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## “RTI Integrity Framework:

### A Tool for Monitoring and Evaluating RTI Implementation” – Webinar

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**Slide 1:** Hi, and thank you for listening in on this webinar entitled “RTI Integrity Framework: A Tool for Monitoring and Evaluating RTI Implementation.” My name is Amy Elledge, and I am the Deputy Director of the National Center on RTI. It is my pleasure to introduce you to our integrity framework, which was developed in partnership with RMC Research Corporation in Oregon. We hope that it can help answer the question of how do we know if we’re implementing RTI with integrity? So let’s get started.

**Slide 2:** What is the RTI integrity framework? The framework is comprised of two parts: a worksheet and a rubric that together provide a picture of RTI by looking at the categories that you see on your screen: general information about RTI, the use of screening, the use of a primary level of prevention, a secondary level prevention, tertiary level prevention, the use of progress monitoring, the use of data-based decision making, as well as overarching factors such as the focus, the leadership, staffing, etc. and we’ll go into each of these items in more detail in just a minute.

**Slide 3:** So how did we get here? Briefly here are the steps that we took, all the while keeping in mind the question: “If RTI was being implemented well, how would we know, and what would we look for?” So the steps that we did take were to define fidelity, develop measures in order to capture that definition, and then to develop instruments that would allow others to document what fidelity looked like. And as such, we developed two instruments: one, a worksheet and two, a rubric, and we’ll go over each of those instruments.

**Slide 4:** So the integrity framework is centered on the four essential components of RTI as identified by the National Center on RTI, which you can see there on your screen: screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, and data-based decision making. If you are not familiar with these essential components, you can check out a document we’ve produced, you can find it on our website. It’s entitled: “Essential Components of RTI: A Closer Look at Response to Intervention,” which will explain each of the components in more detail.

**Slide 5:** So as I mentioned, the RTI integrity framework is made up of two fidelity instruments: one, the integrity worksheet and two, the integrity rubric.

**Slide 6:** The integrity framework worksheet is intended for use by RTI coordinators or other evaluators with extensive RTI experience who would be qualified to make judgments and ratings about what they see and hear about RTI implementation. The worksheet is used to rate school



level implementation of RTI according to the rubric. So again, they're used together. The worksheet also includes a narrative rationale for each rating and the data for the worksheet is collected through interviews or site visits.

**Slide 7:** Again, the worksheet is organized according to the essential components as identified by the National Center, which are: screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, and data-based decision making. The sheet also provides example questions, space for comments and notes, as well as rating.

**Slide 8:** So the first component that you'll see on the RTI worksheet addresses screening. The National Center has defined screening as: the RTI system accurately identifies students at risk of poor learning outcomes or challenging behaviors. The worksheet will contain questions in two categories related to screening. The first is screening tools. Some of the questions that are on the worksheet for screening tools will be: "What tools do you use for universal screening?" "When your school selected the screening tool or tools, how much attention was paid to the evidence from the vendor regarding the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the tool?" Also, "Do you have reason to believe that the screening tool or tools that you use may have issues with validity, reliability, or accuracy - including the sub-group - and if so, please explain." So these are some of the types of questions that an external evaluator or RTI coordinator will be asking people at the school. Also under the screening component of the worksheet, there is a category for universal screening. Some of the questions included in this category are: "Are all students at the target grade level screened at the beginning of the school year?" "Does your school conduct screening throughout the school year? If so, how many times?" "Is a well-defined cut-score used to identify students at risk?" "Describe the process for conducting the screening." And, "To what extent is that process consistently followed?" Again, there are more questions on the worksheet, but this gives you an idea of some of the things that an RTI coordinator or external evaluator who is completing the worksheet would be looking for, for this component.

**Slide 9:** The next component that the framework worksheet addressed is the multi-level prevention system. This has been defined by the center as: the framework includes a school-wide multi-level system for preventing school failure. This addresses each of the levels of a multi-level prevention system: the primary level, the secondary level, and the tertiary level. Some of the questions at the primary level are centered on research-based curriculum material, fidelity, articulation of teaching and learning in and across grade level, instruction, and school-based professional development. For example, one of the questions under research-based curriculum material is: "When your school selected its core instructional material, how much attention was paid to the evidence from the vendor regarding effectiveness of the materials when used with fidelity?" An example of a fidelity question would be: "Are procedures in place to monitor the fidelity of delivery of the core curriculum?" For articulation of teaching and learning in and



across grade levels, some of the questions include: “What efforts have been made to articulate teaching and learning from one grade to another? And describe the process that supports the articulation of teaching and learning from one grade to another.” For instruction, the external evaluator would be looking at questions like: “To what extent do teachers use assessment data and knowledge of student readiness, language, and culture, to offer teaching and learning strategies that address individual needs? And how consistent is this effort among teaching staff?” For school-based professional development, the questions address: “Do teachers regularly participate in school-based professional development that is structured so that teachers continually examine, reflect upon, and improve instructional practice?” And some of the probes that would follow that question include: describing the professional development, how frequently the professional development is provided, and the percentage of school staff who participate in that professional development.

**Slide 10:** As I mentioned, this section of the worksheet covers each level of the multi-level prevention system. So at the secondary level of prevention, the questions are centered around evidence-based intervention, how it complements core instruction, fidelity, instruction, determining responsiveness to secondary intervention, and the addition to the primary. So for evidence-based intervention, some of the questions include: “What programs are used?” “Have these programs demonstrated efficacy with the target population?” For example, has research shown that the interventions positively impact students’ achievement? In terms of looking at complementing core instruction, some of the questions include: “How do the instructors of the secondary level intervention ensure that the content they address is well aligned and complements the core instruction for each student?” And “How are foundational skills that support core instruction incorporated into secondary level intervention?” In terms of fidelity, the questions are looking at: how the instructors of the secondary level intervention ensure that the content they address is well aligned and complements the core instruction for each student? And how are foundational skills that support core instruction incorporated into secondary level intervention? In terms of determining responsiveness, the questions include: “Are the decisions about whether or not a student is responding to secondary level intervention based on progress monitoring data?” “Are the decisions made based on the slope of a student’s progress or on the student’s final status at the end of secondary level prevention?” And “Are the criteria implemented accurately and consistently?” In terms of addition to primary, questions include: “Are the secondary level interventions always implemented as a supplement to the core curriculum? And if not, please explain.”

**Slide 11:** And finally, for the multi-level prevention system section, it addresses the tertiary level. Questions here center around evidence-based intervention, fidelity, instruction, determining responsiveness to tertiary level prevention, and the relationship to the primary level.



In terms of evidence-based intervention, the questions ask about: “What evidence-based instructional practices are implemented at this level?” And “Are the tertiary level interventions more intense than the secondary level intervention? And if so, how are they more intense?” In terms of fidelity: “Are procedures in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the tertiary level intervention?” And “How do you ensure that the individualized instruction at the tertiary level includes evidence-based instructional practices?” In terms of instruction: “Does the group size allow for the interventionist to adjust and individualize instruction to address the needs of each student?” “What is the maximum small group size?” And “Describe a typical tertiary level experience for students.” In terms of determining responsiveness to tertiary level prevention, the questions include: “Are the decisions about whether or not a student is responding to tertiary level intervention based on progress monitoring data?” And, “Are the decisions made based on the slope of a student’s progress or on the student’s final status at the end of the tertiary level intervention?” Questions here include: “Are the tertiary level interventions always implemented as a supplement to the core curriculum, or do the tertiary level interventions replace the core curriculum for some students?” And “How do you ensure that meaningful connections exist between the tertiary level intervention and the core curriculum?”

**Slide 12:** The next component that the worksheet will cover is progress monitoring, which we’ve defined as ongoing and frequent monitoring of progress quantifies rates of improvement and informs instructional practice and the development of individualized programs. Here the questions are divided into two categories: one, progress monitoring tools and monitoring progress. In terms of progress monitoring tools, some of the questions include: “What tools are used for progress monitoring?” “How many alternate forms of equal difficulty are available?” And “When your school selected these tools, how much attention was paid to the evidence from the vendor regarding the validity, the reliability, and the accuracy of the tool or tools?” And “Does your school have documentation from the vendor that these tools have been shown to be valid, reliable, and accurate, including when used with sub-groups?” In terms of monitoring progress, the questions include: “How often is the progress of students monitored at the secondary level?” “How often is the progress of students monitored at the tertiary level?” “Is progress monitoring conducted frequently enough to show a trend in academic or behavioral development over time?” And “Describe the process used for monitoring progress.”

**Slide 13:** The next component addressed in the worksheet is data-based decision making, which we have defined as: data-based decision making processes are used to inform instruction, movement within the multi-level system, and disability identification in accordance with your state law. There is only one category under this, and that is the decision making process. Some of the questions here are: “Describe how decisions are made to move students between levels.” “Who is involved in this decision making?” “What data are used to inform these decisions and how are they used?” “What criteria and guidelines are used for making these decisions?” “Do



you have any reason to believe that the decision making process may be subject to bias or inappropriate influence?” And “Are consistent decision making rules used with all students?”

**Slide 14:** The last section of the worksheet deals with overarching factors, or factors that relate to the entire RTI framework. Some of these include a prevention focus. “To what extent do you believe the teaching staff view the purpose of RTI as primarily to prevent students from having academic and/or behavioral problems?” And “What portion of the teaching staff view RTI as primarily a means for special education identification?” In the leadership category, some questions include: “To what extent do the actions taken and decisions made by district administrators improve the effectiveness of the RTI framework at your school?” And, “To what extent do the actions taken and decisions made by school administrators improve the effectiveness of the RTI framework at your school?” Also, “Does your school have a designated person who oversees and manages RTI implementation?” So in terms of culturally and linguistically responsive, “What efforts have been made to ensure that core instruction and secondary and tertiary level intervention take into account cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors for students?” In terms of parents, communicating with and involving them in the RTI process, some of the questions here address: “How are parents of students at secondary or tertiary level kept informed of the progress of their child?” “How are parents involved in decision making regarding the participation of their child in secondary or tertiary level of prevention?” So the hope here is, in this overarching factors section, is that actually a lot of the questions of this section can be applied to any implementation of any initiative that is taking place at a school, so, just general good things to keep in mind when implementing anything new.

**Slide 15:** So let’s take a look at the tools themselves. Here you see the first page of the RTI framework integrity worksheet. Information here about the school level implementation should be collected through interviews with school personnel and through observations and document review. Because this is such a large amount of information and the questions are so detailed, we suggest notifying sites ahead of time: what would be helpful to have on hand during the interview and any documents or other things that the evaluator might find helpful in answering, making notes about each of these questions and components. And after all of the information has been collected, the evaluator would use their notes and the RTI essential components integrity rubric – which we’ll see in just a minute – to rate the school on each item. So here you can see on the screen, this shows just the first part of the worksheet, which addresses screening, and just the first section of the screening, which addressed screening tools. In that second column, you see the questions that I reviewed a couple of slides ago, and then you see a column for the ratings, as well as a column for rationale. So in the rating column, that is where the rubric comes into play, and we’ll take a look at the rubric in just a minute to see how the information that you’ve gathered, or the evaluator has gathered by answering the questions and through



observation, how that information plays against the description of the rating on the rubric. And we'll see how they tie together in just a minute.

**Slide 16:** So, the RTI integrity rubric is the second fidelity instrument in our integrity framework. Again, it's aligned with the essential components and, as well, it also has that overarching factors component. And it also has descriptions of ratings for a 1, a 3, or a 5 across those factors. The sections of rubric are exactly aligned with the sections of the worksheet. If a school's practice is judged to fall somewhere between the described ratings, you can assign a school a rating of 2 or a 4. For example, if the school is judged to be performing at a level higher than the rubric described for a level 3 rating, but not quite at the level described for a 5, the school would be rated as performing at a level 4. So let's take a look at the rubric in order to see how this plays out.

**Slide 17:** So here is a screenshot of the first page of the RTI essential components integrity rubric, and you use this rubric to fill out the ratings section on the integrity worksheet. So, taking a look at the screening tool, for example, which is the first row underneath that black row, you would have information from the following questions from the worksheet: what tools do you use for universal screening? When your school selected the screening tools how much attention was paid to the evidence from the vendor regarding the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the tool? Does your school have documentation from the vendor that these tools have been shown to be valid, reliable, and accurate, including when used with sub-groups? And, do you have reason to believe that the screening tools you use may have issues with validity, reliability, or accuracy – including when used with sub-groups – and if so, please explain. So you would use the answers to these questions, as well as any other notes you might have from a document review or from an observation that you have, to give the school a rating on screening tools. And so, based on the answers that you have, you would select whether that school is performing at a 1, a 3, or a 5 – or if it's in-between, a 2 or a 4 – and then you would go back to the RTI essential components integrity worksheet, and circle or fill in the rating for the school for that particular factor.

**Slide 18:** So we think that the benefits of the integrity framework are several. We think that it provides data that can be useful for improving the effectiveness of the RTI system in school. It can also be used to describe how schools are implementing RTI. The data support both a formative and substantive evaluation aspect of evaluating an RTI framework. And we hope that data from the tool will better enable the state or the district to provide targeted services and professional development to address specific needs that are revealed by the data.

**Slide 19:** So where can I find these tools? Well, both the worksheet and the rubric are available on the NCRTI website, which you see there on your screen: [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org). And both of these tools are completely free to use, as we are a federally funded center. So I'm going to walk you through how to find them on our site.



**Slide 20:** Here is a screenshot of our homepage, and that green arrow there is pointing to the Resources tab. So you click on the resources tab...

**Slide 21:** which opens up this site. Then you would follow the green arrow again, and click on the section entitled “implementation tools.” By clicking on that...

**Slide 22:** ...it opens a list all of our center products that deal with implementation. The second grouping there is where you’ll find the RTI integrity rubric and worksheet, and again the green arrow indicates that. Clicking on that link...

**Slide 23:** ...will take you to where they are, and you can see there is a brief introduction to the tools, and then you can click on each of the items, the rubric and the worksheet, to access them. They will open in PDF files, which you can then print out and use or modify as you see fit.

**Slide 24:** So, how have these tools been used in the field? Well I want to share some examples with you. The first is from a state, and you can see there that the state conducted site visits to the pilot sites that are implementing RTI in that state. So teams of 2-5 people completed an external review of each pilot site. They used the questions from the worksheet. The reviewers each had to come to agreement on the scores. They then compiled a report for each school and shared that with the school. And they have since targeted their technical assistance –or TA – based on what they have found and rated schools. For each rating that received a 3 or below, the state is providing webinars to districts on those topics. The districts will then in turn give assistance to the school. And each webinar contains information about the topic and also features resources that are available on the topic both within the state and external to the site. So here they had external reviewers complete the worksheet, share the results with the pilot site, and now the state is using those ratings to provide targeted assistance to the district who then in turn provide assistance to the school.

**Slide 25:** The second state I want to talk to you about uses capacity building coaches to train sites. In this particular state, capacity building coaches have been trained on how to use the worksheet and rubric. Then the coaches in turn offer training to their pilot sites who are implementing RTI. As part of that training and ongoing use, they’ve held ongoing discussions on the rubric elements, where they are on each element, how they can be improved, and, for going forward, the pilot sites and other sites as well, are looking to do more advanced training. And in order for them to be able to be eligible to attend these trainings, the site must have an external evaluator complete the rubric and worksheet before attending these trainings. So, during the training, they will use the findings from the worksheet to structure the discussions and the topics



that those trainings focus on. So they need to have homework, if you will, brought with them to these more advanced trainings.

**Slide 26:** This last example I want to talk to you about comes from a state who is using it in two large urban districts. So, teams of 4 external evaluators and an SEA staff person conducted a 2-3 hour interview with each building RTI team. They did the structured interview with 28 items, and in this case they used a modified version of the worksheet. They broke down the note section to include also recommendations, and then they also took each component and each factor and talked about reading and math individually, because they have found that some of the implementation across the two content areas vary, and they wanted to give more detailed information relating to how each of those content areas were being implemented in the RTI framework. So, they were scored against the specific language and definitions listed in the rubric. When in doubt, they actually rounded the scores down. Just as we suggest, they did use scores of a 2 or a 4 when the implementation did not exactly match the definition of a 1, 3, or a 5. The scores were then averaged across the implementation area. Any components that they found were not in place scored a one, and they used the ratings to give targeted feedback, as well as the scores. They made specific recommendations to each of the sites, identifying their areas of strengths and challenges. This took place using 2 interviewers. They both took detailed notes and they had to discuss the items following the interview. They scored each item independently, following the discussion of the item, and in this case they required an agreement within 1. If the discrepancy was greater than 1, the reviewers discussed and then had to come to an agreement on a score.

**Slide 27:** So I hope that this webinar gives you an introduction to the RTI integrity framework. I want to thank you again for listening in, and if you have any questions about the integrity rubric or worksheet, I hope you'll join our follow-up live chat, or send any questions you might have to [rtiwebinars@air.org](mailto:rtiwebinars@air.org).