

**APPLICATION FOR RTI EXTERNAL COACHES PARTNERSHIP**  
**Illinois ASPIRE – South**  
October 10, 2008

**General Information**

**Eligible Applicants:** Public school districts, special education joint agreements/cooperatives, Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) and Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) are eligible to apply, provided they are located in the geographic area served by the Illinois Alliance for School-Based Problem-Solving and Intervention Resources in Education (I-ASPIRE) – South region, as shown on the map in Appendix A. Each applicant must designate one or more individuals (Coaches) who will be trained by I-ASPIRE staff to serve as External Coaches/Trainers for school districts in their area.

**Number of Applicants to be Selected:** The number of applicants selected will depend upon the number of External Coaches to be supported through this project. It is projected that the I-ASPIRE South region will have the capacity to train and support up to 10 External Coaches for the 2008-09 school year.

**Start Date:** It is estimated that training to the designated external coaches will begin by February 2009.

**Application Deadline:** Applications must be received by Friday, November 21, 2008. Mail the original plus 5 copies (six in all) to Illinois ASPIRE South, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Box 1147, Edwardsville, Illinois, 62026-1147, Attention: Michael McCollum, Co-Director. No FAX copies of applications will be accepted.

**Contact Person:** For more information about this application, contact Michael McCollum, Co-Director, at [mmccollum@siue.edu](mailto:mmccollum@siue.edu) or 618-650-5182.

**Background**

In September 2005, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) received a five-year State Personnel Development (SPD) Grant issued by the U.S. Department of Education under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. To implement the objectives of the SPD Grant Project, in February 2006 ISBE established I-ASPIRE and funded four regional I-ASPIRE Centers—one in the city of Chicago and one each in the northern, central and southern parts of the state. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville was funded to operate the I-ASPIRE – South grant, which serves districts in the counties shown on the map in Appendix A.

The overarching goal of the I-ASPIRE Grant Project is to:

*Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.*

The professional development and technical assistance under I-ASPIRE focuses on designing and implementing a multi-tiered early intervening services model including RtI. See Appendix B for ISBE’s definition of RtI. ISBE initiatives such as the former Flexible Service Delivery Project (problem solving and RtI), Standards-Aligned Classrooms and Illinois Reading First helped provide the foundation for the content of the training and technical assistance provided by each I-ASPIRE region.

In addition to the initiatives listed above, in June 2008 Illinois was selected as one of four states participating in the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs’ national technical assistance grant to “promote student academic achievement and behavioral health by supporting implementation and scaling-up of evidence-based practices in education settings.” The State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center “will work with the selected states to increase their capacity to carry out implementation, organizational change, and systems transformation strategies to maximize achievement outcomes of all students in each state.” I-ASPIRE will be an integral component of Illinois’ SISEP activities, and the primary focus of SISEP will be on:

1. Full integration of all ISBE-supported general and special education training and technical assistance projects to ensure a cohesive approach to implementing effective practices,
2. Establishing a statewide coaching network that will support the implementation of evidence-based practices in schools across the state and
3. Data-based decision making founded on outcomes measurements.

I-ASPIRE is also an integral part of ISBE’s efforts to ramp up implementation of RtI across the state. While RtI is connected to the state special education regulations that went into effect in June 2007, as conceived by ISBE, RtI is more than part of the process to determine eligibility for specific learning disabilities. RtI is an overall school improvement process. This school improvement process is designed to provide scientifically based, appropriate instruction to *all* students in a multi-tiered early intervening services model.

As a result of the changes discussed above, the scope of I-ASPIRE is being expanded from grades K-3 to grades K-12 and the target of intensive training efforts are being extended to larger scale educational units to support implementation through a broader coaching-of-coaches model.

## **Program Specifications**

### ***Partnerships and Collaboration***

Each application must involve a collaborative partnership of multiple entities. Examples of such partnerships include the following:

- One or more special education joint agreements/cooperatives in conjunction with multiple school districts and/or one or more ROEs or ISCs.
- One or more ROEs or ISCs in conjunction with multiple school districts and/or one or more special education joint agreements/cooperatives.
- Multiple school districts in partnership with one or more special education joint agreements/cooperatives and/or ROEs or ISCs.
- Multiple school districts in partnership with each other.

### ***Service Commitments***

#### **I-ASPIRE Commitments**

I-ASPIRE – South will commit to providing the following for designated External Coaches AT NO COST:

1. Training in seven ASPIRE modules ranging from RtI Essential Components to Advanced Problem Solving Skills,
2. Training in coaching and team building skills and
3. Ongoing support from ASPIRE staff for technical assistance needs, including monthly contact (e.g., via meetings, email, telephone) and regular networking opportunities with other coaches in the I-ASPIRE – South region.

Financial support in an amount up to \$500 per person will also be made available, if needed, to offset External Coach expenses, e.g., travel costs to attend training.

#### **Applicant Commitments**

The applicant will commit to:

1. Designate individuals who demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities delineated under “External Coach Characteristics” (see below) to be trained and serve as external coaches.
2. Allow the identified individuals to participate in the training provided by I-ASPIRE.
3. Allocate a percentage (e.g., 0.4 Full Time Equivalency (FTE)) of each trained individual’s position to provide the training and coaching services delineated under “External Coach Commitments.”
4. Allocate funds for the salary corresponding to the external coaching position’s FTE.
5. Ensure that the trained External Coach(es) fulfill the “External Coach Commitments.”
6. Assist with the coordination of training and coaching services to be delivered by the trained External Coach(es), including assistance with scheduling and location of training for school and district teams.

#### **External Coach Commitments**

The trained external coaches will commit to:

1. Participate in training and networking provided by I-ASPIRE, as discussed above.
2. Participate in technical assistance provided by I-ASPIRE, as discussed above.
3. Provide training to district and school teams in seven I-ASPIRE modules ranging from RtI Essential Components to Advanced Problem Solving Skills.
4. Provide ongoing coaching to internal building coaches for technical assistance needs.
5. Guide internal building coaches in implementing problem solving processes (including team roles, meeting structure, etc.).
6. Facilitate the use of a team-based, problem solving process to provide interventions for all students at the universal, targeted and intensive levels.
7. Use required data on a regular basis (satisfaction surveys and critical components checklists quarterly; universal screening and progress monitoring tools such as AIMSweb or DIBELS, sources of student discipline data such as SWIS, School Report Card and Child Count data and parent surveys annually).
8. Guide internal building coaches in collecting and using data on at least a monthly basis for decision-making purposes.
9. Guide internal building coaches to work with their building teams to develop an annual action plan for RtI activities based on analysis of collected data.
10. Disseminate information to staff members in the district(s) and school(s) served.

### External Coach Characteristics

Individuals who will be trained and serve as External Coaches under the RtI External Coaches Partnership should have the following characteristics:

- Knowledge, skills & abilities with:
  - Curriculum-based evaluation (CBE)
  - Functional behavior assessment (FBA)
  - Reading programs
  - Scientific, research-based instruction and interventions
  - 3-tiered model of instruction, assessment and intervention
  - Instructional and behavioral coaching
- Experience and skills in working with adult learners

### **Application Requirements**

Each application must include the information specified below in a narrative format, in the order in which it is presented. The narrative **must** be double-spaced using a 12-point font and should not exceed 10 pages.

#### **1. Applicant Commitment**

Applications must outline specific activities the applicant will carry out to meet the requirements specified under “Applicant Commitments.” A separate Statement of Understanding (as found in Appendix C) must be signed by an administrator from each entity participating in the application and submitted with the application. Applications must also clearly demonstrate the External Coach’s ability to fulfill the requirements

specified under “External Coach Commitments,” including detailed information about each individual’s qualifications, particularly in regard to the External Coach Characteristics. A separate Statement of Understanding (as found in Appendix C) must be signed by each External Coach and submitted with the application.

A budget detailing the applicant’s commitment for implementation, including funds for the External Coach salary and training must also be included. If requesting funds from I-ASPIRE to offset expenses of the External Coach, include the amount requested in the budget. An sample budget is provided below:

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Applicant Commitment</b>	<b>Requested Support from I-ASPIRE</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>External Coach Salary</b>	<b>0.4 FTE budgeted at \$25,000</b>	<b>\$500</b>	

**2. Statement of Need and Expected Outcomes and Impact**

Applications must:

- a. Describe the applicant’s needs that will be addressed through participation in the project.
- b. Identify measurable outcomes, tied to the identified needs, that will result from project participation.
- c. Discuss the expected impact of services to be provided, including the following information for each district to be served: district name and number (e.g., Utopia CUSD 1), student enrollment data (number and race/ethnicity of students) and number of schools.

**3. Applicant Experience with Initiatives and Programs**

Applications must describe the applicant’s current and/or previous level of involvement in academic and/or behavioral initiatives and programs. In addition, discuss any involvement the applicant has had with the following ISBE-funded projects:

- I-ASPIRE
- Flexible Service Delivery Project
- Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative
  - Illinois Reading First
  - Illinois Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
  - Project CHOICES
  - Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project
  - Parent Mentor Project and/or Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center
  - Other (specify)

If the applicant has not been explicitly involved with the projects listed above, but has been involved with educational systems reform or any elements of the initiatives, please describe those experiences.

Applications must also describe each External Coach's current and/or previous level of involvement in academic and/or behavioral initiatives and programs and with any of the initiatives listed above.

### **Application Review**

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria listed below.

- 1. Applicant Commitment (25 points):** The application demonstrates clear administrative, programmatic and fiscal commitment (including the required Statement(s) of Understanding) and capacity to fulfill the requirements as set forth in "Applicant Commitments." The application also demonstrates the capacity of the External Coach(es) to fulfill the requirements set forth in "External Coach Commitments," including information about each individual's qualifications and the required Statement(s) of Understanding. Particular attention will be given to the applicant's financial and personnel commitment in FTE to the project.
- 2. Statement of Need and Expected Outcomes and Impact (15 points):** The application clearly defines the needs that will be addressed through participation in the project and provides convincing evidence that without assistance from the project, these needs would not be met. The application also delineates projected outcomes that: a) are measurable, b) are clearly linked to the identified needs and c) will result in systems change and an increased capacity to support school and district implementation of RtI. In addition, the application demonstrates that as a result of participating in the project, there will be a significant impact with regard to the number of districts and schools to be served.
- 3. Applicant's Experience with Initiatives and Programs (10 points):** The application describes in detail the level of the applicant's and each External Coach's involvement in academic and/or behavioral initiatives and programs, resulting in a comprehensive picture of the applicant's current systemic capacity.

Awards will be considered on the basis of total points. It is important that diverse districts be represented in the operation of the RtI External Coaches Partnership. Therefore, after all applications have been evaluated against the criteria delineated above and have received a final score from 0 to 50, additional factors will be considered prior to selection of the RtI External Coaches Partnership applicants. Specifically, applicants will be selected to ensure that districts to be served by the project are diverse with respect to geographic location, student enrollment and district type (i.e., rural, urban, suburban).

It is anticipated that final decisions with regard to selection of RtI External Coaches Partnership applicants will be made no later than December 19, 2008.



## APPENDIX B

### **DEFINITION OF RTI FROM THE IL STATE RTI PLAN**

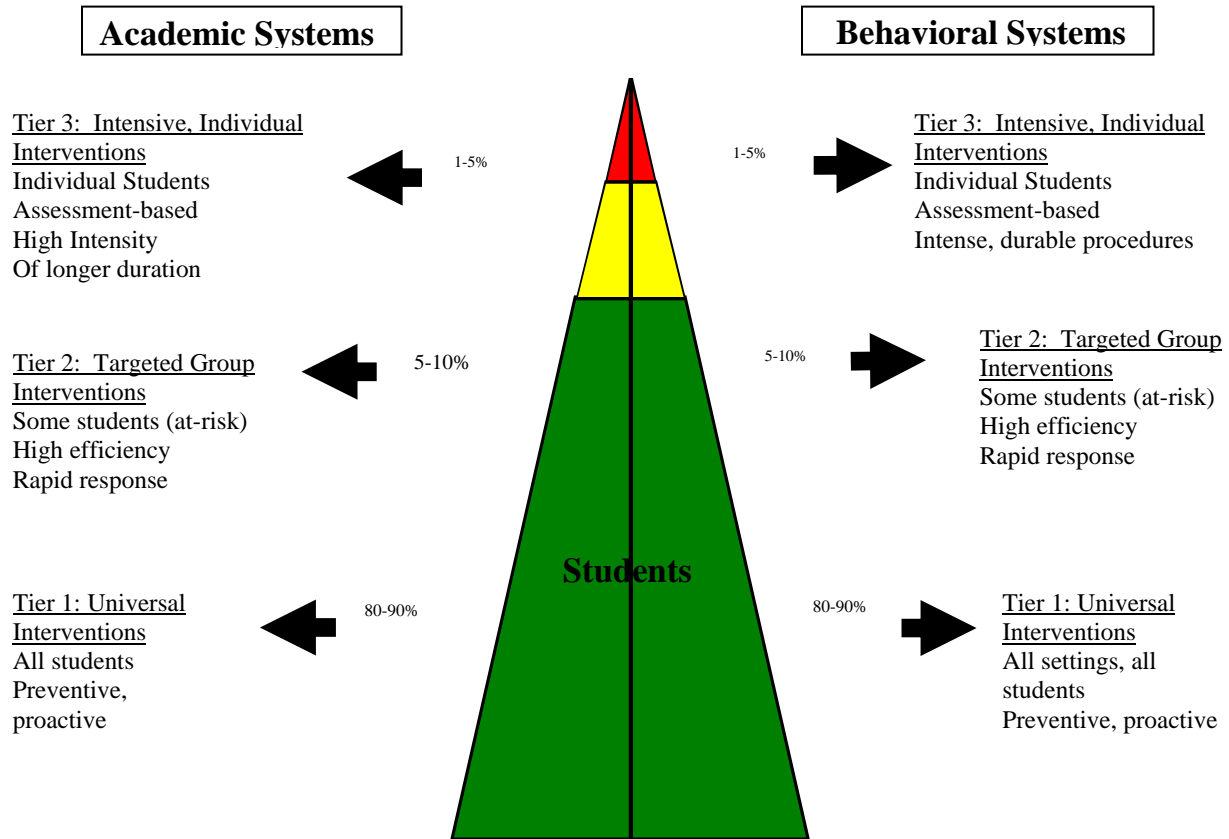
Response to Intervention (RtI) is “the practice of providing 1) high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and 2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to 3) make important educational decisions” (*Batsche, et al., 2005*). This means using differentiated instructional strategies for all learners, providing all learners with scientific, research-based interventions, continuously measuring student performance using scientifically research-based progress monitoring instruments for all learners and making educational decisions based on a student’s response to interventions.

RtI has three essential components: 1) using a three tier model of school supports, 2) utilizing a problem-solving method for decision-making, and 3) having an integrated data system that informs instruction.

- 1) Three-tier model of school supports: Within an RtI framework, resources are allocated in direct proportion to student needs. This framework is typically depicted as a three-tier model (see Figure 1) that utilizes increasingly more intense instruction and interventions. As Figure 1 shows, Tier 1 is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based core instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum. At Tier 2, supplemental instruction and interventions are provided *in addition to core instruction* to those students for whom data suggest additional instructional support is warranted. Tier 3 consists of intensive instructional interventions provided *in addition to core instruction* with the goal of increasing an individual student’s rate of progress.
- 2) Problem-solving method of decision-making: Across the tiers, the problem solving method is used to match instructional resources to educational need. The problem-solving method (see Figure 2) is as follows:
  - a) Define the problem by determining the discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring.
  - b) Analyze the problem using data to determine why the discrepancy is occurring.
  - c) Establish a student performance goal, develop an intervention plan to address the goal and delineate how the student’s progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be ensured.
  - d) Use progress monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan.
- 3) Integrated data collection that informs instruction: Within an RtI model, progressively more intensive interventions and supports are coupled with more frequent progress monitoring of student achievement in order to guide the educational planning. At Tier 1 data are collected and are used as a general screening process for all students and to determine effectiveness of core instructional practices. At Tier 2 data are collected to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and determine if an instructional change is needed. At Tier 3, data are collected for the same reasons as Tier 2, but are collected on a more frequent basis so that educational decisions can be made in a timelier manner. Data systems used for screening and progress monitoring within an RtI model should be consistent across all three tiers and be scientifically based.

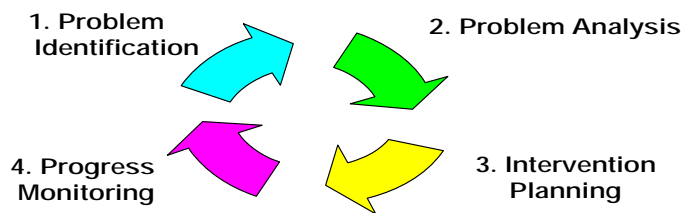
It is important to note that RtI within a three-tier intervention model is also a part of special education eligibility decision-making required by 34 CFR 300.309 and 23 IAC 226.130.

**Figure 1. Three-Tier Model of School Supports**



Adapted from *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation* (Batsche, et al 2005).  
 Note: Percentages are approximations and may vary by district.

**Figure 2. Steps of Problem Solving**



Adapted from *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation* (Batsche, et al. 2005).

**APPENDIX C**

**STATEMENTS OF UNDERSTANDING**

# Statement of Understanding

## Applicant Statement of Understanding & Participation Agreement

(Complete one for each entity participating as a partner in the application.)

Agency/District	_____	ROE #	_____
Administrator	_____	Email	_____
Work Address	_____	Work Phone	_____
		Fax	_____
Work City	_____	State	_____
		Zip	_____
Home Address	_____	Home Phone	_____
Home City	_____	State	_____
		Zip	_____

### As a partner in this application, my agency/district agrees to:

1. Designate individuals who demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities delineated under "External Coach Characteristics" (see below) to be trained and serve as external coaches.
2. Allow the identified individuals to participate in the training provided by I-ASPIRE.
3. Allocate a percentage (e.g., 0.4 Full Time Equivalency (FTE)) of each trained individual's position to provide the training and coaching services delineated under "External Coach Commitments."
4. Allocate funds for the salary corresponding to the external coaching position's FTE.
5. Ensure that the trained External Coach(es) fulfill the "External Coach Commitments."
6. Assist with the coordination of training and coaching services to be delivered by the trained External Coach(es), including assistance with scheduling and location of training for school and district teams.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency/Dist Administrator                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ASPIRE Regional Director                      Date  
(to be signed upon selection of application)

