



Increasing Access to Core Instruction: Continuum of Services and Least Restrictive Environment



A collaborative project of TN Department of Education and STEP, Inc.

Dana Johnson | Sped Interventionist West Division | TDOE Special Populations
Karen Harrison | Executive Director | Support & Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP, Inc.)

SPDG: Overview

Purpose: To provide ALL students with access to high-quality core instruction in the least restrictive environment.

Partners:

- Centers for Literacy, Education and Employment – UT, Knoxville
- University of Kentucky Human Development Institute
- Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)

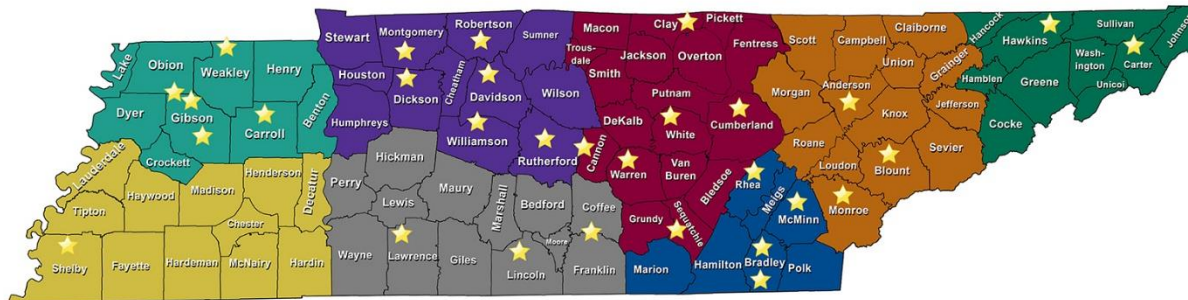
Process:

- SPDG funded Professional Development Activities:
- Strand One / Strand Two Trainings
 - Three part workshop series (Fall, Winter, Spring)
 - Conducted by district-selected facilitator
 - Audience: School teams from district-selected schools
 - General educator, special educator, administrator
- Ongoing support:
- Training:: All participants, Three times / year
- Communities of Practice: Monthly check-ins
- Coaching and Modeling: Individual support, based on need
- Interventionist Support: Individual support, based on need

SPDG Participating Districts



SPDG Participating Districts



WEST

- Achievement School District
- Bradford Special School District
- Gibson County Special School District
- Trenton Special School District
- Weakley County Schools
- West Carroll Schools

MIDDLE

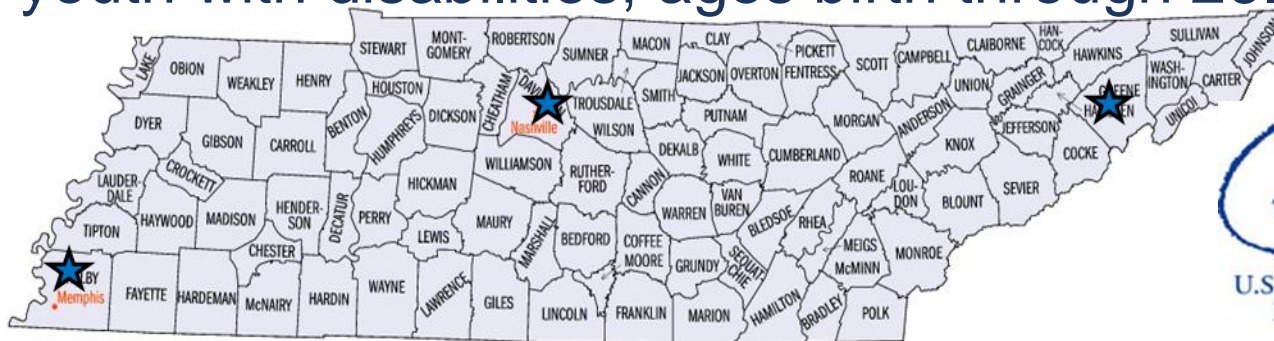
- Cannon County Schools
- Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools
- Clay County Schools
- Cumberland County Schools
- Dickson County Schools
- Fayetteville City Schools
- Franklin Special School District
- Lawrence County Schools
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Murfreesboro City Schools
- Robertson County Schools
- Tullahoma City Schools
- Warren County Schools

EAST

- Alcoa City Schools
- Bradley County Schools
- Cleveland City Schools
- Clinton City Schools
- Elizabethton City Schools
- Hawkins County Schools
- McMinn County Schools
- Rhea County Schools
- Sequatchie County Schools
- Sweetwater City Schools
- White County Schools

STEP: Who We Are and What We Do

STEP, Inc. (Support and Training for Exception Parents, Inc.) is a not for profit organization serving families who have children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 26.



PTI

Tennessee Parent Training & Information Center



FYI²

Family and Youth Information and Involvement



SPDG

State Personnel Development Grant



Gifts

Projects funded through donations and other funds



STEP's vision is to ensure a brighter future for children and youth in Tennessee, with an emphasis on those with disabilities, special health care needs, and mental health needs.



STEP: Our Services

- Trainings across TN
- Webinars and electronic information
- One-on-one assistance
- IEP/504 preparation
 - Record review and strategy planning
- Some attendance at IEP/504 meetings
- Letter writing help
- Referral to other agencies
- Information and awareness events/conferences
- Conflict resolution: Communication strategies, building relationships



Statewide training, information and referral services to parents of children with disabilities and professional development for school districts to improve family/youth involvement and outcomes.

Learning Objectives

- An overview of a continuum of services and the least restrictive environment
- Increase understanding of the general education initiative RTI² (response to intervention and instruction) and special education as the most intensive intervention
- How to use the information to effectively engage in their child's education as full, active, and informed participants in the education process

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Continuum of Services

Least Restrictive Environment § 300.114 LRE - (A) In general.--To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, **are educated with children who are not disabled**, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs **only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.**

Continuum of Services/Alternative Placements § 300.115 C

The range of services which must be available to the students of a school district so that they may be served in the least restrictive environment.

Special Education Continuum of Services

General Ed Classroom

- Consultation
- Information Sharing
- Problem Solving
- Co-teaching
- Collaboration
- Coaching
- Co-teaching
- Other support services

Pull Out Services/Supports

- Direct Instruction
- Academic Support
- Social Skills
- Study Strategies
- Transition Skills

Separate Classroom

- Direct Instruction
- Behavior Instruction
- Social Skills
- Content Instruction
- Functional Skills

Alternative Setting

- Special Schools
- Home Instruction
- Hospitals
- Specialized Institutions

Least Restrictive

Most Restrictive

Districts Requirements for LRE

- Each LEA must have a continuum of alternative placements to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services.
- The continuum refers to the entire spectrum of placements where a student's special education program can be implemented.

Inclusion Is

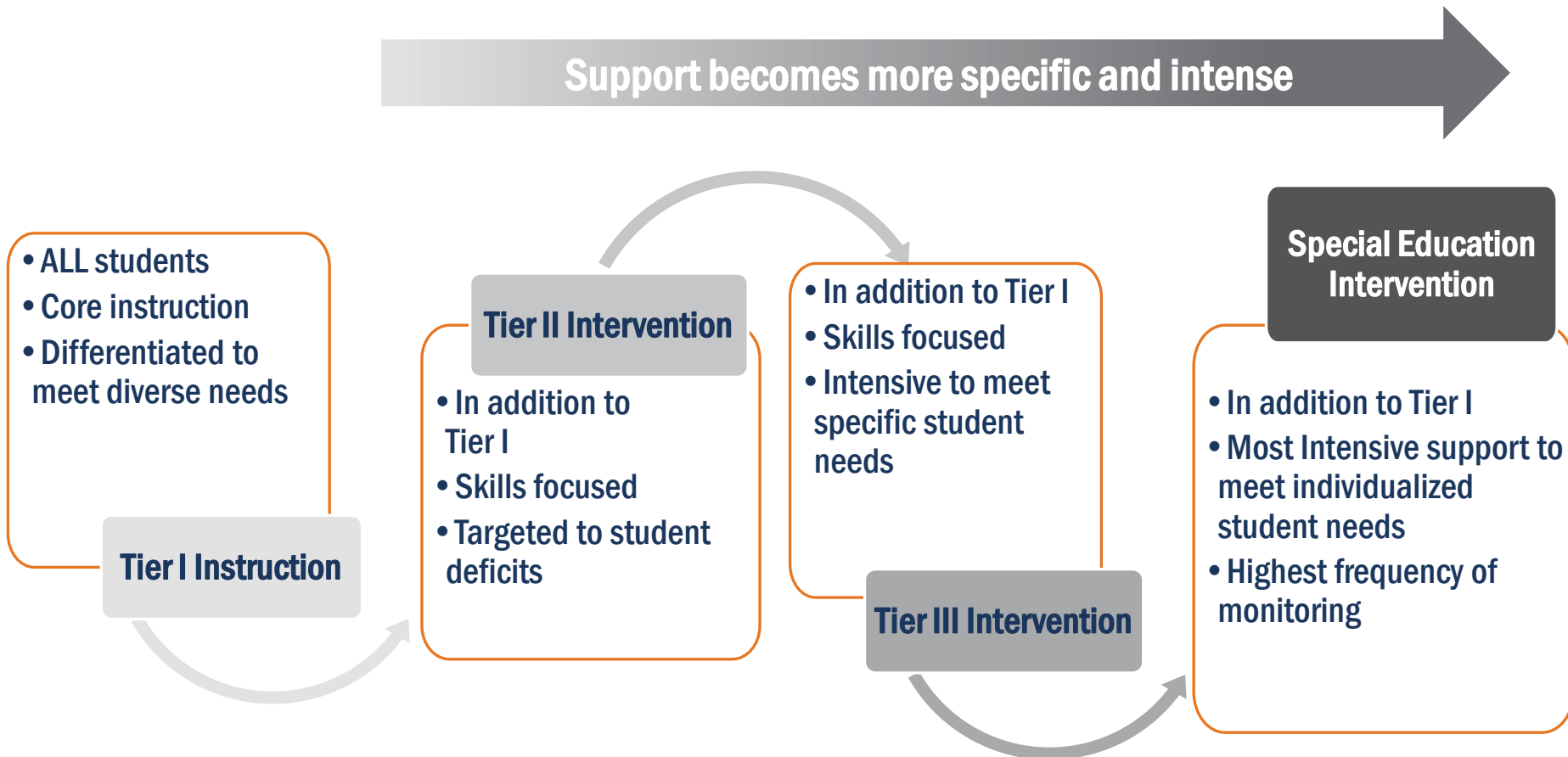
- Belonging to and being an essential part of a group
- Inclusive environments are built on the foundation that all students have value and unique gifts to offer; at home, at school, and in their communities.



Response to Intervention and Instruction? (RTI²) Is

- A General Education Initiative
- *QUALITY* instruction provided to ALL students!
- *DATA* reporting to parents!
- Improved *OUTCOMES* for students!
- Identify struggling learners *EARLY* and close the achievement gap

Continuum of Supports



Two Sides to RTI²

Quality teaching and monitoring of progress for **ALL** students



The process to determine eligibility for IDEA services in the category of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)





All students receive research based, high quality instruction in English/Language Arts and Math aligned to TN State Standards

**Core Instruction:
90 minutes a day**

80 – 85 % of students
Will meet grade level expectations



Struggling and advanced students provided additional high quality instruction matched to student-targeted area of need

**In Addition to
Core Instruction:
30 minutes a day**

10 – 15 % of students
Will meet grade level expectations



Small percentage of struggling students provided more explicit and more intensive intervention targeting specific area of need

**In Addition to
Core Instruction:
45– 60 minutes a day
Time Based on: grade level and
subject**

3 – 5 % of students
Will meet grade level expectations

Tier I: All Students

Tier II: Some Students

Tier III: Few Students

Examples of Supports in Tier 1

TIER I – Core Instruction

- What supports and services can occur for students in Tier I?
 - Differentiation
 - Scaffolding
 - Accommodations
 - Preferential seating
 - Pacing
 - Modifications
 - Others



Differentiation vs. Scaffolding

- Differentiation is a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing different students with different avenues to learning.
- Scaffolding is breaking up the learning into chunks and then providing a tool, or structure, with each chunk.

About Interventions

The intervention must have empirical evidence supporting its use in remediating the area of suspected disability (i.e. Basic Reading Skills). **That means “proof that it works”**

- A student may immediately require Tier III intervention
 - Students below 10th percentile or 1.5 – 2.0 grade levels behind
 - The “data team” should make decisions on an individual basis.

The purpose of immediately placing a student in Tier III intervention is to increase the **INTENSITY** of the intervention, not to shorten the **DURATION** of the intervention period.

Specifics Related to Tier II

TIER II + Core Instruction

- Targeted Support based on multiple data sources
- What supports and services can occur for students in Tier II? School teams consider:
 - What intervention
 - Frequency/duration
 - Number of students in setting
 - When is the intervention occurring?
- Progress Monitoring



Specifics Related to Tier III

TIER III + Core Instruction

- Targeted Support based on multiple data sources
- What supports and services can occur for students in Tier III?
 - More Intensive
 - Intervention Change based on data.
 - School teams consider:
 - What intervention
 - Frequency/duration
 - Number of students in setting
 - When is the intervention occurring?
 - Progress Monitoring – trend line



Special Education Consideration

- Instructional review leads to Special Education Consideration
- Special Education is Specially Designed Instruction and the Most intensive intervention
- If the previous Tiers have not proven to remedy the skills deficit – more intensive support is warranted. These interventions are in addition to Core instruction
- Students do not have to wait until they go through all of the tiers to be evaluated for special education services.

Special Education Services Overview

- **Specially Designed Instruction**
 - Goals
 - Frequency, duration, and location
- **Related Service**
 - Goals
 - Frequency, duration, and location
- **Nonacademic Services and Activities**
 - Accommodations **AND** potential Modifications

Foundational Premise for Students Who Already Have an IEP

- Special education services are still determined by the IEP team.
- Special education is not a place...it is the **most intensive intervention, supports, and services** brought to the student through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Guidance provided by the Department of Education is that ALL students should have access to core instruction and that this instruction should take place in the General Education setting by a General Education teacher *to the greatest extent possible*.
- Additional intervention provided through special education would be provided in addition to the core instruction.

What if a Parent Requests an Evaluation for Special Education?

- The team must complete the agreed upon components of the evaluation within the initial evaluation timeline.
- The student may be eligible for services as a student with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) based only on the RTI Framework.
- RTI² process is not required or appropriate for all areas of suspected disability.
- If the team lacks sufficient evidence to establish the student's eligibility for services:
 - the team may agree to request a timeline extension or
 - the student will be made ineligible until sufficient data can be collected.



®

Family Input is Key

Information families can use to participate
in the IEP and education process

Collaboration & Communication Are Key

The IEP is the tool designed to help families and school personnel **plan for the future** success of children with disabilities when they exit public education.

Non-Descriptive Example	Descriptive Example
<p>Joey's parents have concerns with his reading.</p>	<p>Joey's parents are very concerned with his reading fluency skills. While he comprehends text at grade level, his reading fluency remains two grade levels behind his peers. Joey's parents would like to see more communication about his classroom and RTI progress sent home so that they can help Joey retain the skills that he is being taught at school.</p>

Sharing Parent Concerns

Non-Descriptive Example	Descriptive Example
<p>Joey's parents have concerns with his reading.</p>	<p>Joey's parents are very concerned with his reading fluency skills. While he comprehends text at grade level, his reading fluency remains two grade levels behind his peers. Joey's parents would like to see more communication about his classroom and RTI progress sent home so that they can help Joey retain the skills that he is being taught at school.</p>

Sharing Student Strengths

Non-Descriptive Example	Descriptive Example
Sue is no problem at school.	Sue is polite, respectful and gets along with her peers. She is willing to participate and likes to be asked to help with errands and to assist the teacher or her peers. She demonstrates motivation and following directions.
Joey is a very polite child and his peers seem to like him.	Joey is able to comprehend text on a 5th grade level. He especially likes stories about sports. He also enjoys being outside with his friends and gets along very well with adults and peers. He is very visual and excels in basketball.
Donna is a very strong willed young lady.	Donna has strong organizational skills and decision making skills. She is extremely motivated when work involves using the computer.

Accommodations

- Enable students to **participate more fully** in instruction and assessments and to **demonstrate their knowledge and skills**
- Provide equitable **access** during instruction and assessment
- Mitigate the effects of a student's disability
- Based on **individual needs**, not on:
 - disability category
 - English language proficiency
 - level of instruction
 - program setting
 - availability of staff
 - amount of time in a general education classroom

Accommodations & Modifications

Accommodation

- Graphic organizer
- Text to speech with the book
- Template for long division
- Raised line paper
- Calculator
- Class lecture notes ahead of time
- Completed agenda with homework expectations
- Sensory break “pass”
- Picture schedule
- Word processor for writing assignments
- Shortened assignments
- Assignment broken into smaller tasks
- Oral assessment for understandings

Modification

- Partially completed graphic organizer with fewer links and less complexity
- Low level, high interest reading with text to speech
- Simple division facts with pictures, graphics, manipulative, or number line
- Dotted words and letters to trace
- Modified rubric for presentation to include fewer elements and more explicit understandings
- Essential elements from instruction taught with hands-on materials
- Assessed on only a portion of the test or concept

Collaboration & Communication are Key

- **“I’d like more information about that.”**
- **“I’d be interested in what you think.”**
- **“Why do you think that?”**
- **“Let’s discuss it.”**
- **“I don’t clearly understand. Could you put another way?”**
- **“This seems important to you.”**
- **“What would it take to...?”**



Preparing for LRE Discussions

- Be familiar with your son's or daughter's disability.
- Know the laws and rights that apply to what you are discussing at the meeting.
- Be familiar with best practices and research based interventions.
- Be prepared to share what works for your son or daughter.
- Gather information of effective teaching strategies from those who have worked with your child.
- Share information on how your child has been successfully included in other areas (ie: church, community, clubs)
- Review the IEP goals

How Parents and Caregivers Can Support What Their Child is Doing in School

- Communicate with your child's teacher
- Monitor and assist with homework assignments
- Review progress monitoring data
- Share your child's successes
- Learn more about the curricula and interventions being used in your child's school
- Attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings
- Talk to your child's teacher or principal for more information about how RTI² is being implemented

Tools and Resources

http://www.tn.gov/education/section/tdoe-rti2	TNCore RTI ² Implementation Guide available online
www.tnstep.org/events/archivedWebinars.aspx	STEP website with archived webinars such as TN Ready, Occupational Diploma, Transition, more
www.youtube.com/user/TNStep	STEP Youtube Channel with Videos on IDEA, Basic Rights and Instructionally Appropriate IEPs
www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/rti/#families	Parent Center family friendly RTI information
www.tnspdg.com/	TN State Personnel Development Grant web portal with up-to-date information for families, teachers, and administrators around the state's improvement efforts.
RTI.questions@tn.gov	Send specific questions
Theresa Nicholls, Assistant Commissioner Theresa.Nicholls@tn.gov Lori Nixon, Assessment Design, SPDG lori.nixon@tn.gov	Special Populations Contacts with TN Department of Education

Presenter Contact Information



Dana Johnson

**West Tennessee Regional Special
Education Interventionist**

SPDG | Office Of Special Populations

Dana.Johnson@tn.gov

www.tn.gov/education



Karen Harrison

Executive Director

Karen.harrison@tnstep.org

800-280-7837

www.tnstep.org