RTI Questions and Answers

55 common questions for the RTI lead at Santiago Garcia Elementary, in plain words.

District details still to confirm. State rules here come from the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Education Code. Time frames described as common practice may differ in Edcouch-Elsa ISD. Check the district RTI plan before relying on them.

Basics · Parents and notices · Tiers and decisions · Evaluations and referrals · Behavior · SuccessEd and records · Deadlines · Tricky situations

Basics

7 questions

1 **What is RTI, in one sentence?**

Catch students who are falling behind, give extra help early, and check often whether the help is working.

2 **Is RTI the same as MTSS?**

Almost. Texas calls the whole system MTSS, which covers academics, behavior and wellness. RTI is the part about giving and checking extra help. Your campus may use either name for the same work.

3 **Is RTI special education?**

No. RTI is general education help that any student can receive. Special education needs an evaluation and its own team.

4 **Who decides what help a student gets?**

The campus RTI committee, using the student's data. You organize the meeting and record the decision. You do not decide alone.

5 **Does a student in Tier 2 or 3 miss regular class teaching?**

No. Each tier is added on top of classroom teaching. It does not replace it. Try to schedule groups so the student does not miss core lessons.

6 **What is progress monitoring?**

A short check, given on a set schedule, that shows whether the student is growing. Each score goes on a graph so the team can see the trend.

7 **What is a universal screener?**

A short test given to all students, usually three times a year, to find who may need help. Ask which screeners SGE uses.

Parents and notices

9 questions

8 **When must a parent be told?**

When a student who is not in special education begins Tier 2 or Tier 3 help. Texas requires a written notice at that point.

9 **What must the parent notice include?**

Five things: a description of the help, the Tier 1 data that showed the need, how long the help is expected to last, when progress reports will come, and the statement of the parent's right to ask for an evaluation at any time.

10 **The student was in Tier 2 last year. Do I send a new notice?**

Yes. The notice is required each school year, when the help begins for that year.

11 **Does the notice have to be in Spanish?**

It must be in English or, where practical, the parent's home language. TEA provides the sample form in English and Spanish.

12 **Does the parent have to sign or agree before help starts?**

State law requires notice, not permission, for academic and behavior interventions. Mental health services are different and need consent first. Check whether the district asks for a signature to show the notice was received.

13 **A parent says they do not want their child in RTI. What now?**

Listen, explain that the help is added to class and can be changed, and tell your principal. Write down the conversation and the date. Follow district policy on what happens next.

14 **How often do parents get progress reports?**

On the schedule written in the notice. Many campuses send one each grading period. Confirm the district's schedule.

15 **The notice went home but never came back. Is that a problem?**

The rule is that the notice is given. Record the date and how you sent it. If the district wants a signature, send it again and note each try.

16 **We forgot to send a notice and help already started. What do I do?**

Send it now. Record the true date you sent it. Do not backdate. Tell your principal.

Tiers and decisions

7 questions

17 **How does a student move from Tier 2 to Tier 3?**

The committee reviews the growth data. If the help was delivered as planned and growth is still too slow, the team may move to stronger help. Record the meeting, end the old plan, add the new one, and send a new notice.

18 **How long does a student stay in a tier?**

A round of help commonly runs 6 to 9 weeks before review. There is no state limit, but a student should not sit at the same tier for round after round without a recorded decision. Check the district plan.

19 **When can a student exit RTI?**

When the goal is met and the student holds that level. Record the exit date and reason, tell the parent, and watch the next screening score.

20 **Can a student skip Tier 2 and go straight to Tier 3?**

Yes, when the data shows a large gap. The tiers describe how strong the help is. They are not a ladder every student must climb in order.

21 **Growth is slow. How do we know if the intervention failed?**

First check two things: did the student attend, and was the help given as often as planned? If not, the help has not really been tried yet.

22 **How many data points do we need before deciding?**

A common rule of thumb is at least 4 to 6 progress scores before changing course. Confirm the district's number.

23 **Can a student be in RTI for reading and behavior at the same time?**

Yes. Keep a separate plan and goal for each area so the progress for each can be seen on its own.

Evaluations and referrals

7 questions

24 **A parent asks me for special education testing. What do I do?**

Help them put the request in writing that day, and hand it to the principal. Write the date received. A written request to an administrator starts a 15-school-day clock for the district to respond.

25 **Do we have to finish RTI before a student can be evaluated?**

No. RTI can never be used to delay or deny an evaluation. A student suspected of having a disability must be referred, at any point.

26 **What if the parent only asked out loud?**

A spoken request does not start the 15-school-day clock, so help the parent write it down right away. Never let a spoken request sit.

27 **A teacher suspects a disability but the student just started Tier 2. What now?**

Tell the principal and special education staff now. Referral and intervention can run at the same time. Keep the help going.

28 **Does RTI help stop when a student is referred for evaluation?**

No. Help already under way should continue during the evaluation.

29 **What does the special education team need from me?**

A complete record: the concern, Tier 1 data, each intervention with dates, progress scores, meeting decisions and parent contacts.

30 **What about Section 504?**

A parent may also ask for a Section 504 evaluation at any time. Send those requests to the campus 504 coordinator the same day. Ask who that is at SGE.

Behavior

5 questions

31 **How is behavior RTI different?**

The steps and the notice are the same. You count behaviors instead of test scores, such as incidents per week or daily card points.

32 **How do I write a behavior so it can be tracked?**

Use words anyone could count. Not "disrespectful" but "leaves seat without permission, about 6 times each morning."

33 **Is a suspension or office referral an intervention?**

No. Discipline is recorded as discipline. An intervention teaches or supports a new behavior.

34 **Can I provide counseling as a Tier 2 behavior support?**

Skill groups and check-ins are common Tier 2 supports. Services that count as mental health care need the parent's consent first, on a separate form. Ask which district form applies.

35 **What are common Tier 2 behavior supports?**

A daily check-in and check-out with an adult, a small social skills group, a mentor, or a simple behavior card with points.

SuccessEd and records

9 questions

36 **What must be in every open record?**

Nine things: referral, Tier 1 data, first meeting, this year's parent notice, the intervention, a goal with numbers, progress scores on schedule, a review with a decision, and a future review date.

37 **I made a mistake in SuccessEd. Can I delete it?**

Do not delete history. Correct the entry and add a note saying what changed and why. If the system will not let you, ask your district SuccessEd contact.

38 **I am entering something late. What date do I use?**

The real date the event happened, with a note that it was entered late. Never change a date to make it look on time.

39 **Who should enter progress scores?**

That depends on the campus. Often the person who gives the check enters it, and the lead reviews. Ask how SGE does it.

40 **A student transferred in with RTI records from another school. What do I do?**

Ask for the records, bring them to the committee, and start a record at SGE. Send a new notice if Tier 2 or 3 help continues here.

41 **A student withdrew. What happens to the record?**

Close it with the withdrawal date so the campus list stays accurate. Do not delete it.

42 **Can I use AI to check my records?**

Only if district policy allows it, and only with names, ID numbers and birth dates removed. A ready checkup prompt comes as a separate supplement to the handbook. SuccessEd stays the only real record.

43 **Who can see RTI records?**

Staff who work with that student, and the parent. They are education records. Do not share lists with names and tiers by email or on wall charts.

44 **The button names in the guide do not match my screen.**

The guides are generic. Write your screen's wording beside each step the first time, or ask a district trainer to walk one record with you.

Deadlines

5 questions

45 **What are the deadlines I can never miss?**

The parent notice when help begins, and passing a written evaluation request to the principal the same day so the district can answer within 15 school days.

46 **How fast should meeting notes be entered?**

Within 2 school days is a good habit. Confirm the district's rule.

47 **What happens at the end of each grading period?**

A review for every Tier 2 and Tier 3 student, and a progress report to parents.

48 **What is due at the end of the year?**

A final decision for every student, all records complete, and an accurate list of students served for the PEIMS count. Ask the PEIMS clerk for the date.

49 **Why does the state count matter?**

Each year the district reports how many students received intervention strategies. That number comes from your records, so a missing record means a wrong number.

Tricky situations

6 questions

50 **A teacher keeps doing interventions without telling me.**

Thank them for helping the student, then explain that Tier 2 or 3 help needs a notice and a record. Offer to set it up together that day.

51 **A student is absent so often the intervention barely happens.**

Record every missed session. Bring attendance to the committee. The team cannot judge help that was not received.

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52 **The committee cannot agree.**

Go back to the data and the goal. Record the decision made and the reason. If still stuck, ask the principal to decide.

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53 **A student is an emergent bilingual. Is slow reading a language issue or a learning issue?**

That is a team question, not yours alone. Invite the bilingual or ESL teacher to the meeting and look at progress in both languages where you can.

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54 **I have more students flagged than interventionists can serve.**

Tell your principal with the numbers. A large share of students flagged may point to a Tier 1 need for the whole class or grade.

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55 **I inherited records that are a mess. Where do I start?**

Run a list of open records. Fix notices first, then plans and goals, then missing scores. Note today's date on anything you repair.

Sources for state rules: TEA, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (tea.texas.gov); Texas Education Code 26.0081 and 48.009. This sheet explains the process in plain words. It is not legal advice. For a question about a specific student's rights, ask your principal or the special education office.