The WHY Behind RTI

“We educators are directly responsible for crucial, life-saving work. Today, a student who graduates from school with a mastery of essential skills and knowledge has a good chance of successfully competing in the global marketplace, with numerous opportunities to lead a rewarding adult life. In stark contrast, students who fail in school are at greater risk of poverty, welfare dependency, incarceration, and early death. With such high stakes, educators today are like tightrope walkers without a safety net, responsible for meeting the needs of every student, with little room for error. Fortunately, compelling evidence shows that Response to Intervention (RTI) is our best hope for giving every student the additional time and support needed to learn at high levels (Burns, Appleton, & Stehouwer, 2005).”

- Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2010

Why should we engage in the RTI process?

The RTI process has been proven to assist us in our mission as teachers. As stated in our Strategic Plan, “The mission of Warwick Public Schools, working cooperatively with families and the community, is to provide challenging, student-centered learning environments that enable all students to develop the skills, knowledge, and strategies necessary to excel in college, career, and life.”

How can RTI facilitate learning?

Research on effective teaching and learning demonstrates that:

Targeted Instruction + Time = Learning

Students have varying areas of need. They learn in different ways and at different speeds. RTI gives us the opportunity to efficiently and systematically provide every student with the time, support and instruction that they need. This requires that all of us work together in creative ways.
How can we successfully engage in RTI?

Schools that are successful with RTI realize that it is much more than simply placing kids into interventions or complying with regulations. When RTI is a success, people transform the way they think about teaching and learning. In turn, all tiers are transformed.

Tier 1:

- Teachers work in teams to analyze data and customize instruction for their students.
- Teachers differentiate instruction and meet with small groups to address gaps in learning.
- When students are struggling, teachers examine and look to modify the students’ instruction, curriculum, and environment.
- Teachers narrow and focus their instruction in order to address the Common Core State Standards and get the students to the point of mastery.

Tiers 2 and 3:

- Interventions are specific and focused on an area of need.
- The instruction in interventions is different than the instruction in class. Evidence-based approaches are used.
- Interventions are administered in small groups.
- The progress of students in interventions is monitored using STAR.
- Intervention groups change according to data and need. Students have the opportunity to move throughout the tiers.

Additional resources:

Warwick Public Schools Strategic Plan 2013-2018:

Effective RTI Use and Decision Making: