State Data Use Spotlight: Rhode Island

> **Challenge:** How do we collect data from local education agencies to monitor progress toward our state-identified measurable result (SiMR) when they use different assessment tools?

State tests lack the sensitivity and frequency to reflect ongoing academic improvement of students who are well below grade-level proficiency standards. As a result, some states are using screening and progress-monitoring data, collected as part of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) model, to evaluate early student-level progress toward SiMR outcomes. This state spotlight presents strategies the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is using to collect and summarize screening and progress-monitoring data from local education agencies (LEAs) that are using different assessment tools.

State Context

Rhode Island's Part B SiMR focuses on increasing third- through fifth-grade mathematics achievement of Black or Hispanic students in urban settings who have specific learning disabilities as measured by the annual state assessment, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). In 2015, the majority of the SiMR target population scored at the lowest proficiency level on PARCC.

> *Public School Facts: Rhode Island*
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> Districts: 61
> Schools: 306
> Students: 142,013
> Students with IEPs: 16.5%

To support students with the most intensive academic needs, RIDE has been working with the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) to build the capacity of LEAs to effectively implement intensive evidence-based mathematics interventions to support Tier III within an MTSS framework. Simultaneously, Rhode Island's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) has focused on MTSS implementation. As part of this work, LEAs in Rhode Island choose the screening and progress-monitoring tools used to implement their district-level MTSS model. Although some districts

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overlapped in their choices, the variation in tools and data sources created challenges for RIDE. How could they effectively summarize LEA data to monitor overall progress toward the SiMR?

Potential Strategies

Because of the local control realities in Rhode Island, RIDE could not mandate that LEAs use a uniform assessment tool for screening and progress monitoring. As a result, districts and schools could select valid and reliable tools that resulted in different types of data that could be used for analyses: raw scores, RIT scores (shorthand for "Rasch units"), percentile ranks, scaled scores, percentage at or above target, or growth rates. The lack of consistency in types of data reported by schools created challenges for summarizing data at the district and state level. To mitigate challenges and increase the usability of collected data, RIDE sought strategies to efficiently and effectively gather comparable data from LEAs using multiple types of screening and progress-monitoring tools. The bulleted section below describes their selected approaches to LEA data collection in current SPDG MTSS implementation and intensive mathematics intervention work. The school and district organizational structures determined whether the data was collected at the building or district level.

- *Screening Data.* Schools across the state are currently collecting screening data three times a year through their MTSS implementation. During fall, winter, and spring, MTSS teams review the benchmark screening results for both reading and mathematics. RIDE asks each LEA to report the total number and percentage of students who meet benchmark goals at each data collection period. These types of data can be readily gathered by the LEAs using their assessment data system. It also provides an indicator of growth across the school year that can be compared across schools and districts, despite the variation in selected tools.

  - *Disaggregated Screening Results.* Schools and districts also are required to provide disaggregated screening data for students who have an IEP and students who identify as English learners by grade level.

- *Progress Monitoring Data.* Beginning in the 2016–17 school year, RIDE will use student-level progress-monitoring data to assess progress toward the SiMR. Collecting each data point was considered impractical and difficult to summarize across students, schools, and districts. To reduce the burden on the LEA, RIDE requested that each school provide a count and percentage of students who met their individualized mathematics intervention goal. These data will be readily available as part of the schools' efforts to implement intensive interventions at Tier 3. As intensive intervention work in

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mathematics expands in Rhode Island, one goal is to gather data on percentage of expected growth. (See NSCI webinar *Avoiding Evaluation Pitfalls Through Periodic Assessments* for more information.)

Recommendations for States Facing Similar Challenges

- Provide LEAs with tools and resources (e.g., NCII *Tools Chart*) that allow them to be reflective of the assessment decisions they make around the selection of screening and progress monitoring tools.

- Spend time training and communicating with districts regarding how to select valid and reliable measures of student progress.

- Use data collection and data reporting strategies that reduce the burden for LEAs while providing usable data for school and district level analyses.

Available Resources
- National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), Technical Assistance State Facilitators (Find your state on the map at https://ncsi-resources.wested.org/)
- NCSI Data Use Team Technical Assistance Support (Contact: Kristin Ruedel at kruedel@air.org)
- NCSI Webinar, *Avoiding Evaluation Pitfalls Through Periodic Assessments* (https://vimeo.com/169085231)
- NCII, *Progress Monitoring Tools Chart* (http://www.intensiveintervention.org/chart/progress-monitoring)
- Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI), *Screening Tools Chart* (http://www.rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts/screening-tools-chart)