



Deputy Commissioner
Office of Instructional Support

January 3, 2017

To: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Public School Administrators

From: Angélica Infante-Green *A. Infante - Green*

Subject: Response to Intervention (Rtl) Middle School Demonstration Project
Applications of Interest

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) Office of Instructional Support is pleased to announce technical assistance resources to assist middle schools across the State to implement high-quality frameworks of Rtl. The NYSED is seeking “Applications of Interest” from public middle schools that are interested in participating in a three year Rtl Middle School Demonstration Project.

The purpose of the Rtl Middle School Demonstration Project is to provide school-specific support to New York State (NYS) public middle schools (Grades 5-8) that are interested in developing or refining a data-driven prevention/intervention framework aimed at improving instruction for all students.

Rtl can be defined as a school-wide prevention framework that provides needs-specific instruction to students, including: (1) universal screening to determine risk status; (2) progress monitoring to determine student response to instruction, and; (3) supplemental intervention that increases in intensity based on student needs and progress. In recent years, Rtl has evolved to include attention to the academic behaviors that are needed to make learning possible (e.g., academic engagement, following directions, completing work). While implementation of Rtl has focused predominately at the elementary level, many schools are beginning to scale up prevention efforts to focus on middle school implementation.

Participation in the Rtl Middle School Demonstration Project

Interested public middle schools who wish to apply are strongly encouraged to participate in a webinar designed to assist applicants. Please use the webinar registration link (<https://nysrti.adobeconnect.com/rtidemproject/event/registration.html>) to attend. The webinar will be held on January 11, 2017 from 4:00-4:45 pm. This webinar will detail the logistics of the project, eligibility and selection criteria process, project expectations, and responsibilities. This webinar will be archived on the NYS Response to Intervention Technical Assistance Center’s (Rtl TAC) website

(<https://nysrti.org/professional-development/past-webinars/>) for middle schools that are unable to participate in the live webinar.

Middle schools interested in participating in the project must submit an application to the NYSED no later than February 10, 2017. Please see the attached application materials. Upon review of applications, the NYSED will narrow the field of applicants to twenty (20) middle schools for further consideration. These twenty (20) middle schools will be scheduled to participate in individual web-based interviews with consortium members from the Rtl TAC and NYSED personnel. Upon completion of the web-based interviews, ten (10) middle schools will be selected for participation in the project.

Each selected middle school will be paired with a consortium member from the Rtl TAC. The TAC consortium members will provide school-specific technical assistance over the course of three years. For additional information on the Rtl TAC and the consortium members, please see <https://nysrti.org/about-us/who-we-are/>. The intent is for each selected middle school to develop an Rtl framework that will serve as a model prevention/intervention process for other middle schools across the State. The assistance provided for each school will include:

- an annual two-day Rtl Summer Institute to be held in Albany at the end of June each project year and one annual regional professional development session;
- eight days annually of on-site building-based professional development and technical assistance; and
- monthly webinar academies for the principals and Rtl coordinators from each participating middle school.

Funding will not be provided to selected middle schools for participation in the project; however, the professional development and technical assistance will be provided at no cost. The Rtl TAC will cover the cost of hotel accommodations and mileage for participants' attendance at the annual Rtl Summer Institute. Information regarding eligibility for participation and project participation requirements may be found in the attached application.

If your middle school is interested in receiving the support provided through the project, please complete and submit the attached forms by email no later than Friday, February 10, 2017 to rtpdschools@nysed.gov. All districts will be notified in April 2017 of selection to participate in the project. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to improve outcomes for all middle school students.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this memorandum, please contact Jason O'Connell at (518) 486-7462.

Enclosures

**Response to Intervention (RtI) Middle School Demonstration Project
Application of Interest**

Purpose of Request for Applications: The New York State Education Department, Office of Instructional Support seeks to continue to promote and build school district capacity to implement a systemic, RtI process by soliciting proposals from eligible middle schools that are interested in participating in an RtI Middle School Demonstration Project.

Eligible Applicants:

New York State public middle or junior high schools (Grades 5-8), at any level of academic need or demographic distribution, and at any level of RtI implementation are eligible to participate in the project.

Project Period: April 2017 through June 2020

Application Deadline: February 10, 2017

Completed Applications Must Be Sent To: rtipdschools@nysed.gov

Response to Intervention (RtI) Middle School Demonstration Project Application of Interest

Narrative

Abstract: Provide a 1-page overview of your school's rationale and goals for submitting an application. Specify the ways that the Response to Intervention Technical Assistance Center (RtI TAC) can provide support to help you to achieve these goals.

Application Information: Please provide information for each of the sections outlined below relative to the **middle school that will be participating**, not the entire district.

Background School Information:

- 1) Using the New York State Report Card Data (2015-16), provide the following demographic data pertaining to your middle school population:
 - Student enrollment
 - Student race/ethnicity
 - Average class size
 - Free and reduced-price lunch
 - Attendance
 - Teacher turnover rate

- 2) Using the New York State Report Card Data (2015-16), provide aggregated (e.g., all students) ELA assessment data for the middle school grades by performance level and disaggregated ELA assessment data by performance level for the following subgroups:
 - Race/ethnicity
 - General education and students with disabilities
 - English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners
 - Economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged

- 3) List any other ELA assessments that are used to assess or group students in your middle school (e.g., DIBELS, AIMSWEB, STAR, iReady, SRI), and provide the grade level outcomes for your middle school grades for the past two years.

- 4) Describe your middle school's current system to support struggling students in the area of literacy (300-500 words).

Rationale: Discuss reasons why your middle school is interested in applying for this project.

Outcomes/Goals: Provide a summary of your anticipated 3-year project outcomes/goals relative to RtI implementation and student outcomes.

Proposed Rtl Infrastructure:

- 1) Provide a description detailing the planned role and participation of the middle school building principal within the Rtl model throughout the three-year project.
- 2) Identify your Rtl leadership team that includes: building principal, guidance counselor, content area teachers from 2-4 disciplines, literacy specialist (if already on staff), and district level administrator (e.g., Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent).
- 3) Identify a member of the Rtl design team to serve as the school-designated Rtl Coordinator and specific time that will be allocated to focus on Rtl management tasks. This person will serve as a data manager, liaison with staff, facilitator for Rtl meetings, and as point of contact with the Rtl TAC.
- 4) Describe evidence of district level commitment and support (e.g., professional development plan, school quality review plan, Academic Intervention Services (AIS)/Rtl plan, district goals, ad hoc participation of central office staff (e.g., Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Rtl team meetings).

Additional Project Information

Expectations for Middle Schools Selected for Participation

Selected middle schools will be required to establish a multi-disciplinary Rtl Leadership Team that will be responsible for developing the infrastructure of their Rtl framework. The Rtl Leadership Team will be required to attend all professional development activities offered by the Rtl TAC, will be in attendance during Rtl TAC site visits with their assigned Rtl TAC consortium member, and provide access to Rtl data for determining progress toward Rtl implementation. Middle schools chosen for the project must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reflecting meaningful and participatory commitment to the project as defined in the MOU.

Criteria for Selection

All school districts are encouraged to submit an application of interest on behalf of one of their middle schools. The project can serve up to 10 middle schools to receive support beginning in April 2017. Each district may select one middle school within their district to participate in the project.

Selection Criteria

Public middle schools of all levels of academic needs as well as demographics proposing to implement middle/junior high school Rtl programs (Grades 5-8) will be considered. Middle schools at any level of Rtl implementation will be considered.

The following selection criteria will be applied:

- Strong rationale for initiating or improving existing Rtl model
- Strong evidence of district level commitment and support
- Strong evidence detailing the role and participation of the building principal within the Rtl model throughout the three-year project
- Strong evidence of an Rtl Leadership Team
- Strong evidence that a member of the Rtl Leadership Team will serve as a school designated Rtl Coordinator and that specific time is allocated for this individual to serve as data manager, communicate with staff, set agenda for Rtl meetings, and serve as a point of contact with the TAC
- Strong evidence of expected outcomes/goals.