *group interventions*. The team reviews progress monitoring data for each student and analyzes *aimlines* and/or *trendlines* (see Decision Rules). One of four different decisions may be made at this meeting for each student being reviewed:

- 1. the group intervention has been successful and the student no longer needs small group instruction;*
- 2. the intervention appears to be working for the student and should be continued as is;*
- 3. the group intervention is not working for the student and should be revised or refined; or,*
- 4. the group intervention is highly unlikely to be successful for the student and therefore a more, individualized approach is needed.*

***Tier 3 (SST) Involvement for Individualizing and Intensifying Interventions:*** When a more intensive intervention is needed, **EBIS team refers the child to Tier 3** and completes necessary Tier 3 paperwork. At the individualized planning/Tier 3 level, it is also necessary to assign a case manager for each student. The **case manager's** responsibility is to ensure that the intervention is implemented correctly and that progress is monitored according to the schedule agreed upon by the team. In addition, the case manager completes the EBIS/Tier 3 Individual Student Action Plan and continues to track intervention details using the EBIS/Tier 3 Student Intervention Profile. Case managers report back to the Tier 3 team on the progress of the students under their supervision on at least a monthly basis. Based on the progress monitoring data, the Tier 3 team may determine that a referral for a *formal special education evaluation* is appropriate. **The information from the intervention profile should be included with the referral as it provides evidence regarding the student's responses to various interventions.**

## ***Lessons from the Field - Getting a POI Process Started In Your District***

## What Do Schools Need To Do To Begin Navigating the POI ?

To successfully navigate the POI, the first steps that schools must take include these key points:

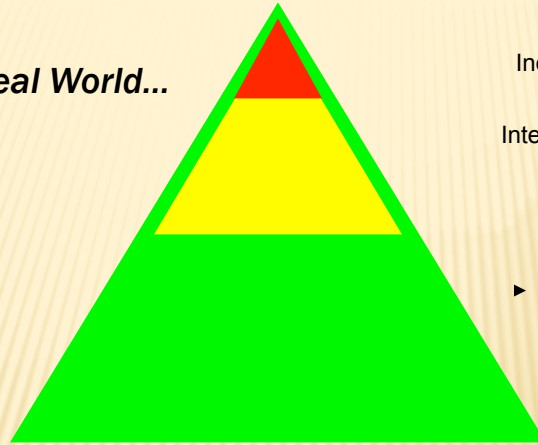
- ✓ developing a clear, concise vision for the school that focuses on raising student achievement,
- ✓ securing staff commitment to “doing whatever it takes”,
- ✓ using **data** to make better informed decisions,
- ✓ aligning curriculum with state and national standards,
- ✓ identifying any gaps within curriculum,
- ✓ bridging those gaps with research-based materials, and
- ✓ ensuring that faculty members are highly qualified

Just as **DATA** is the key element in determining steps that need to be taken, it is important to analyze **student data** to ascertain which students need additional assistance. This data should be derived from objective performance indicators, such as performance on specific tasks, such as Criterion-Referenced Tests, historical data, such as previous years' course grades.

When the pyramid is utilized as intended and designed, approximately 80% or more of students are expected to be successful in the regular classroom setting with effective, standards-based instruction.



*In the Real World...*



Individualized/Intensive

► 5% - Tier IV

Intermediate/Targeted

► 15% -  
Tiers II and III

Universal/Core

► 80% - Tier I

At Tier I, all students in the school are provided with high-quality, standards-based instruction by highly qualified educators. Differentiated instruction, and other proven strategies may be useful in helping most students experience success in the general education classroom.

## For Those Students Who Continue to Struggle At Tier I



- > Review Previous Local & State Test Scores
- > Review Previous Grades
- > Review Specific Plans for the Student
- > Review Recent Student Work
- > Dialogue with Teachers
- > Dialogue with Administrators
- > Dialogue with Guidance
- > Dialogue with Parents
- > Diagnostic Testing, where appropriate

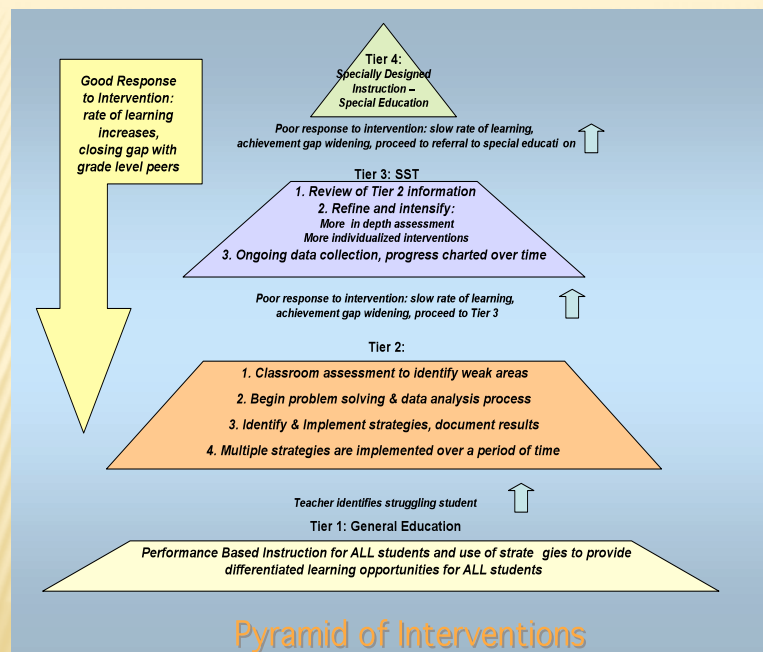


## Students Who Require More Intense Interventions Would Likely Benefit From Assistance at Tiers 2 & 3

*The decision to move students from Tier 1 to Tiers 2 & 3 would depend upon what has been attempted previously with these students, the individual school system, the resources it possesses, and what the DATA indicates.*

Examples to this question may include those students who

- fail to progress after two (2) small group interventions, used consistently & with fidelity, for a 9-week grading period,
- consistently are performing in the lowest 5% of the class,
- have not made sufficient progress in at least 2 interventions for at least 6 weeks (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1997)



## Program Efficacy

### **Instructional Programs Must Demonstrate Evidence of Effectiveness**

- Proven, Evidenced-Based Practices Should be Used
  - Project-Based Learning is one example
- Relevant Skills are Targeted
- Level of Explicit Instruction

## Program Implementation

- Treatment Fidelity is necessary to ensure that the program is implemented as intended, for a sufficient period of time
- Professional Development/Staff Support should be embedded and ongoing to help staff members increase their buy-in, knowledge of, and implementation of the POI processes.

## Grouping for Instruction

- Group Size should reflect the needs of individual students
- Larger groups should be for those students who need less intensive intervention; smaller groups consisting of a few students should be for those students who need more individualized instruction.
- For Existing Groups—Think Creatively!!!
- Efficient Use of Resources

## Coordination of Instruction

- More frequent meetings are necessary to review progress and modify, as needed, for students who need more intensive intervention
- Involvement of “specialists”, such as Reading Specialists or Behavioral Interventionists, to intensify interventions
- Ensure that all staff members are “on the same page” regarding the implementation of the pyramid



## Providing Support

- Focus on what we can **change** to help the student
  - **CURRICULUM** is not always what we should change
- Determine what works for **EACH** child

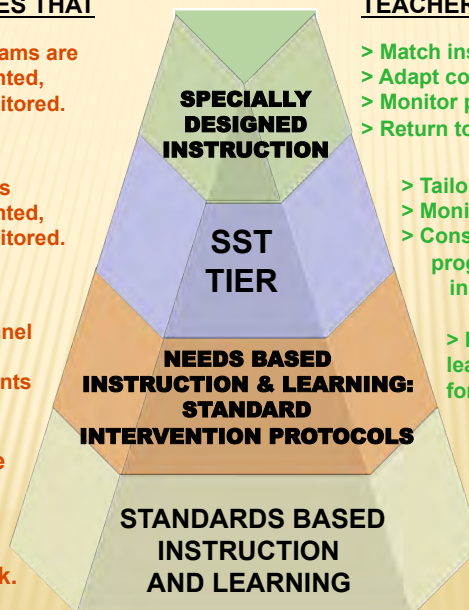


- Provide Support
  - Determine how the school and system can provide intensive support for students who need it
- Assessing students' response to intensive intervention
  - Determine what constitutes students' adequate response to intensive support/intervention

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PYRAMID OF INTERVENTIONS

### SCHOOL ENSURES THAT

- > Specialized programs are designed, implemented, supported and monitored.
- > An effective SST is designed, implemented, supported and monitored.
- > Structures, personnel and resources are directed when students struggle.
- > Teachers provide instruction based on GPS's, commentary and differentiated work.



### TEACHERS WILL

- > Match instruction to needs.
- > Adapt content, methods, delivery.
- > Monitor progress frequently.
- > Return to lower tiers ASAP.
- > Tailor instruction to needs.
- > Monitor/Revise interventions.
- > Consider specially designed programs only when data indicates a need.
- > Provide enhanced learning opportunities for targeted students.
- > Design SB instruction.
- > Monitor.
- > Provide feedback.
- > Differentiate.

### **Develop a Plan for All Intervention Areas**

- Academic
- Behavioral
- Speech/Language
- Attendance
- Other Concerns Specific to Your School or District

### **NHS General 9-12 Options for Intervention**

#### **Tier I Interventions**

- Standards-based Instruction from Learning Focused School Trained Faculty
- Instruction from Highly Qualified Teachers
- Maximized Instructional Time (before-school, after-school, lunch tutorials)
- Research-based Instructional Strategies
- Recognition and Incentive Programs
- Senior Mentors for 9<sup>th</sup> Graders (proposed)

**Tier II Interventions- Preplanned for Students Not Successful in Tier I**

- Increased Progress Monitoring and Parental Contact
- Reteach, Review, Refine- Continuation of tutoring
- Referral to Graduation Coach for Development of Individual Graduation Plan
- Individual Counseling
- Weekly or Bi-Weekly Progress Report
- NovaNET Credit Recovery Software
- Community Mentors
- Peer Tutoring

**Tier III Interventions- Interventions from Support Team Addressing Specific, Individual Needs**

- Behavioral Intervention Plan
- Student Support Team
- Refer to Special Ed Screening if needed
- Intensive Intervention with Graduation Coach



### **Tier IV Interventions**

- Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)
- 504 Plan
- Specialized Programs and Instruction

## **Tiered Interventions for Behavior**

### **Tier 1**

- Positive environments for all students
  - Safe
  - Respectful
  - Responsible
- Alter reinforcement
- Use effective classroom practices with differentiated instruction

### **Tier 2**

- Individual behavior support planning with goal monitoring
  - Increase and individualize reinforcement
  - Behavioral contracts
  - Can be Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) driven
- Use of group programs
  - Counseling, adjustment groups, prevention groups

### **Tier 3**

- Highly Individualized
- Based on FBA or BIP
- May include multiple agencies and interventions with highly data driven, frequent decision making

### **Tier 4**

- Specifically designed behavior intervention

### **State BOE Rule 160-4-7**

A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability if the primary factor for that determination is:

Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction;

- Lack of appropriate instruction in math;
- Lack of appropriate instruction in writing;
- Limited English proficiency;
- Cultural factors;
- Environmental or economic disadvantage; or
- Atypical education history (multiple school attendance, lack of attendance, etc.).

### **Challenges that Led NCSS to Implement Tiered Interventions at the High School Level**

***Among The Many Challenges That Led NCSS To Implement Tiered Interventions At The High School Level Were:***

- Recommended interventions were used inconsistently, and treatment fidelity was often of insufficient quality for accurate decision-making
- Increasing numbers of special education referrals and students being served who may have been successful in general education settings with reasonable interventions
- Differences within school, among district schools, and across districts in providing students with adequate opportunity to learn
- Little accountability regarding outcomes of instruction
- Inconsistency of pre-referral intervention practices and implementation between the schools and among districts
- Many students were referred for special education consideration for inappropriate reasons, including possible bias, stereotyping, and other issues

### **Successes That Have Made the Biggest Impact Upon Student Achievement**

- School-level self-study to analyze building strengths & weaknesses, coupled with an external review of all school elements, and detailed suggestions/recommendations for improvement
- Improved use of data for decision-making and student placement
- Making certain that curriculum is aligned to state standards
- Making strides in addressing gaps & weaknesses in the curriculum, and bridging those gaps with research-based strategies and materials
- Focusing upon student achievement and evidence of growth
- Realignment of resources to better meet student needs
- Strong and united leadership who communicate consistently with teachers and other staff members about the need for data-driven instruction and best-practices strategies
- Continuous, on-going review of student and school data

### **CONGRATULATIONS NEWTON HIGH!!!**

**Newton High School has earned various honors over the last 2 years. AYP status was attained for the 2008-09 school year, and the school is working diligently to attain AYP for 2009-10. The school has also earned the distinction of being one of only four GA high schools to win the Bronze Award from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement ! Go RAMS !**



## The Status of NHS Implementation of RTI

At NHS, the RTI process is under constant review and assessment. The goal of implementing RTI as it was intended is meant to better serve our students by utilizing a concise, but innovative framework to increase student achievement. At the same time, the process gives educators a framework that will allow them to enhance and increase their repertoire of effective instructional skills.

In our second year of using the POI, Newton High School is currently analyzing the processes that are employed at the school. We hope to add additional, proven programs that will be of great benefit to our students. We want to improve upon the good practices we are implementing, and make them among the best at helping students achieve at their optimal levels. Finally, we want to continue to learn and grow so that we may provide our students with what they need to achieve their potential.

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