Response to Intervention (RTI) is a framework for improving student achievement through targeted, evidence-based supports for students struggling to meet academic standards. RTI works best when implemented with fidelity, but school district administrators often lack valid and reliable information about schools’ progress at implementing RTI. Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest and Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) developed a system that allows school district administrators to monitor how well schools are implementing specific components of RTI.

The implementation of RTI requires strong leadership from the principal and the school’s RTI implementation team and collaboration between the implementation team and teachers. Students complete balanced assessments, and the implementation team uses data-based decision making to assign students to tiers in a multi-tiered instruction system. The implementation teams conduct continual evaluations of the RTI processes and students’ mastery of subject matter. Students are reassigned to tiers as needed.

The monitoring system allows school leaders and school improvement staff to evaluate the quality of RTI implementation at school, regional, and district levels. The system also enables its users to examine specific components of RTI implementation to determine in which areas schools are struggling with implementation and in which areas they are succeeding.

1 Users’ level of access in the monitoring system corresponds to their level of responsibility. For example, a principal can see data for his or her school but not for other schools. A school improvement coach can see results for the schools that he or she serves but not the results for other schools or for the district as a whole.

RTI Components: The monitoring system divides RTI into six components.

- Data-based decision making
- Leadership
- Balanced assessment
- Collaboration
- Evaluation
- Multi-tiered instruction

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School improvement staff visited 68 schools in the district and made implementation ratings. Using this system, MPS identified the percentage of visited schools that struggled to implement each RTI component. Nearly 70 percent of the schools struggled with implementing multi-tiered instruction. A deeper investigation of the subcomponents of multi-tiered instruction revealed that 77 percent of schools struggled with implementing Tier III.

Based on these findings, MPS plans to offer more professional development and coaching on multi-tiered instruction and Tier III support. MPS should anticipate for these measures to lead to greater fidelity of RTI implementation.

**TAKEAWAY**  | Many districts across the nation have adopted RTI as their approach to school improvement. MPS’s experience suggests that districts should consider closely monitoring RTI implementation.


**Additional Information**  | For more information, contact REL Midwest by e-mail (relmidwest@air.org) or by phone (866-730-6735).