



Ideas to Build Teacher Understanding and Support for RTI

Teacher support for the RTI model is crucial for its success. When seeking to enlist faculty support, schools should offer RTI information in short, teacher-friendly presentations or discussion forums; emphasize the benefits of RTI in addressing chronic concerns about struggling students; solicit teacher input in the development of the RTI model; and demonstrate that RTI is a comprehensive problem-solving framework rather than an isolated, stand-alone program.

	Goal	Possible Action Steps
1.	<p>Offer RTI information to teachers in a series of short presentations or discussion forums. A common mistake that schools make in rolling out RTI is to present their teachers with RTI information in a single, long presentation—with little opportunity for questions or discussion. Instead, schools should plan a series of RTI information-sharing sessions with teachers throughout the school year. Any large-group RTI training sessions (e.g., at faculty meetings) should be kept short, to ensure that the audience is not overwhelmed with large volumes of information. Consider using smaller instructional team or department meetings as a vehicle for follow-up presentations, discussion, and teacher questions about RTI.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Create a year-long RTI information-sharing plan.</i> Determine what RTI information your school would like to present to staff, as well as the degree of faculty input and discussion needed. Then draft a year-long plan to communicate with staff about RTI. Each year, update the plan to keep faculty updated about implementation of the RTI model.</p>
2.	<p>Present RTI as a coordinated, schoolwide approach to address long-standing teacher concerns about struggling students. The fact that many states now strongly encourage or mandate RTI may not be enough to convince teachers that they should support RTI. Instead, schools should consider framing RTI as a broad, schoolwide solution to help teachers to better instruct, motivate, and manage the behaviors of struggling learners. Teachers want fewer class disruptions, more uninterrupted instructional time, higher performing students, targeted supplemental academic help for students who need it, and better communication among educators about the needs of all students. As schools make the case for RTI, they should demonstrate how it will help teachers to manage the day-to-day challenges that they face in their classrooms.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Get feedback from teachers about their classroom concerns.</i> Find opportunities to engage teachers in productive discussions about what they see as the greatest challenges facing them as instructors. Note the teacher concerns that surface most often. For each teacher concern, generate ideas for how an RTI model in your school might help teachers with that issue. Craft these ideas for instructor support into 'talking points' and include them in your school's RTI presentations.</p>
3.	<p>Solicit teacher input when building your school's RTI model. Teachers are a valuable resource that schools should tap when implementing RTI. When schools solicit teacher questions about RTI, include teachers on planning teams to help to develop the RTI process, and treat teacher objections or concerns about RTI as helpful feedback rather than stubborn resistance, those schools send the message that teachers are full partners in the RTI planning process.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Include teachers on the RTI Leadership Team.</i> One of the best ways to ensure that teachers have input into the RTI development process is to include teacher representatives on the RTI Leadership Team, the group that oversees the district's implementation of RTI.</p>
4.	<p>Link all significant school and district initiatives to RTI. RTI is a comprehensive, proactive model to identify and assist struggling students. Yet teachers may erroneously perceive RTI as just another 'program' that is likely to last for only a short time and then disappear. Any RTI training for staff should make the point that RTI is not a single-self contained program but is actually an all-inclusive and flexible framework for student support that encompasses <i>all</i> existing student support programs and strategies.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Organized all school programs under the RTI framework.</i> A useful workshop exercise that can help a school to correct the possible tendency of staff to underestimate and dismiss RTI is to present it as an elastic multi-tier problem-solving framework. First, the school lists all of its significant current programs or initiatives intended to assess or intervene with students with academic or behavioral needs. The school then assigns each of the programs or initiatives to Tier 1, 2, or 3 in the RTI framework. The message for staff is that, while specific <i>programs</i> may come and go, the overarching RTI model is both adaptable and durable--and that much of the power of RTI rests on its potential to integrate a series of isolated programs into a larger unified and coordinated continuum of student support.</p>