Council of the Great City Schools

Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students:

Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Sue Gamm
Judy Elliott
Julie Wright Halbert
Ricki Price-Baugh
Robin Hall
Denise Walston
Gabriela Uro
Michael Casserly

www.cgcs.org/domain/87

2012

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C.

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961, the Council is located in Washington, D.C., where it works to promote urban education through legislation, research, media relations, instruction, management, technology, and other special projects.

Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students:

Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Sue Gamm
Judy Elliott
Julie Wright Halbert
Ricki Price-Baugh
Robin Hall
Denise Walston
Gabriela Uro
Michael Casserly

2012

Table of Contents

Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

A Council of the Great City Schools White Paper

As America's Great City Schools implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), they have a unique opportunity to integrate strategies for teaching, intervening, and supporting the nation's urban students in a way that will ensure they have the literacy, numeracy, behavioral, and engagement skills necessary to be successful in college and careers.

Instituting the Common Core State Standards with fidelity means embracing and addressing the diverse needs of **ALL** students. This imperative reflects the reality that regardless of how effectively school district leaders develop and implement high-quality curricula aligned with the new standards, some students will need additional support and interventions to be successful. Implementing the Common Core State Standards within a framework of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) will help ensure that all students have an evidence-based system of instruction to assist them in achieving success.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is designed so that schools can provide the appropriate level of instruction and intervention for their students. Using performance data and monitoring learning rates through MTSS, educators can make important instructional decisions to meet the needs of students from different backgrounds, learning styles, and levels of attainment.

Also referred to as Response to Intervention (RtI) in some school districts, MTSS is the umbrella concept under which both academics and behavior fall. Some educators think of RtI as applying to academics only; others consider Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) as applying to behavior only. Still other educators use RtI in the context of both. The intentional shift in terminology to a multi-tiered system in this white paper is meant to integrate both academics and behavior as uniformly critical to student success in our educational system.

The paper outlines the key components of an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, interventions, and academic and behavioral supports needed by school districts in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. It also underscores the importance of data-based decision making in implementing these standards while meeting the specialized

and diverse needs of urban students. In addition, the paper provides concrete examples using a model lesson based on the Common Core State Standards. The Council of the Great City Schools produced the paper for school board members, superintendents, chief academic officers, curriculum and instruction administrators, leading education administrators (general education, Title I, special education, English-language learner programs, and gifted programs), researchers, accountability officers, and others to help guide their thinking about how the Common Core State Standards can be implemented in a way that will ensure that the broadest array of urban students are college and career ready.

What Is MTSS?

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is the term used to describe an evidence-based model of education that employs data-based problem-solving techniques to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. This integrated instruction and intervention system is provided to students in varying levels of intensities—or tiers—based on student needs. This needs-driven decision-making model seeks to ensure that district resources reach the appropriate students (and schools) at suitable levels of quality and concentration to accelerate the performance of ALL students.

The MTSS framework is based on a continuum of increasingly intense, evidenced-based supports designed to meet the academic and behavioral needs of diverse learners. Three tiers define the levels and intensity of instruction and interventions available across the continuum (see exhibit below)—but none of these tiers are used to describe categories of students *per se* or specific instructional programs. Instead, the tiers refer to the types of instruction and intervention provided. The three tiers are illustrated and defined below—

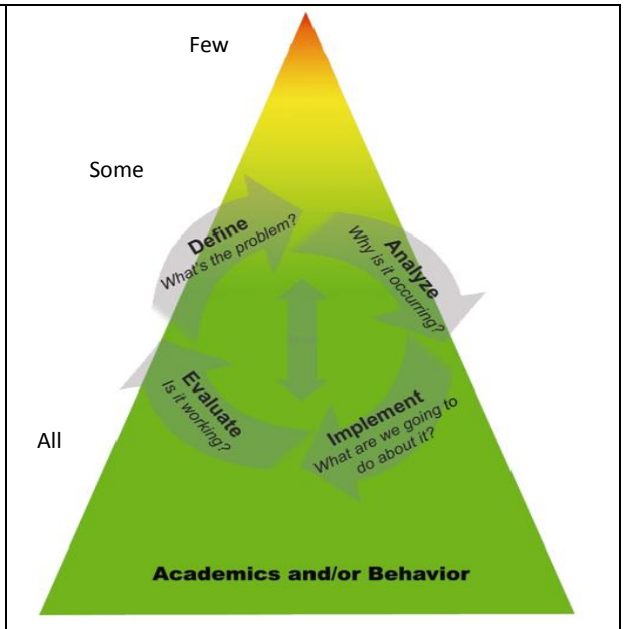
MTSS and the Problem Solving Process

ACADEMIC and BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions & Supports.
The most intense (increased time, narrowed focus, reduced group size) instruction and intervention based upon individual and small group student needs provided in addition to and aligned with Tier 1 & 2 academic and behavior instruction and supports.

Tier 2: Targeted, Supplemental Interventions & Supports.
More targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support in addition to and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum.

Tier 1: Core, Universal Instruction & Supports.
General academic and behavior instruction and support provided to all students in all settings.



Tier 1: Core Universal Instruction and Supports. Tier 1 (the green level in the exhibit above) involves general academic and behavioral instruction and support, including support for greater student engagement in learning, which is designed, provided, and differentiated for **all** students in regular instructional settings. This tier presumes that the core curriculum is rigorous, evidence-based, aligned with the Common Core State Standards, culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate, and is implemented with integrity for **all** students. Although the tier includes general instruction, it also refers to differentiation of core instruction to address diverse student classroom needs. This differentiation in Tier I instruction can be accomplished effectively by designing curriculum and classroom teaching around the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL removes or reduces barriers to learning by customizing and adjusting instruction and student supports to individual learning needs; and the use of technology can be particularly helpful in this effort. In the case of English-language learners, UDL refers both to the removal of barriers and the assurance that students have the English-language development supports that allow them full access to the core curriculum. And in the case of behavior, Tier I refers to the positive behaviors that are expected of all students.[1]

Meeting individual learning needs under UDL, however, should not be interpreted to mean that struggling students should be given below-grade-level work if they are behind. Instead, it means that teachers and administrators should plan and use lessons thoughtfully that build student knowledge and independence in their daily Tier I or general instruction, so that students learn how to handle the academic vocabulary, sophisticated language structures, and content present in the complex texts called for in the Common Core State Standards.

Tier 2: Targeted Supplemental Instruction and Intervention. Tier 2 instruction (the yellow level in the exhibit above) entails more focused, targeted instruction, interventions, and supplemental supports that are provided to **some** students who share common academic and/or behavioral needs. Tier 2 services are provided *in addition to*—not in lieu of—core instruction, are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and use, to a significant degree, core instructional materials and supplemental tools. But under Tier 2, students are assessed and their progress is monitored more frequently than are students receiving only Tier 1 instruction.

Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Instruction and Intervention. Tier 3 (the red level in the exhibit above) is the most intense instruction and intervention and is made available only to a **few** students based on their individual needs. Tier 3 is characterized by increased time and intensity

[1] When implemented appropriately, MTSS has the added potential benefit of addressing the discrepancy in disciplinary rates among African American students and others with IEPs. National suspension data indicate that 17 percent or 1 out of six African American students enrolled in grades k-12 were suspended at least once—a significantly higher rate than among Native American students, (8 percent), Latinos students (7 percent), white students (5 percent), or Asian American students 2 percent). Among all racial groups combined, more than 13 percent of students with disabilities were suspended, twice the rate of their non-disabled peers. And one out of four (25 percent) of African American students with disabilities were suspended at least once in 2009-10. Source: *Opportunities Suspended: The Disparate Impact of Disciplinary Exclusion from School*. Los Angeles: UCLA (2012).

spent on a narrowed and more focused curriculum for students who continue to struggle after receiving academic and behavioral support in Tiers 1 and 2. In Tier 3, instruction remains aligned with the Common Core State Standards and includes necessary supplemental academic and behavioral instruction, and supports.

In this tier, it is essential that students are taught skills and provided remediation in the context of the standards, and that teaching is targeted on the skills and concepts presenting students with the most difficulty. Thus, students receiving Tier 3 services should focus on and practice skills and concepts that are spelled out in the Common Core State Standards for the student's particular grade level. This is also the tier where the needs of students in say grade 6 and might not be able to decode are addressed. The instruction for these students may not be on grade level in this circumstance, but provides the instruction needed to get there. Finally, in this tier, students are assessed and progress is monitored more frequently than for students receiving Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 instruction. One should also note that when using intensive Tier 3 interventions with English-language learners (ELLs), in particular, it is important that the interventions have been validated on ELLs and are meant to address a literacy development issue.

MTSS and the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards are designed to help students prepare for meeting rigorous college and career expectations. The standards require individuals to have a deep understanding of academic content and the ability to apply that academic knowledge and skills. To get students ready to meet these standards, school districts and schools will need to provide not only higher quality instruction, but also instruction that is more integrated across subject areas than ever before.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is completely consistent with the Common Core State Standards. However, MTSS builds on these standards to provide a framework and a set of critical tools and additional time to support teaching and learning at differing levels of intensity, depending on the academic needs of the students. In other words, the CCSS articulates the "what" in teaching; and MTSS provides a framework for "how and when" to provide it.[2]

In short, MTSS employs a problem-solving process that helps match instructional resources and focus to educational needs; makes the instructional adjustments necessary for continued improvement in both student academic performance and students' rates of progress; and assesses the effectiveness of instruction/interventions on student outcomes.

MTSS is also designed to be preventive in nature because it uses a variety of early warning signs to ensure that educators can work to accelerate student progress before it is too late. Furthermore, MTSS provides an earlier and more appropriate identification of students

[2] This reference to when to provide MTSS is not to be confused with any timing specified in school or district pacing guides, which provide information on "when" to teach a concept or skill.

who are not on track academically, and allows differentiated instruction and intervention as soon as a need is identified. So, students do not have to exhibit significant academic failure or behavioral difficulties before they receive support.

In addition, using a tiered, systematic, and schoolwide approach—which links socially appropriate behaviors and student engagement in academic work into a seamless system— has the great potential to increase student engagement in learning and reduce behavioral and disciplinary distractions. In this way, academically engaged time and behavior are connected strongly to student achievement. Best practices in MTSS thereby support appropriate and acceptable behavior and bolster student achievement, and can result in less reactive interventions and a greater concentration of scarce personnel and program resources onto students in greatest need.

In sum, MTSS leverages the full array of instructional resources strategically and purposefully in a systemic and cooperative fashion for the sole purpose of improving student achievement and behavior. When implemented with fidelity and used as a robust and data-driven decision making process, MTSS results in significantly greater percentages of students achieving on grade level and likely meeting the Common Core State Standards. Moreover, the system leads to greater student engagement and decreased discipline referrals, as well as fewer students requiring special education services. MTSS can also help reduce the disproportionate representation of students from various racial/ethnic groups and those with developing levels of English proficiency in the ranks of those requiring special education services. The reason for this potential outcome is that with MTSS, the needs of such students can be met at the outset of the instructional process rather than after they begin to slip behind.

Finally, this system of tiered instruction is particularly important because the new, higher academic standards will undoubtedly reveal deficits in current instructional practices, as well as weaknesses in academic achievement. The Common Core State Standards should improve educational outcomes over time, but they could also reveal a history of inadequate instruction and may exacerbate achievement gaps. To mitigate this possibility, MTSS can be used to ensure that all students, including those who are excelling and in need of enriched instruction and activities, have full access to effective instruction and supports from the start in order to achieve better outcomes.

Brief Description of MTSS Components

The components of an effective MTSS framework include:

1. A well-defined district- and school-based leadership and organizational structure;

2. District policies and practices that align with and support a multi-tiered system;

3. Technology sufficient to support instructional decision making (e.g., data) and implementation of instruction (e.g., UDL);

4. Robust and valid core instruction delivered to all students;

5. The use of data-based decision making to match instructional resources to educational needs;

6. Assessment of expected rates of progress;

7. The use of three tiers of increasingly intensive (time and focus of instruction) instructional supports and strategies;

8. Professional development to ensure fidelity of implementation of the MTSS methodology and the Common Core State Standards;

9. An evaluation process that monitors both implementation and outcomes; and

10. The engagement of parents and caregivers.

These 10 elements of MTSS are described in greater detail below—

1. Successful implementation of the critical elements of an MTSS depends on district- and school-based leadership that is strong and effective and organizational structures that are well defined and designed to achieve the district's mission for all students.

Leadership and its continuity when promising reforms are in place have been repeatedly demonstrated as the key ingredients in the improvement of public schools in urban school districts. This dynamic is no less true for MTSS. Specifically, districts should have leadership structures in place to ensure that MTSS is being implemented faithfully. These structures would include establishing a district-based leadership team (DBLT) to guide successful implementation of MTSS systemwide and be accountable for its effectiveness. The primary function of the DBLT should be to ensure that funding, professional development, infrastructure (e.g., data supports), and implementation supports (e.g., coaching, technical assistance) are available to bolster implementation at school sites.

Likewise, school-based leadership teams (SBLTs) should be established to ensure that building-level staff members understand the rationale for using MTSS and have the skills and supports necessary to make the system work effectively. In addition, the makeup of these teams should parallel that of staff members on the district-based leadership team; and the building principal should serve as the primary accountability officer for MTSS implementation at the school level.

2. District policies and practices are aligned with and support a multi-tiered system.

Many school boards and administrative leaders approve policies or programs that apply primarily (or only) to students receiving general Tier 1 instruction or they pursue programs and practices that essentially codify low expectations for some children. These policies and programs then determine the results on which district and school administrators, teachers, and instructional support staff are held accountable. However, the reality is that students needing Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 services sometimes require policies and programs that go

beyond what Tier 1 is able to provide. Also, circumstances may exist when the needs of these students are simply inconsistent with existing Tier 1-based policies. Either way, when policies and programs intentionally or unintentionally exclude students who need Tier 2 or 3 services, then those policies put district and school educators at risk of violating legal requirements and failing to provide services to students who have extra needs.

Consequently, it is critical for school boards and administrative leaders to have a Multi-Tiered System of Supports in mind when policies and programs are considered to ensure that those policies and programs are capable of addressing the instructional and behavioral needs of all students at every level of need. Moreover, school-district policies and practices should be reviewed periodically to ensure they are not creating impediments or barriers to the systemic implementation of MTSS, or that some students are not being left behind because they have not appeared on district policy makers' radar screens. Finally, it is essential to have clearly articulated expectations and parameters in place, *via* policies and practices, to ensure that staff members make data-based decisions that will guarantee increasingly intensive and focused instruction and interventions for students who need them.

3. Technology is in place to support instructional decision-making (e.g., data) and implement high-quality and differentiated instruction for all (e.g., UDL).

The use of instructional and back-office technology is critical to and tailor-made for accelerating and differentiating student academic and behavioral development, as well as for monitoring results. Moreover, technology can provide a wider range of learning structures and supports to make sure that MTSS operates effectively and efficiently, particularly for students with special needs. For instance, English-language learners, students with disabilities, students with learning challenges, and students who perform below expectations typically require the most effective and efficient learning environment to meet those expectations; and technology can be tailored to provide that environment.

In addition, it is not likely that schools will be able to increase the size of their professional staffs in the near future because of current budget constraints, so the use of technology and other similar supports among existing staff can be an important means of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of instruction. Finally, the use of technology helps ensure that supports for students are individualized, portable, and widely applicable (i.e., not just site-specific).

4. Robust and valid core instruction is delivered to all students from the beginning and is modified as students progress.

The Common Core State Standards define and shape the content of Tier 1 instruction, in particular, along with other grade-level performance indicators. In an effective MTSS framework, these new standards should be delivered using Universal Design for Learning principles to ensure that all students have access to appropriate, barrier-free instruction in the

general education setting.[3] Without this access, it is often difficult to determine whether a student's underachievement is due to a disability, instruction that has not taken student needs into account, or general instruction that some students simply never receive. Without a UDL framework, schools will sometimes place students immediately into Tier 2 instruction or refer them for special education services without initially providing them full access to Tier 1. This tactic results in wider achievement gaps.

Instead, UDL principles work to optimize instruction and supports in Tier 1 for all students; deliver full access to the general curriculum regardless of disability, English language proficiency status, income, race, or academic performance; and provide teachers with a data-driven, research-based, and culturally and linguistically responsive blueprint for meeting the full range of student needs in urban classrooms. These principles also include the use of differentiated instruction that matches individual student needs with appropriate instructional and support strategies in regular classroom settings and the use of flexible student groupings to address language and learning needs that are shared among a number of students while still ensuring that all are attaining mastery of grade-level material.

For English-language learners and standard-English learners alike, appropriate instruction using MTSS also includes teaching that is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate, along with being explicit and rigorous. This means that instruction and interventions should consider and build upon a student's cultural knowledge, home language, background, and experiences, as well as their linguistic proficiency (in both English and native language). These considerations will help determine how a student learns best, in what settings, and under what teaching conditions students will attain high standards, because some students may simply need a different teaching approach to understand a lesson's content.

Moreover, it may also be the case that students need differing instructional approaches at varying times. For instance, English-language learners can be successful with instruction and support in reading challenging, short texts that are beautifully written and feature complex vocabulary and narrative, such as those called for in the Common Core State Standards, before moving onto longer texts as students increase their reading stamina and their skills become more advanced. Attempting to teach these students the same way from the beginning to the end of the learning process would not be effective. Thus, initial teaching methods may be designed with particular student needs in mind, but other teaching methods may be required as conditions, circumstances, and student needs change.

In addition, engaging students in academic work regardless of their achievement level is critical to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Students need to be actively involved in the learning process and need the time to learn and practice the skills that

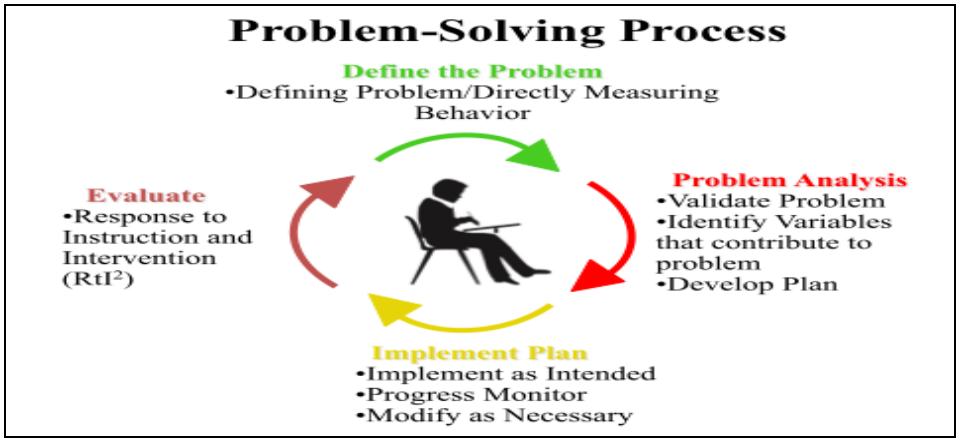
[3] UDL is a framework for eliminating instructional barriers to students and making the curriculum accessible for all students at the outset of the instructional process by providing the following: multiple ways of acquiring information; alternatives for demonstrating what students have learned; and strategies for engaging diverse learners and motivating them to learn.

they are being taught. In fact, research shows that the time spent engaged in academic work is a primary predictor of student achievement—more so than IQ, race, and socioeconomic status.

5. Data-based decision making is used to match instructional (academic and behavioral) resources to educational needs in all tiers.

The application of a data-based problem-solving and decision-making cycle in and across all three tiers of instruction is a critical component of an effective MTSS. The problem-solving process is important for making instructional adjustments that will continually improve both student performance and the rate at which it progresses. The process is also essential for assessing (using student responses to the instruction) the effectiveness of the tiered instruction and interventions being implemented.

Essentially, the problem-solving process in MTSS is a self-repeating, self-correcting, ongoing methodology for effective decision making at all levels of the system and across all three tiers. In fact, the logic and process of data-based decision making in education is embedded in a variety of instructional structures that educators already use, such as school improvement planning, student progressions, reading plans, positive-behavior supports, progress monitoring, continuous-improvement models, and district policies and procedures.



As seen in the figure above,[4] the four critical components of an ongoing problem-solving cycle are as follows--

- ✓ **Define the problem** by determining the differences between what is expected and what is occurring. Ask, "What specifically do we want students to know and be able to do?" compared with what they currently know and are able to do. In the area of academics, the "what we expect students to know and do" is driven by the Common Core Standards that guide instruction at each grade and subject area. In the area of behavior, what we expect students to know and do is guided by age-appropriate student engagement behaviors and the pro-social behaviors that support a positive school climate.

[4] Los Angeles Unified School District Problem-Solving Process based on Florida Problem-Solving/RtI statewide project.

- ✓ **Analyze the problem** using data to determine why an instructional gap is occurring. Generate hypotheses (reasons why students are not meeting performance goals) based on evidence-based content knowledge, alterable variables, and instructionally relevant areas. Gather and analyze assessment data to formulate hypotheses. Link hypotheses to instruction and interventions so that suppositions lead to evidence-based decisions. Ask, "Why is/are the desired goal(s) not being met? Is there reason to think that students, including English-language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are not getting full access to the general curriculum? In the case of ELLs, is there reason to think that the district does not have an effective English-language development strategy in place? What are the barriers to student(s) doing and knowing what is expected?"

- ✓ **Develop and implement an intervention plan** based on an analysis of how well individual students or groups of students are meeting performance goals. Identify the rate of student progress necessary to achieve the goal within a specified time frame. Delineate how the progress of individual students or groups of students will be monitored; how program implementation will be supported; and how the plan will be readjusted based on the data. Ask, "What are we going to do and how do we know we have done it?"

- ✓ **Measure response-to-instruction and intervention** by using data gathered with progress-monitoring tools at agreed-upon intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional and intervention plan. These data should be based on responses by individual students or groups of students to the intervention. Progress-monitoring data should directly reflect the targeted skill or skills. Ask, "Is the intervention working?" The *rate* of improvement is also a basis for judging response-to-instruction or intervention (see next section). Finally, for an approach to be responsive to ELLs, it is essential that the team understand what works with ELLs, what is a reasonable rate of language acquisition, as well as what is culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction.

When instruction within each of the three tiers is not effective for targeted students, the problem-solving process should be used to inform decision making about what to do next. For example, if 20 percent of students enrolled in a given course at the secondary level are failing, then problem-solving processes should be employed to formulate tiered instructional strategies that will improve success rates. Or, if a third-grade core math program results in only 50 percent of students meeting grade-level benchmarks, then the four-step problem-solving process should be implemented with a focus on Tier 1. The same process can also be applied at subsequent tiers if the measured level of effectiveness of services in the preceding tier does not meet expectations.

6. A critical component to any problem-solving process is assessing the degree to which the expected rate of progress toward a goal is being achieved.

Academic attainment is a necessary but insufficient standard of measurement for assessing how students respond to instruction and intervention. A positive response requires improvement among students that reaches the desired goal within the specified time frame. If that does not occur, staff members need to figure out how to adjust the instruction and

intervention plan to better support the progress of individual students or groups of students. Staff team discussions, then, should focus on how to maintain or better enable student learning.

Specifically in the academic area, using cumulative, statewide assessments is necessary, but is insufficient for determining whether students are moving toward proficiency and mastering the standards. Shorter, more frequent and incremental benchmarking is also needed.

Typically, students participate in benchmark assessments three or so times each year—usually fall, winter, and spring—to determine their progress toward achieving current state standards. This frequency of assessment will also be the case when the more ambitious Common Core State Standards are fully implemented. Students whose progress is of concern and who may be receiving supplemental and/or intensive interventions would benefit from even more frequent progress monitoring (e.g., monthly).

For students who are struggling academically and may require intensive, individualized or small-group instruction and intervention (Tier 3), diagnostic assessments or other tools may be needed as part of the problem-solving process to look deeper into a student's academic situation to determine what particular targeted instruction and interventions are needed and how learning can be accelerated. In the case of ELLs who may also have a disability, a cross-functional, diagnostic approach is called for that would sort out whether the student has an English-language acquisition issue, has been the subject of weak literacy instruction, or is not responding to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction and needs special education.

In addition, progress monitoring of behavior or school discipline concerns is based on such data as levels of student engagement, disciplinary referrals, incident rates, attendance, tardiness, and suspensions/expulsions. It is also important to examine behavioral and situational patterns when monitoring disciplinary incidents, e.g., dates, locations, time of day, day of week, teacher at time of incident, and the involvement of other students. Most importantly, it is necessary to assess the relationship between student engagement behavior and academic performance because the two are closely tied.

Progress monitoring data should also help staff members determine whether students are making progress at an adequate rate and provide information for problem solving. In some instances, the problem may stem from a failure to deliver the instruction or the intervention with integrity or fidelity; sometimes the problem may rest in the inadequate quality of the instruction; and other times the problem may reflect a mismatch between the instruction given and the language-development or other needs of a student. Progress monitoring provides data to determine whether more intensive instruction and interventions are needed or whether the presence of a disability must be considered. District protocols should provide guidance on defining progress-monitoring requirements for instruction/interventions and behavior. (Many samples are available.)

Moreover, when monitoring the progress of ELLs and standard-English learners, their expected rates of progress should take into account native and second-language proficiency, the stage of second-language acquisition, and type of language instruction. People reviewing the data should have knowledge of second-language development and students' history of first

and second language acquisition. Caution should also be taken to avoid lowering the expected rate of progress among ELLs and standard-English learners alike simply because of their language status.

7. Time and the intensity of instruction and intervention are increased across the three tiers and are provided for students who are underachieving academically and experiencing behavioral problems.

The three instructional tiers in MTSS differ in intensity, frequency, duration, focus of instruction, and/or group size. Again, Tier 1 involves general education that is differentiated in the classroom. Tier 2 instruction and interventions are provided *in addition* to core instruction (Tier 1) that all students receive—not in lieu of it. Tier 2 instruction is not a substitute for the core program; it supplements the core program (e.g., preview, reteach, review). Students receiving Tier 3 instruction may be taught using a replacement program that is standards-based but directly addresses identified skill deficits. Tier 3 involves increased time and intensity with a narrowed instructional focus. Often students receiving Tier 3 instruction, especially at the secondary-grade level, receive this narrowed and more intensive instruction *via* a double block, double dose, or pull-out type of intervention. However, students engaged in Tier 3 instruction should not be pulled out of Tier 1 instruction in their core subjects.

Moreover, the length of time a student receives an intervention depends on such factors as the skill to be learned; the gap between the desired outcome and current level of proficiency and the time needed to close that gap; and/or student age and/or developmental level. Most importantly, the length of time that a student receives an intervention depends on the student's rate of progress and his or her response to the intervention.

When students are identified as not making satisfactory headway through the screening or progress-monitoring process, the problem-solving process again is used to develop a plan to meet needs in the deficit areas. A school's multi-tiered service-delivery model should provide a comprehensive range of supplemental instruction and interventions to increase the time and intensity of instruction at each tier proactively.

In addition, the issue of language proficiency and culture that was discussed in section four above also extends to African-American students and others who may not be proficient in standard academic language. The close reading of complex text called for in the Common Core State Standards will emphasize academic vocabulary and the structure of language or layering of ideas within intricate sentences and paragraphs. This essential knowledge will need to be incorporated at each tier in a way that takes into account students' English proficiency levels.

Furthermore, district protocols for MTSS should define which individuals can provide interventions; the settings in which the interventions should occur; characteristics that interventions must possess to ensure they are evidenced-based at various levels of intensity and are normed on the applicable subgroup; parameters for the minimum length of intervention sessions, number of interventions per week, and duration; and the criteria for when an intervention is terminated.

Moreover, positive behavior supports employ a comprehensive, systemic three-tiered approach for establishing the social, culture, and behavioral foundations needed by all students to achieve both social and academic success. The approach is not a packaged program *per se* but a framework that defines critical elements that can be achieved through multiple strategies. The most effective implementation of MTSS integrates supports for positive behavior along with assistance for academic success. The integration of academic and behavioral supports often occurs during lesson study. The purpose of lesson study is to identify academic goals and strategies along with the student engagement behaviors necessary to successfully perform academic tasks; and the instructional goals are informed by the Common Core State Standards.

8. Staff members have the knowledge and skills provided through professional development and other means necessary to implement the Common Core State Standards and MTSS with fidelity.

In order to ensure fidelity and sustainability of MTSS implementation, all educators should receive initial and ongoing professional development so that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective core instruction and make data-based decisions about student progress in mastering concepts. An effective professional development program should include information on—

- What content is being taught, high-leverage strategies to teach the content, and the type of student work that demonstrates mastery of the content, as well as likely areas of student misconceptions and how to address them.
- How to set up a teacher-led process to solve problems.
- How to provide appropriate instruction and interventions.
- How to create instructional schedules that take into account student needs, including time, instructional focus, etc.
- How to implement, evaluate, and support interventions for students.
- How to monitor progress, including collecting, displaying, interpreting, and using performance data to maximize the impact of instruction on student work and achievement.
- How to evaluate student trajectories of learning to determine the need for instructional intervention, and engagement in effective problem solving and decision making.
- How to communicate and celebrate outcomes of the MTSS process with school and district staff.
- How to engage with parents and caretakers about the multi-tiered process, communicating ways they might support their children, and developing procedures for notifying parents and caretakers about student progress.

Students are most likely to improve their performance when core instruction, interventions, and progress monitoring within MTSS are implemented as intended. Professional

development is critical to that implementation. Implementing MTSS with fidelity also means that all components of the framework are designed and put into practice consistently across classrooms and grade levels and monitored through the constant use of data.

9. An evaluation process is used to monitor both implementation and outcomes of MTSS. For each school district this translates into having a plan and system of accountability with measurable expectations for implementing the core curriculum within a multi-tiered framework.

To facilitate implementation of a common core-based curriculum within an MTSS framework, school districts should establish, communicate, support, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of a districtwide plan. Such a plan should define a frame for school-based implementation, which is made up of the critical components of the MTSS model: three-tiers of service delivery; the collection and use of data to inform instructional decisions; and the integration, evaluation, and modification of instruction based on student data to ensure maximum Tier 1 outcomes. The frame should provide schools with the flexibility necessary to address their particular needs and characteristics.

The district plan should also include *district- and school-level responsibilities* for ensuring faithful implementation of MTSS. These responsibilities should include clear and concise communication of the importance of the MTSS model, line authority and responsibility for MTSS implementation, professional development (including coaching and technical assistance), a unified data system, school-based leadership support (e.g., a principals' and teachers' professional learning community or PLC), and clear expectations that implementation is the responsibility of both the district and the schools.

Finally, an overall program evaluation should be incorporated into the implementation to ensure that the initiative is providing a positive return on investment for students.

10. Parents/caregivers are engaged in the educational process and are considered to be valued members of it.

Research and common observation show that parents' engagement with their children's schooling and the educators who work with their children has a significant impact on student progress—both academic and behavioral. The MTSS model should bring new information to parents, caregivers, and the community. The impact of the model on parent engagement should occur in two primary areas: communications; and the understanding and use of data. It is the responsibility of district- and school-based teams to ensure that parents understand that instruction occurs across three tiers, what the purpose of the tiered model is, what the services look like for their children, and how the tiers support core instruction. For the parent of a student who is suspected of having a disability, the school should communicate how the multi-tiered system provides instructional interventions quickly and how the parent will know if those interventions are effective. School staff also needs to assure parents and caretakers that the multi-tiered system is not a delaying tactic for referral or provision of special education services.

Because MTSS is grounded in data-based decision making, the district and school should make every effort to ensure that parents understand what the data are, what they mean, and how they are used. The ultimate goal is to give parents the skills that they need to monitor their child's progress independently. Parents should be able to understand the current status and level of their child's academic performance, what goal or performance level is being sought, the level of progress necessary to reach the goal, and the student's rate of progress. Parents will better support and embrace interventions, regardless of their student's current performance, if they have the information to tell them that their child will reach appropriate goals at some point in the future. In addition, the school district should establish guidelines—based on the tier of service delivery—for how frequently schools will communicate student progress results to parents.

Importance of MTSS in Determining the Need for Special Education Services

Nationally, the largest percentage of all students identified as needing special education services (37 percent) is due to a primary specific disability. Many other students needing these services have been found to have both a specific learning disability and another primary disability. This dual disability situation often results from either academic underachievement or a specific disability in one or more areas. Traditional approaches to reading instruction in the early grades, for example, have often substantially underestimated variations among children in their early literacy. Data suggest that many youngsters have difficulty reading *not* because of a disability but because they are initially behind and do not receive classroom instruction and/or home supports necessary to develop foundational language and early reading skills.[5] Simply not performing up to expected standards is not enough for a student to be considered to have a disability. Instead, a student's response (or lack of response) to increasing levels of instruction is a necessary prerequisite to disability determination. And this determination should not be made without a multi-tiered system of instruction.

If children having difficulty reading receive effective, high-quality instruction early and intensively in a way that is appropriate to their performance level, they can often make large gains in general academic achievement. Research suggests that reading failure rates as high as 38-40 percent can be reduced to six percent or less by providing early intervention using multiple levels of intensity. At that point, special education resources can be deployed in a more concentrated fashion to the remaining six percent or so of struggling readers who have not responded successfully.[6] Factors other than a disability may account for students having difficulty in language and literacy (as well as numeracy). Such factors may include the nature of a student's educational opportunity, as well as teaching practices or assessment tools that are insensitive to cultural or linguistic differences, for example.[7] Other circumstances might include

[5] Statement by Dr. Reid Lyon before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Education Reform (2002); and *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education* (2001)
[6] *Id.*
[7] International Reading Association Commission on RtI: Guiding Principles

family circumstances, e.g., children who grow up without access to nutritious food, who live in chaotic households, and who have no written materials in the house. When implemented with fidelity, however, MTSS can help ensure that these factors are not blocking the way for students as staff members consider making a special education referral or determining eligibility for special education services.

Many states are now requiring (or have a time frame for requiring) the use of MTSS for determining whether a student has a disability, particularly in the area of specific learning disability. The first of several related criteria for determining whether a student has a disability involves whether he or she has scored below proficient on a statewide reading assessment. A second criterion for determining the presence of a disability is that a student fails to make adequate progress toward meeting the standards even after an intervention has been put in place. When interventions and progress monitoring are not used as intended, it is unlikely that schools will have the documentation needed to satisfy a third criterion: that underachievement was not due to the lack of appropriate instruction or intervention. Not having processes in place to help educators know why a student is not performing is obviously detrimental to students, and further underscores the need for a comprehensive, faithfully implemented, Multi-Tiered System of Support.

What the Common Core State Standards Look Like in an MTSS Framework

The Common Core State Standards establish an expectation that all students, no matter where they live or what their background is, will have access to high-quality instruction. Yet setting higher academic standards alone will not result in better student achievement. Some students will be further along than others and some will require additional time and support.

This reality is where multi-tiered instruction and intervention systems—and the principles of Universal Design for Learning—offer critical tools for delivering instruction and curriculum that is accessible and responsive to learners with differing needs and styles. Simply put, the Common Core State Standards provide the target of performance for all students. The duration and intensity of core instruction (Tier 1), including differentiation in general instruction, is expected to result in performance at the standards for most students.

However, some students will require additional instruction (intensity and/or time) in order to achieve the common-core benchmarks. This additional instruction is offered in Tiers 2 and 3. Tier I instruction and the supports provided in Tiers 2 and 3 should reflect the Common Core State Standards and result in significant improvement on those standards by students, including English-language learners, special education, and other students at-risk of not reaching expected performance levels. When students have access to effective MTSS, it is more likely that all will come closer to meeting or exceeding the Common Core State Standards. The following presents some examples.

English Language Arts and Literacy

The Common Core State Standards have balanced the reading of literary texts with the reading of informational texts rather than emphasizing one over the other, the current practice under many state standards.

The new standards entail three primary shifts from current practice: building background knowledge through reading rich informational texts, in addition to reading literary texts; using evidence from a text in both reading and writing; and closely reading complex texts again and again to increase meaning and comprehension.

While the Common Core State Standards are capable of creating a very deep level of pride and satisfaction among students who have successfully navigated a difficult text, the transition to a close- reading model at the heart of the new standards may be a problem for some students and a struggle for many. Some students may ask their teachers to provide the meaning of the text directly rather than reading—and rereading—it themselves until they understand the passage. As the teacher encourages independence, some students' first and second (and possibly even third) reactions may be frustration at not being given the answer: "I can't get it. Explain it to me."

For many educators, it is uncomfortable watching students struggle, but we also know that true learning emerges from wrestling with material that initially appears dense and difficult to understand. The tasks laid out by the standards are demanding for both the teacher and student, and can give rise to anxiety. Teachers need to overcome their own anxieties and focus instead on supporting students as they learn to independently overcome theirs. Educators often know that student frustrations will only be temporary—a narrow gate through which they must pass if they are to truly grasp what it means to read and understand a difficult text.

In trying to help students feel successful in their reading, educators historically have turned to materials written with low-level vocabulary and simplified sentence structures. However, this well-intentioned practice often has been implemented without clear plans for bringing students up to grade level reading and beyond. Giving students only texts at their particular reading level sometimes replaces giving students access to the rich language of literature and the full information found in content-based grade-level texts.

Additionally, teachers have often felt pressure to cover all material in a crowded curriculum, rather than feeling they had permission to linger over worthwhile materials and provide students with the types of close-reading skills they need to be successful in their grade level and beyond. The writers of the Common Core State Standards specifically reduced the number of standards to provide more time to teach in depth. This should give teachers the time they need to ensure that their students develop the skills, vocabulary, and concepts necessary to read grade-level materials and above—and feel the satisfaction that comes from doing this successfully and independently.

Thus, a teacher about to design a literacy lesson based on the Common Core State Standards in an MTSS framework would begin by selecting a piece of reading for its rich use of

language at the appropriate grade level—rather than at students' reading level. The appendix of the Common Core State Standards suggests many such texts, or districts and teachers may select one using the text-complexity guidelines in the standards. The key is that the material is worth devoting extended amounts of time to in close reading. The material should also offer interesting content as well as language structures that define quality writing. At least one such reading should be taught in each content area per month.

Below is an example of a seventh-grade classroom where a teacher is providing common core-based instruction on how to read and understand complex texts using the Gettysburg Address. In this sample classroom, students possess a wide range of skills and interests; some are highly proficient readers, and others have decoding and/or comprehension skills that are far below proficient levels. Our multi-tiered example is based on classroom instruction using the following selected common core-reading standards:

Reading Standards for Informational Texts in Grade 7—

- Key Ideas and Details—Standard 1

  Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text**.**

- Craft and Structure—Standard 4

  Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Language Standards in Grade 7—

- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use—Standard 4

  Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on Grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use—Standard 5

  Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use—Standard 6

  Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Tier 1

In Tier I instruction, a selected text—in this case, the Gettysburg Address—and supplemental materials could be used to teach any number of standards, but a teacher should focus on a few standards in order to better monitor student progress toward mastery. It would be a mistake to think that instruction should cover a long list of standards simply because many skills are encompassed in the reading. While students' attention could be drawn to particular features of a text (Language Standard 6), a teacher should select three or four standards for deep focus within the selected text as we have done above. Since Tier I instruction is for all students, teachers should consider how to design a lesson that is accessible to all students, is consistent with student-engagement patterns, is mindful of high expectations for students, provides or scaffolds an extra measure of support that will diminish over the course of the year as students gain capacity and confidence, and builds academic vocabulary and skill (Language Standards 4 and 5).

In the appendix of this paper, we have included a portion of Student Achievement Partners' model lesson calling for close reading of the Gettysburg Address. We have modified it to illustrate ways in which instruction can be provided for a group of students with diverse learning needs. The activities and actions described follow a carefully developed set of steps that assist students in increasing their familiarity with and understanding of Lincoln's speech through a series of text-dependent tasks and questions that ultimately develop college- and career-ready skills identified in the Common Core State Standards (Reading for Information Standard 1). In this example, the standards include two reading standards for informational text and three language standards. The unit can be broken down into three sections of instruction, which is followed by additional activities—some designed for history/social studies and some for English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms.

Even with the careful approach outlined in the appendix, some students may have difficulty with the Gettysburg Address's long, complex sentences, such as the following one:

> "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

For students having difficulty handling this and other complex sentences, a teacher might use "sentences strips" and color coding to help students as they clarify the words and phrases of the sentence that provide answers to the questions "who," "what," "where," "when," and "how/why" (Craft and Structure Standard 4). Sentence strips can be used to remove or reveal portions of a sentence so that students will focus solely on the part of the sentence the teacher wants to discuss. Pull the sentence apart to leave the simplest piece of a sentence (e.g., our fathers brought forth). Add the rest of the sentence, piece by piece, to show how the ideas are layered into the final sentence. Use the same method whenever you need to help a student tackle complex sentences and build his or her independence in seeing how authors use language to express their ideas and strengthen their impact.

For students with reading levels that are far below their peers, teachers might use a digital audio text of the material so students can listen to the material and read along during any silent reading activities to reinforce the lesson.

Tier 2

Tier 2 instruction is provided to groups of students who are having difficulty with the standard and accompanying activities. They may need additional instruction to facilitate mastery of the standard(s) (Language Standard 4). Also, these students may be able to decode most of the passage, but have difficulty with vocabulary, genre, and comprehension of the material without additional assistance. Some students may simply need preview, review, and/or re-teaching of the core instructional activity.

In the case of English-language learners, students may need instruction that focuses on vocabulary acquisition and the structure of the English language used in the Gettysburg Address or other texts rather than a decoding exercise. Previews might include leveled-readers.

Tier 2 instruction typically is designed to provide more intensive instruction to a group of students who share the same instructional need. This standard protocol approach uses data-based decision making to identify evidence-based interventions to meet a shared instructional need (Reading for Information Standard 1). It is critical that the instructional goals for Tier 2 instruction remain aligned both with the grade/subject-level ELA standards listed above as well as the Tier 1 scope and sequence of general instruction. The use of common instructional goals and materials facilitates the integration of Tier 2 and Tier 1 instruction.

Tier 3

Tier 3 instruction and intensive interventions are for the small number of students who read at a level that is significantly below grade-level standards, based on their current work products as well as screening data. For example, the skill level of the students may not be sufficient to enable them to read most of the passage based on core instruction alone.

The intervention activities for these students are more intensive and narrower in scope than those designed for students receiving Tier 2 interventions. Generally, the Tier 3 activities would include a more focused concentration on the skills needed by each student to meet the standards being taught using the Gettysburg Address lesson than those used in Tier 1 instruction alone.

It is typical for students with significant deficits in reading decoding and comprehension to be receiving additional classroom or supplemental literacy instruction. It is critical that the providers of remedial classes be involved in the support and planning for students in their core instruction (Language Standard 4). Proactive instruction for these students would involve the remedial teacher's providing more informational context, using texts with a lighter vocabulary load, and re-teaching or modifying instructional delivery in a way that allows students with reading difficulties to reach and master the standards being taught.

Mathematics

The key shifts in the Common Core State Standards in mathematics involve focus, coherence, and rigor.

The focus on fewer math topics each year should enable teachers to spend more time teaching concepts at deeper levels. The standards are also constructed to develop concepts coherently within and across grade levels. Finally, the math standards demand rigor built on fluency with content and the application of mathematical concepts with speed, intensity, and deep understanding. Rather than rushing through a crowded set of curriculum standards, there should be time for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 instruction.

Consider this example from mathematics in grade 2:

Mathematics Standards in Grade 2—

- Standard 2.NBT.1: *Understand place value*. Understand that the three digits of a three-digit number represent amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones; 100 can be thought of as a bundle of ten tens – called a hundred (2.NBT.1)

- Standard 2.NBT.5 and .7: *Use place value* understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract (fluently within 100; add and subtract within 1000 – 2.NBT.5 and 2.NBT.7).

- Standard 2.NBT.8: *Mentally add* 10 or 100 to a given number 100-900, and *mentally subtract* 10 or 100 from a given number 100-900.

Problem: A student wrote the sum of 46 + 37 as 713 instead of 83.

Use the following tiers of intervention to improve student understanding of numbers and operations in base ten.

Tier 1

If a student can quickly decompose 13 as a ten plus three more ones, then connect the picture to their explanation while revisiting the number of tens.

Level 1--Do a "think aloud." What is 46 composed of? (4 tens and 6 ones). 37? (3 tens and 7 ones). Have the student say it and hear it. Using drawings or place value models to show a picture of each number and what happens when numbers are composed. For example, what happens to the 13 ones? (13 ones become a ten and 3 ones). Connect the picture to their explanations (Standard 2.NBT.1).

Example 1: Have the student say the number out loud; 46 + 37 as 4 tens and 6 ones added to 3 tens and 7 ones. Pose questions about the total number of tens versus the number of ones (7 tens, 6 ones added to 7 more ones) (Standard 2.NBT.1). Students can then decompose the 13 ones into one 10 and three ones and add the result to the seven 10s. (Standard 2.NBT 8)

Example 2: Initially start with the student counting by ten (46, being added to 3 more tens). The student will say 56, 66, 76; followed by counting 7 more ones (Standard 2.NBT 8).

Tier 2:

Can the student count and group by 10s? If not, address the misconception by having them count by 10s (show each resulting sum of +10 using a 100s chart).

- Standard 1.NBT.2: *Understand place value*. Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones. Understand the following as special cases: 10 can be thought of as a bundle of ten ones- called a ten; the numbers from 11 to 19 are composed of a ten and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine ones (1.NBT.2)

- Standard 1.NBT.4: *Use place value* understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract. Add within 100, including adding a two-digit number and a one-digit number; and adding a two-digit number and a multiple of 10, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value (1.NBT.4).

Example 3: Have the student tell you what happens when one does: 46 + 10; 46 + 20, 46+ 30;

Illustrate each successive addend on a 100s chart. Ask, "What would I need to add to get to the next decade (get to 80; 76 + 4 = 80)? So what happens when I add 7 more (instead of a mere 4)?" (Standard 1.NBT.2 and 1.NBT.4)

Connect this directly to concept of place value—focusing on students understanding a bundle of ten. ["What is 46 composed of (4 tens 6 ones)? 37? (3 tens and 7 ones)"] Let the student say it and hear it. Use drawings or place value models to show process.

Tier 3:

Are the students having difficulty composing and decomposing, and relating the bundle to a group of 10? Go back to drawings, models, and place-value cards to find the sum found in earlier grade levels.

- Standard 1.OA*: Add and subtract within 20.* Add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10. Use strategies such as counting on; making ten; decomposing a number leading to a ten.

- Standard K.NBT.1*: Work with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value.* Compose and decompose numbers from 11 to 19 into ten ones and some further ones, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record each composition or decomposition.

Level 1--direct modeling by counting using simpler numbers.
6 + 5, 6 +6, 6+7, 6+8 – have the student model, sketch the picture using a ten-frame, and discuss orally what happens in each case (we end up with a ten) (Standard 1.0A and K.NBT.1).

Let the student find some other addends that will make a ten with some ones left over (student will write: 7 +4, 7 +5; 9 + 3) (Standard K.NBT.1).

Talk with the student about why they chose some of the numbers.

Tell the student to look at some two digit numbers (i.e., 14 + 6; 13 + 7; 12 + 8). Have the student describe what happens (show resulting sums using two 10 frames). Help the student develop the idea of groups of 10 (Standard K.NBT.1 and 1.0A);

Have students discuss what happens when adding (i.e., 14 + 7; 13 + 8; 12 + 9). Revisit the sums using two 10 frames and also record the results on a 100s charts. Make explicit connections between another group of 10 with a specific number of ones remaining.

Recommendations

With the advent of rigorous Common Core State Standards, students will be expected to demonstrate ever-higher levels of content knowledge and skills—including reading-comprehension skills and the application of math concepts. Therefore, schools have both the opportunity and a responsibility to deliver instruction in a way that meets diverse student needs and makes college- and career-level skills accessible to all students. The components of effective multi-tiered intervention and support systems offer strategies for achieving this instructional responsiveness and matching educational resources to student learning needs in flexible, effective, and innovative ways.

To that end, school districts should consider the following recommendations for implementing the Common Core State Standards using Multi-Tiered System of Support and Universal Design for Learning principles: [8]

1. **Establish a districtwide plan for MTSS, including written guidelines and parameters, professional development, and program evaluation.** With support from the school board and superintendent, and led by the chief academic officer (or someone in a comparable position), engage staff members from every educational unit (e.g., Title 1, special education, English-language learners, gifted) in developing an MTSS plan based on the standards.

   Establish tools and guidelines for universal screening, tiers of increasingly intensive evidenced-based interventions, progress monitoring, the use of data to make educational decisions, and the engagement of families. Support (funding, personnel) a rigorous professional development initiative to ensure that all educators in the district have the skills, appropriate for their role and responsibility, to implement and support an MTSS.

2. **Develop a professional development plan (i.e., three to five years) to deliver high-quality and ongoing training to enhance the skills needed by principals and teachers to successfully implement MTSS to attain mastery of the Common Core State Standards.** It is

[8] This information includes components that are based on the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation Act (LEARN Act), H.R. 2272, which if passed would authorize state grants to improve birth through Grade 12 literacy.

critical that all students have access to general, common core-based (Tier 1) instruction in order for them to be proficient; and professional development for teachers and staff should reflect that priority. The professional development should include content-based information on language development, English-language acquisition, progress monitoring, analysis and use of data for decision-making, and the implementation of evidenced-based interventions to meet both academic and behavioral goals at varying level of intensity. Cross-functional training of administrators and other school-support groups from every educational division should be conducted in a way that will expand the supports they provide to schools. The training plan should also take into consideration principals and teachers who are new to a district. Finally, the plan should recognize that traditional one-size-fits-all professional development sessions will not be sufficient. On-site, ongoing support mechanisms need to be part of the plan.

3. **Develop a district plan for implementing the Common Core State Standards that includes Universal Design for Learning principles to provide instruction that accommodates learning differences.** Consider—

   a. How literacy, numeracy, and writing instruction, and positive-behavior supports will be integrated into core academic subjects, including social studies, science, music, and career and technical education.

   b. How teachers (including Title I, special education, bilingual, gifted and talented educators), librarians, speech/language pathologists, and other relevant school and district professionals will work jointly to plan appropriate literacy and mathematics instruction.

   c. How the district can emphasize high-quality, developmentally appropriate oral language instruction, including listening and speaking, literature, and print-rich classroom environments; and how it can provide writing experiences and programs that will instruct and engage students in writing for multiple audiences and purposes.

   d. How instruction will be coordinated and integrated with other academic initiatives, e.g., early education, after-school programs, library, etc.

   e. How developmentally appropriate and evidenced-based instructional materials will fit together and use appropriate technology.

4. **Provide training for families and caregivers on how to reinforce activities at home that will support the learning of their children.** Districts and schools should ensure that parents:

   a. Understand the purpose of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports.

   b. Understand how student performance is improved in an MTSS.

   c. Know what questions to ask when their student is identified as needing additional academic help to get ahead.

   d. Have the skills to know if progress-monitoring data and information show a positive response to intensified instruction.

5. **Publicly communicate the district's system of accountability and measurable expectations for implementing the core curriculum within the MTSS framework.** Establish, communicate, support, and monitor clear expectations for establishing accountability systems across departments and schools. Incorporate these expectations into the personnel evaluations of administrators, principals, teachers, teacher assistants, and related-service personnel. And have schools incorporate activities into their school improvement plans that enable them to meet the expectations.

Appendix
Common Core Unit: A Close Reading of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

UNIT SUMMARY[9]

This unit has been developed to guide students and instructors in a close reading of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The activities and actions described below follow a carefully developed set of steps that assist students in increasing their familiarity and understanding of Lincoln's speech through a series of text dependent tasks and questions that ultimately develop college and career ready skills identified in the Common Core State Standards.

This unit can be broken down into three sections of instruction and reflection on the part of students and their teachers, which is followed by additional activities, some designed for history/social studies and some for English Language Arts classrooms.

SECTION 1 **What's at stake: a nation as a place and as an idea**

- Students silently read, then the teacher reads aloud the text of the Gettysburg Address while students follow along
- Students translate into their own words the first and second paragraphs
- Students answer guiding questions about the first two paragraphs

SECTION 2 **From funeral to new birth**

- Students are reacquainted with the first two paragraphs of the speech
- Students translate the third and final paragraph into their own words
- Students answer guiding questions regarding the third paragraph of the Gettysburg Address

SECTION 3 **Dedication as national identity and personal devotion**

- Students trace the accumulated meaning of the word "dedicate" through the text
- Students write a brief essay on the structure of Lincoln's argument

Even with a model lesson, the teacher will need to be artful considering both the time of year and the level of student skills. The goal is for all students to read on grade level independently. A teacher may need to make more modifications when teaching this text early in the year and build student skills to become increasingly independent. Resist the temptation to oversimplify, but be ready to ask the kinds of questions that will lead students to learn how to approach complex text.

Supplemental Student Activities

Appendix I	Samples of non-text dependent questions
Appendix II	Additional ELA activities/tasks
Appendix III	Additional History/Social Studies activities
Appendix IV	Vocabulary

[9] This unit summary was developed by Student Achievement Partners and the narrative on the instructional tiers was developed by the Council of the Great City Schools.

President Abraham Lincoln's Speech:
The Gettysburg Address, 1863

Four score[10] and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,[11] testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate[12] —we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain[13]—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

[10] score: twenty
[11] civil war: a war between citizens of the same country
[12] consecrate: declare a place sacred
[13] in vain: without accomplishing anything

SECTION 1
(1–2 days)

What's at stake: a nation as a place and an idea*

Section 1 Activities

Tier 1. If the class consists of children that may be reading below grade level, the teacher may want to re the text aloud first, then have students read silently.

1. Students first read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address silently.
2. The teacher then reads the text out loud to the class and students follow along in the text.
3. After listening, students re-read the first paragraph of the Gettysburg Address and translate it into their own words.
4. The teacher asks the class a small set of guiding questions about the first paragraph of Lincoln's speech.
5. After the discussion, students rewrite their translation of Lincoln's paragraph.
6. The teacher guides discussion of first line of second paragraph.
7. Wrap up.

Tier 2. The teacher would read the text aloud for a second time. Then, students should translate the first paragraph into their own words.

Tier 1. Steps 1 and 2 can be reversed, particularly early in the school year or with English-language learners. Repeat in step 2.

1. Teacher introduces the text and students read independently

The idea here is to plunge students into an independent encounter with this short text. Refrain from giving background context or substantial instructional guidance at the outset. It may make sense to notify students that the short text is thought to be difficult and they are not expected to understand it fully on a first reading--that they can expect to struggle. Some students may be frustrated, but all students need practice in doing their best to stay with something they do not initially understand. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge, and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Lincoln's address.

Tier 2. The teacher would read the text aloud for a second time. Then, students should translate the first paragraph in their own words.

2. Teacher reads the text out loud as students follow along

Listening to the Gettysburg Address is another excellent way to initially acquaint students with Lincoln's powerful and stirring words. After students have an opportunity to silently read the text, read aloud the speech slowly and methodically, allowing students to follow the twists and turns in Lincoln's argument. Do not attempt to "deliver" Lincoln's text as if giving the speech yourself but rather carefully speak Lincoln's words clearly to the class, being sure to follow his punctuation and rhetorical clues. Reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may not be fluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.

3. Students translate the text of the first paragraph into their own words in one or more sentences

This is the second independent activity, in which students attempt to understand on their own the first paragraph. The aim here for students is not to summarize, but to paraphrase, to put it in their own words.

Tier 2. The teacher may need to read the text aloud again, pausing for students to put phrases into their own words before they write. If the majority of the class is having difficulty, this may be Tier 1 instruction.

Students should write no more than a couple of sentences. In order for students to accomplish a task like this successfully, they will need practice in focusing and writing independently. The aim is not to have them answer questions but do what they can on their own to be used as a formative assessment.

4. **Teacher guides discussion of the first sentence/paragraph.**

Central Concern #1 for guided discussion:

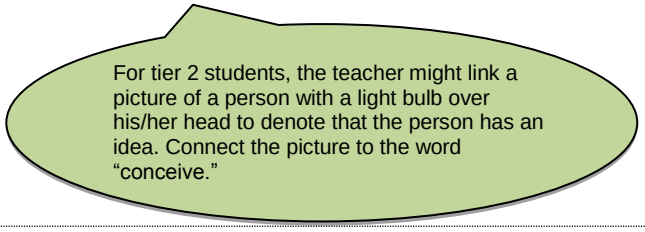
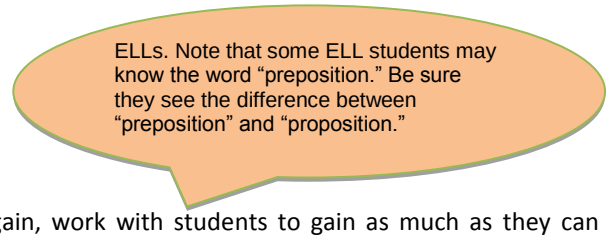
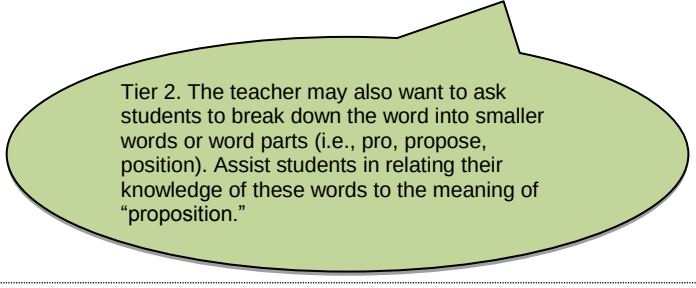
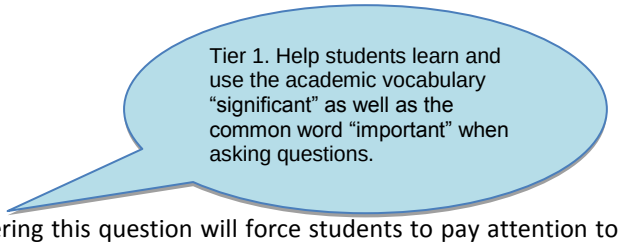
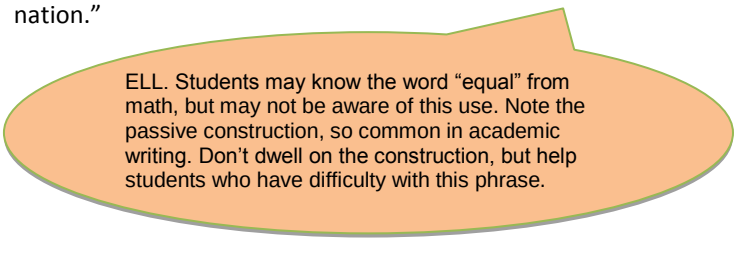
In the first sentence, what does Lincoln tell us about this new nation?

This first central concern aims to guide students to recognize that Lincoln tells us quite a bit, including something about who, what, when, where, and why. He outlines *when* the country was founded, *where* (on this continent), by *whom (our fathers)*, and offers something about *how* it was founded (conceived in liberty), as well as a phrase that describes both *what* the nation is about and *why* it was founded (dedicated to a proposition about liberty).

ELLs. Ensure that students see the function of the commas in setting apart phrases describing the new nation. Also show how the word "that" links to "proposition."

Guiding questions and academic vocabulary:

Text Under Discussion	Guiding Questions	Instructional Commentary
"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."	A. *What does Lincoln mean by "four score and seven years ago"? Who are "our fathers"?*	Lincoln tells us *when* and by *whom* the country was founded. Let students know that these details will be addressed later more thoroughly. For now, though keep it simple – that "our fathers" founded the country some time ago. Point out to students that one important thing about reading carefully is that it helps to get a basic gist of a sentence before looking to understand every detail.
	B. *What does **conceived** mean?*	Have students do as much work as they can from the context to determine what is meant by *conceived* here. The sentence defines one key meaning of *conceive*: *to bring forth something new*. This is one way in which the nation is new; it did not exist before. [That's enough to do with *conceive* for now. Lincoln uses this word in at least two ways and its meanings will be

Text Under Discussion	Guiding Questions	Instructional Commentary
		discussed later in much greater detail. 
		
	*C. What does **proposition** mean?*	Once again, work with students to gain as much as they can about the meaning of *proposition* from the text itself – that is, Lincoln gives us an example of a *proposition* – "the *proposition* that all men are created equal." Ask students: *what kind of statement is "all men are created equal"?* — It is a claim. 
"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."	*D. What is he saying is significant (or important) about America? Is he saying that no one has been free or equal before? So what is new?*	 Answering this question will force students to pay attention to two things that Lincoln says – that this nation is "conceived ***in*** Liberty" and "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Students need to grasp the structure of the sentence: these two phrases modify and describe the "new nation."  1. "conceived ***in*** liberty": Lincoln says the country was "conceived ***in*** Liberty," that is, the people who founded it freely chose to dedicate themselves to a claim – it was not

Text Under Discussion	Guiding Questions	Instructional Commentary
		forced upon them. They were able to think freely. During the making of the country our fathers were free to structure it however they wanted and they chose to dedicate it to what? 2. "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal": what does it mean to be dedicated to a claim? One way to help students grasp the force of Lincoln's words is to ask them to consider what would be different if the proposition changed – what if the nation were dedicated to the opposite, i.e., that some people are better than others?
	E. Sum up and gather what students have learned so far: have students summarize the three ways in which the nation is new.	1. The nation did not exist before, 2. The nation was made through free choice, and 3. The nation is dedicated to a specific idea – "all men are created equal."

Central Concern #2 for guided discussion:

What happened four score and seven years ago?

The second central concern deepens the examination of what is at stake in the Gettysburg Address by further examining how Lincoln places his words in context. For now, the emphasis continues to be on what students can draw from the text itself to figure out an answer to this question—not to the historical context.

Tier 2. The teacher may need to pre-teach academic and domain-specific vocabulary to include: advanced, civil, measure, nobly, note, score, and sense. Some of the more recognizable words are used in an uncommon way in ordinary speech. This is also an opportunity to point out to students or help them realize how words take on different meanings revealed in the context of the text.

Guiding questions and academic vocabulary:

Text for Discussion	Guiding Questions	Instructional Commentary
"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation,	A. *When was "four score and seven years ago"?*	Students have the clues they need to calculate the year. They have been told that score means twenty years, and they have been given the date of Lincoln's speech as 1863. 1863-87=1776

Tier 2. Depending on the ability levels of students, teachers may want to have students walk through the calculation so that all students will understand the process.

Text for Discussion	Guiding Questions	Instructional Commentary
conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."		
	B. *What important thing happened in 1776?*	This question, of course, goes beyond the text to explore students' prior knowledge and associations. Students may or may not know that the Declaration of Independence was issued in 1776, but they will likely know it is a very important date – one that they themselves have heard before. *Something very important happened on that date*. It's OK to mention the Declaration, but the next step is to discover what students can infer about 1776 from Lincoln's own words now in front of them.
	C. *(Beyond what students may or may not know about the Declaration of Independence) what does Lincoln tell us in this first sentence about what happened 87 years ago?*	Students should now be able to draw on the knowledge that they have gained from reading the second part of Lincoln's sentence. They should be able to infer: *Lincoln says that in 1776 "our fathers" freely chose to begin a new nation dedicated to the principle that all men are created equal.* Tier 2. If students are unable to make this inference, break the sentence into parts and ask: 1. "Four score and seven years ago" is what year exactly? 2. Where do we see the subject of the sentence? (Our fathers) 3. What did they do? Where in the sentence does it indicate where they did this? 4. "Our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation refers to what? What clues did you use in the sentence to come to this conclusion? 5. What was conceived in liberty? What does this mean? 6. What is "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal? Now, let's put these facts together to see what this sentence is telling us.
	D. *Who are "our fathers"? What can we know about "our fathers" from this sentence?*	All we know about these "fathers" from this sentence is that they started something new. Some students may recall the phrase "founding fathers" which is a nice inference here, since Lincoln identifies these people as "those who brought forth a new nation." The teacher may not need to ask this question based on student responses above.

Text for Discussion	Guiding Questions	Instructional Commentary
	E. *What is the impact of Lincoln referring to such a famous date?*	This is a hard question to answer without moving on to the rest of Lincoln's speech. It is enough for students, at this point, to recognize that Lincoln frames his remarks within a very important context, the beginning of the country, and an idea on which the country was based. Students should learn to pay close attention to how any author chooses to begin.
5. Students rewrite their translation of Lincoln's first paragraph	Based on what they have learned, students rewrite their translation of the first line.	

Tier 2 or Tier 3. You may want to have students rewrite their translations using a guided writing process if they are unable to do this assignment independently. This support should be phased out over the year.

Tier 3. Use the same color coding method described earlier whenever you need to help students access complex questions.

* Exemplar provided by Student Achievement Partners; information on the three tiers produced by the Council of the Great City Schools.

Biographical Sketches of the Authors

The Council of Great City Schools acknowledges the dedication and contribution of the following individuals who have written and edited this White Paper for the benefit of the membership of the Council of Great City Schools.

Sue Gamm

Sue Gamm is a special education leader and an attorney who has spent the past 40 years specializing in the study of policies, procedures, and practices that have an impact on the systemic and effective education of students with disabilities. She has blended her unique experience as the chief specialized-services officer for the Chicago Public Schools, attorney/division director for the Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education), and a special education teacher to become a highly regarded national special education expert, author, presenter, consultant, and evaluator of systemwide policies and practices. Ms. Gamm has conducted more than 35 special education reviews in more than 20 states, including participating on Strategic Support Teams provided by the Council of the Great City Schools for numerous school districts and for the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. She has drafted eight special education policy, procedural, and practice manuals, and provided guidance to districts on Response to Intervention. Ms. Gamm served as consulting attorney on the Council's *amicus* brief in support of the New York City Board of Education in *Board of Education of the City School District of the City of New York v. Tom F., On Behalf of Gilbert F., A Minor Child* (2007). In addition, she consults with the Public Consulting Group, numerous school districts, and state educational agencies; and provides training at national, state, and local conferences on special education matters, particularly in the area of special education disproportionality. Ms. Gamm also has testified before several United States Senate committees and has published or contributed to numerous books on subjects related to special education. Ms. Gamm graduated with high honors from the University of Illinois with a B.A. degree in regular and special education (1970) and earned a law degree from the De Paul College of Law (1976). She is admitted to practice before the Illinois Bar, the Federal Bar, and the U.S. Supreme Court Bar.

Judy Elliott

Judy Elliott was formerly the chief academic officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District, where she was responsible for curriculum and instruction, professional development, innovation, accountability, assessment, afterschool programs, state and federal programs, health and human services, magnet programs, language acquisition for both English and standard-English learners, parent outreach, and intervention programs for all students. Prior to that assignment, she was the chief of teaching and learning in the Portland (OR) Public Schools and was an assistant superintendent in the Long Beach (CA) Unified School District. In addition, Dr. Elliott has been a senior researcher at the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota. She started her career as a classroom teacher and school psychologist. Dr. Elliott continues to assist school districts, national organizations, and state and federal departments of education in their efforts to update and realign curriculum frameworks, instruction, assessment systems, and accountability for all students. Her research interests

focus on systems change and reform, effective instruction for all students, and data-based decision making for accountability and accelerated student achievement. She has trained thousands of staff members, teachers, and administrators in the United States and abroad in integrated service-delivery systems, leadership, effective use of data, and inclusive schooling that links assessments to classroom interventions, strategies and tactics for effective instruction, curriculum adaptation, collaborative teaching, and behavior management. She has authored more than 51 publications, including articles, book chapters, technical/research reports, and books; sits on editorial boards for professional journals; and is active in many professional organizations. Dr. Elliott is nationally known for her work in Response-to-Instruction and Intervention and has led many successful initiatives and projects around that effort.

Julie Wright Halbert

Julie Halbert has been legislative counsel for the Council of the Great City Schools for more than 18 years. In that capacity, she has served as a national education legal and policy specialist, with emphasis on special education. She worked extensively on the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 and 2004. Ms. Halbert was responsible for drafting numerous technical provisions to the IDEA and providing technical assistance to Congress and the U. S. Department of Education. In 1997 and, again, in 2005, she testified before the U.S. Department of Education on its proposed regulations on IDEA 2004. Ms. Halbert has directed each of the Council's special education review teams, including special education reviews in the Chicago, the District of Columbia, Guilford County (NC), Richmond, St. Louis, Charleston, New York City, Rochester, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence, and St. Paul. Ms. Halbert was also the counsel of record for the Council of the Great City Schools' *amicus* briefs to the Supreme Court of the United States in B*oard of Education of the City School District of the City of New York v. Tom F., On Behalf of Gilbert F., A Minor Child* (2007); Jacob *Winkelman, a Minor By and Through His Parents and Legal Guardians, Jeff and Sander Winkelman, et al., v. Parma City School District* (2007*)*; *Brian Schaffer v. Jerry Weast, Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools, et al.,* (2005); *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* (2007) and *Forest Grove School District v. T.A*, (2009). Ms. Halbert graduated with honors from the University of Maryland and the University of Miami School of Law. She is admitted to practice in the Federal Bar, the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, and the Florida and Pennsylvania Bars.

Ricki Price-Baugh

Ricki Price-Baugh serves as the director of academic achievement for the Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems. She directly assists urban districts in enhancing instructional systems to boost student achievement. Additionally, she participates in researching instructional materials and practices associated with improved student achievement. She has taken an active role in the Council's efforts to call for and advance common standards for our nation's schools. Dr. Price-Baugh retired as the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instructional development in the Houston Independent School District, where she led the development and implementation of the prekindergarten-12 curriculum, professional development for administrators and teachers, and the district's alternative teacher certification program. Her prior experience included teaching

at the secondary level for 13 years and serving as the district's K-12 software resource coordinator before joining the curriculum department as the director of educational programs. She also taught curriculum theory and practice for aspiring principals at the University of Houston. Dr. Price-Baugh received her B.A. degree from Tulane University and her M.A. from the University of Maryland. She earned her Doctor of Education in educational administration from Baylor University.

Gabriela Uro

Gabriela Uro is the manager for English-language learner policy and research and formerly was the manager of intergovernmental relations for the Council of the Great City Schools. As part of the legislative team, she works on legislative matters relevant to English-language learners (ELLs), both on Capitol Hill and with the Administration. She also works with the research and the strategic support teams on projects pertaining to ELL issues. Prior to joining the Council, Ms. Uro served as the policy advisor to the assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education and the director of the Office of Bilingual Education (now English Acquisition) in the U.S. Department of Education. She brought 13 years of education policy and budget experience to the U.S. Department of Education and was part of the department's team for the 1994 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization and the subsequent implementation teams for Title VII, Title I, and the Regional Assistance Centers. Ms. Uro received her M.P.A. from Columbia University with a specialization in education policy and her B.A. degree from the University of California, Irvine (magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa).

Robin Hall

Robin Hall is the director of language arts and literacy for the Council of the Great City Schools. She keeps members informed about research on systems and successful strategies for improving student achievement. Dr. Hall also provides support for the development and dissemination of information and tools to implement the Common Core State Standards. She has served in various capacities for Atlanta Public Schools, including executive director of K-8 schools, principal, K-12 language arts coordinator, instructional liaison specialist, language arts department chairperson and high school language arts teacher—constituting more than 25 years of educational experience. Dr. Hall has also served on the Council of Great City Schools support teams in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and professional development. In 2006, Dr. Hall was nominated to the National Assessment Governing Board by former U.S. Secretary of Education Margret Spellings. Among the board's responsibilities are selecting the content of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), selecting the subjects to be tested, identifying learning objectives for each grade tested, identifying appropriate achievement goals, and ensuring that all items selected for use in the assessment are free from racial, cultural, gender and regional biases. She received her B.A. degree in English from Vassar College and her M.A. and Doctor of Arts and Humanities degrees from Clark Atlanta University.

Denise Walston

Denise Walston is the director of mathematics for the Council of the Great City Schools, where she has responsibility for helping the organization's membership implement the Common Core State Standards. Prior to joining the Council, Ms. Walston was senior coordinator for

mathematics in the Norfolk (Va.) Public Schools. In this capacity, she oversaw the district's dramatic improvement in math achievement scores. Ms. Walston is an active member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics, and has served as president of the Tidewater Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She also serves on a number of statewide assessment committees responsible for the development and oversight of Virginia's math standards and testing system. She received an undergraduate degree in mathematics from the University of North Carolina and a master's degree in mathematics education from Old Dominion University. Ms. Walston has also taken extensive graduate courses from Princeton and George Washington universities. She began her career as a high school math teacher in the Norfolk Public Schools.

Michael Casserly

Michael Casserly is the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of 67 of the nation's largest urban public school districts. Dr. Casserly has been with the organization for 35 years, 20 of them as executive director. Before heading the group, he was the organization's chief lobbyist on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, and served as the Council's director of research. Dr. Casserly has led major reforms in federal education laws, garnered significant aid for urban schools across the country, spurred major gains in urban school achievement and management, and advocated for urban school leadership in the standards movement. He holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland and a bachelor's degree from Villanova University.

***

George Batsche

The Council of the Great City Schools extends a very special thank you to Dr. George Batsche for his substantive review and editing of this paper. Dr. Batsche is a professor and director of the Institute for School Reform at the University of South Florida. He also serves as the director of the Florida Statewide Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention Project for the Florida Department of Education. In the past 20 years, Dr. Batsche has received more than $50 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Education, Florida Department of Education, and private foundations. The majority of his work has focused on systems of implementing academic and behavior interventions for at-risk students.

Online Resources

Core Curriculum (Reading and Math)

- Common Core State Standards Initiative (http://www.corestandards.org/
- PARCC Model Content Frameworks for English Language Arts/Literacy (http://www.parcconline.org/mcf/ela/parcc-model-content-frameworks-browser) and for Mathematics (http://www.parcconline.org/mcf/mathematics/parcc-model-content-frameworks-browser)
- Center on Instruction (http://www.centeroninstruction.org/index.cfm)
- National Reading Panel. TEACHING CHILDREN TO READ: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction (http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/upload/report.pdf)
- What Works Clearinghouse: Literacy (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Topic.aspx?sid=8)
- Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (http://www.meadowscenter.org/vgc/)
- Florida Center for Reading Research (http://www.fcrr.org/)
- Oregon Reading First Center (http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/inst_curr_review_si.html)
- What is evidence-based reading instruction? (http://www.reading.org/General/AboutIRA/PositionStatements/EvidencedBasedPosition.aspx)
- Doing What Works (http://dww.ed.gov/)
- What Works Clearinghouse: Math (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/topic.aspx?sid=9)
- Foundations for Success: The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/report/final-report.pdf)
- Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=2)

Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction

- UDL Website (http://www.cast.org/udl/)
- UDL Guidelines (http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/downloads)
- Fulfilling the Promise of Differentiation (Website of Carol Tomlinson, Ed.D.) (http://www.caroltomlinson.com/index.html)

RtI in General

- National Center on RtI (http://www.rti4success.org/)
- RTI *Action* Network (http://www.rtinetwork.org/)
- Florida Problem Solving & Response to Intervention Project (http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/)
- National Associations for Directors of Special Education RtI Guidance (http://www.nasdse.org/projects/responsetointerventionrtiproject/tabid/411/default.aspx)

- Resource and Training Webinars from The National Center on Response to Intervention (http://www.rti4success.org/subcategorycontents/webinars)
- What Works Clearinghouse (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/)

RtI and English-Language Learners

- RtI Action Network: RtI for English Language Learners (http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/englishlanguagelearners)
- A Cultural, Linguistic and Ecological Framework for Response to Intervention with English Language Learners (http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Framework_for_RTI.pdf)
- National Center on RtI: Center Products for ELL (http://www.rti4success.org/search-view?title=ELL&body=ELL&tid_2%5B%5D=17)
- Equity Alliance: Response to Intervention (http://ea.niusileadscape.org/lc/Category/Response%20to%20Intervention)

Universal Screening

- National Center on RTI (http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)
- National Center on RtI Technical Review Committee: Screening Tools (http://www.rti4success.org/screeningTools)

Increasingly Intensive Interventions

- Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention and Multi-Tier Interventions in the Primary Grades, What Works Clearinghouse (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=3)
- *Response to Intervention* |Intervention Central (http://www.interventioncentral.org/)
- Review of Supplemental Interventions, which provides a description of a variety of interventions and links to research. (http://www.nysrti.org/page/review-of-supplemental-interventions/)

Resources for Parent Information

- Florida's Response to Intervention (http://www.florida-rti.org/Resources/index.htm)
- National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD) (http://www.nrcld.org/rti_practices/parent.html)
- RtI Action Network Resources for Parents & Families (http://www.rtinetwork.org/parents-a-families)

Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (PBIS)

- Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (http://www.pbis.org/)
- Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project: A Multi-Tiered Support System (http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/)

Progress Monitoring

- The National Center on Response to Intervention provides information about reading and math progress monitoring tools and provides users with information about the technical adequacy of commonly used progress monitoring tools. In addition, the chart provides users with practical information about how to obtain, access support for, and implement the tools. (http://www.rti4success.org/progressMonitoringTools)
- Progress Monitoring: What, Why, How, When, Where provides more information about the various types of progress monitoring tools. (http://www.studentprogress.org/library/Presentations/ProgressMonitoringWhatWhyHowWhenWhere.pdf)
- International Reading Association/IRA/National Council of Teachers of English Standards for the Assessment of Reading and Writing (http://www.ncte.org/standards/assessmentstandards)
- National Center on Student Progress Monitoring (http://www.studentprogress.org/)
- Schoolwide Information System (http://www.swis.org/)
- Determining Adequate Yearly Progress From Kindergarten through Grade 6 with Curriculum-Based Measurement (http://www.studentprogress.org/doc/determiningAdequateYearlyProgress.pdf)

Resources for Effective Teaming

- Intervention Central (http://www.interventioncentral.org/)
- RtI Action Network: The RtI Data Analysis Teaming Process (http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/data-based/teamprocess)
- The Colorado Department of Education Response to Intervention (RtI) Problem-Solving Consultation Process (http://www.cde.state.co.us/media/rti/training01/rtivideo01.html)

Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 702
Washington, DC 20004
202-393-2427