

ERIA: Effective Reading Interventions Academy

A Pathway Towards RtI²

Program Guide, December 2010

The Effective Reading Interventions Academy (ERIA) delivers training and ongoing coaching to school site teams of teachers and administrators, **helping schools to improve literacy outcomes for their middle and high school students.**

ERIA supports schools in taking the following 5 Steps as an approach to improving instruction and outcomes as they move towards implementing the foundational elements of RtI² (Response to Instruction and Intervention):

- Step 1 **Identify** struggling readers through universal literacy screening early in the school year using statewide English-language Arts test scores.
- Step 2 **Assess** the decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension skills of struggling readers to guide intervention placement and instruction.
- Step 3 **Deliver** interventions to address specific skill needs for success in the core curriculum using evidence-based programs and practices with fidelity.
- Step 4 **Monitor** the progress of struggling students to ensure that interventions are helping students improve and to adjust intervention placements accordingly.
- Step 5 **Improve** content literacy instructional practices to actively and effectively engage all students in the core curriculum.

Implementing ERIA's five steps impacts student learning while introducing the concepts and practices of needs-based, rather than labels-based, intervention and education. Over the course of **three years of training and coaching**, ERIA brings the language, foundational elements, and strategies of RtI² into the school cultures and faculties of middle and high schools.

Ultimately, ERIA practices are assimilated into the professional cultures of the ERIA sites, with the site teams establishing sufficient expertise and structures to continue supporting improved student outcomes through sustained implementation of ERIA practices without ongoing external supports.

Many veteran ERIA sites have made the internal decision to build upon their work in ERIA, leveraging local resources with ERIA's 5 Steps, to pursue districtwide scale-up of these practices or expand them to fully implement RtI² in a manner aligned to the National RTI Center's guidelines (at <http://www.rti4success.org>).

In December 2009, an evaluation of sites implementing ERIA for at least 3 years observed **an average eleven percentage point increase for both all students and students with disabilities** in the percent of students scoring proficient or above on statewide English-language Arts testing.

This document reflects the contributions of content experts and program planners who redesigned and updated ERIA in early 2010. These contributors include:

Kevin Feldman, EdD – Director of Reading and Early Intervention, Sonoma COE

Janet Digmon – SPDG Project Director, Special Education Division, CDE

Anne Davin, PhD – CalSTAT Project Director

Cheryl “Li” Walter, PhD – CalSTAT/SPDG Project Evaluator

Alan Wood – CalSTAT/SPDG Evaluation Analyst

Dee Wood – ERIA Regional Cohort Consultant

This document also draws from the recommendations and resources generated by:

CDE: Response to Instruction & Intervention (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/>)

The National Center on Response to Intervention (<http://www.rti4success.org/>)

Doing What Works website (<http://dww.ed.gov/>)

The Institute of Education Sciences (<http://ies.ed.gov/>)

The What Works Clearinghouse (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>)

The Florida Center for Reading Research (<http://www.fcrr.org/>)

The IRIS Center (<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>)

This document was created for CalSTAT by the SPDG Evaluation Team of Cheryl “Li” Walter, PhD, and Alan Wood.

eria.support@calstat.org | (707) 287-0054

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Visit CalSTAT at <http://www.calstat.org>.

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ERIA: A Pathway Towards RtI²

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ERIA Trainings and Ongoing Coaching Support

Among the supports ERIA sites receive, annual trainings are a central component. ERIA Content Experts deliver training to ERIA Site Teams and other key personnel, providing the skills and technology necessary to implement ERIA's 5 Steps.

The **Two-Days-Plus-One Training** establishes the basics of ERIA. The first two days are with a Content Expert, such as Kevin Feldman, Jan Hasbrouck, et al., who addresses an overview of ERIA and RtI², such as:

- using data to identify struggling readers
- assessing specific reading skills
- delivering specific intervention programs with fidelity
- monitoring student progress
- improving content literacy instructional practices to actively engage all students

The third day is delivered by a different Content Expert who adds to and reinforces this framework. An additional Booster Training is delivered later in the school year to reinforce implementation and address specific challenges Site Teams have encountered.

The **Booster Trainings** are focused on how to build upon ERIA's 5 Steps and to maximize their impact on student outcomes, fleshing out a comprehensive strategy to improve student outcomes after the basic framework has already been moved into place. Additionally, because the booster training makes a Content Expert available to Site Teams which are in the process of implementing ERIA, the booster training can address site-specific challenges and opportunities, such as adding interventions to the core curriculum to address widespread needs or establishing intensive supports for those at greatest risk.

Ongoing Coaching and Support is provided by a Cohort Coach, an accessible resource for sites throughout the year to help Site Teams plan, problem-solve, and support schoolwide implementation. In addition to joining the ERIA Content Expert at primary trainings, the Cohort Coach is funded to visit ERIA sites directly, providing coaching and supporting fidelity of implementation in the classroom.

Data Collection and Monitoring is the crux of ERIA implementation, and none of ERIA's 5 Steps can proceed until a minimal level of data collection and monitoring is established. Schools are supported in this process by the ERIA Site Team, who receive training and coaching support in the use of existing data, making new assessments, and working with that data to inform decision-making and direct resources.

Once data has been collected, the ERIA Site Team will work with the Cohort Coach to establish criteria that directs available resources to support students around their specific needs. Additional support in data collection and monitoring is also delivered in the form of a **data collection stipend** and analysis from ERIA program evaluators.

ERIA: Collaboration and Teamwork

ERIA fosters collaborative relationships: to deliver training and support to schools, in regional and districtwide learning communities, and in schools and classrooms.

The ERIA Site Team

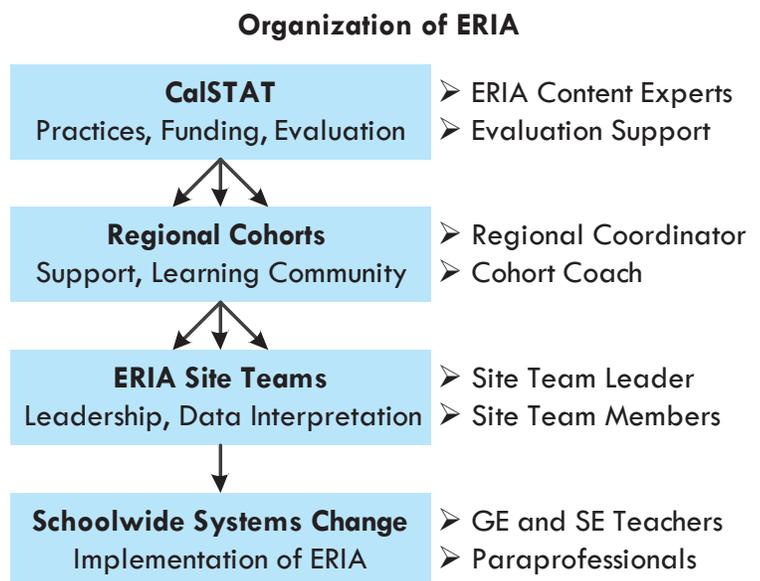
The Site Team motivates and guides implementation of the 5 Steps, communicates practices and processes to the faculty, and collaborates with other educators and stakeholders to direct the use of interventions and enhanced instruction to improve outcomes both for individual students and the school as a whole. Site Team members receive direct content training and ongoing support in this endeavour from external Content Experts and the Cohort Coach.

Because the Site Team is key to ongoing implementation of, not just establishing, ERIA practices, it is essential that new members are actively recruited and supported so they can contribute effectively and develop into leaders. Having attended an ERIA training is not a prerequisite for membership in a Site Team, which benefits from the perspectives and participation of educators from a variety of roles and levels of experience. Developing materials and expertise that allows new members to learn about ERIA practices without external training is key to the sustainability of implementation.

Cascading Structures of Support

In addition to school Site Teams, ERIA establishes support structures at the statewide and regional level, as well. Statewide, CalSTAT provides leadership and funding, contracting with ERIA Content Experts, Regional Coordinators, and Cohort Coaches. In regional cohorts, the Regional Coordinator and Cohort Coach work with school and district personnel to create and sustain a learning community, which supports both implementation and scale-up efforts.

These cascading structures of support follow a model for establishing implementation of best practices that balances limited resources against the challenges to scale-up efforts in a state as large as California. As a special project of the California Department of Education, Special Education Division, CalSTAT has observed many other successes in creating similar structures across the state to support of a variety of goals, including literacy and PBS.



Key Roles in ERIA

- **ERIA Content Experts** present ERIA's 5 Steps to ERIA stakeholders in initial and annual booster trainings and provide additional support throughout the year.
- **ERIA Regional Coordinators** act as a liaison between CalSTAT (the funder of ERIA) and ERIA cohorts, coordinating trainings and evaluation and data collection activities with ERIA sites. The ERIA Regional Coordinator also has a key role in facilitating communication and the distribution of resources.
- **ERIA Cohort Coaches** work with Site Teams and directly at the site level to provide ongoing coaching and direct observations of and supports of implementation with fidelity, as well as supporting the use of student data to guide intervention and instruction. Cohort Coaches have literacy RtI² expertise, participate in all ERIA activities, and are funded by CalSTAT, rather than local districts. They are identified in advance of the first training and recruited locally (preferably internal staff, though this is not a requirement), to help build regional expertise, capacity and sustainability.
- **School District Administrators**, including the superintendent, lead schools in adopting ERIA, organizing resources and motivating school administrators and faculty throughout the district.
- **ERIA Site Team Leaders** are the primary representatives for the Site Teams within the sites and primary contacts for the sites in interactions with CalSTAT, the Regional Coordinators, and the Cohort Coaches. This person is a key motivator at the site and is strongly supported by the principal and other members of the Site Team.
- **ERIA Site Team Members** collaboratively oversee the universal screening process, interpret assessments to understand student needs, and provide guidance to both intervention and core curriculum teachers in instructional practices and fidelity of program implementation. Site Team members will be administrators, general and special education teachers (teaching intervention and core curriculum classes), paraprofessionals, and may include parents.
 - **Administrators** participate in the ERIA Site Team, to ensure that ERIA's 5 Steps can be accomplished (particularly by building them into the master schedule) and facilitate ongoing implementation with fidelity.
 - **Intervention Teachers** implement intervention programs with fidelity. These teachers will receive training in the intervention program and coaching from both the Cohort Coach and Site Team.
 - **Core Curriculum Teachers** may be involved in the ERIA Site Team, identifying struggling readers, and in learning and implementing improved content literacy instructional practices and strategies in the core curriculum.
 - **Paraprofessionals**, in addition to their collaborative role as educators, are often trained in administering screening and assessment tools.

ERIA: A Pathway Towards Needs-Based Intervention and RtI²

ERIA sites deliver needs-based, not labels-based, interventions. Like in RtI², ERIA sites identify students for additional supports based on assessed student needs and do not group students for intervention based on labels or funding category. **ERIA is designed to assist schools in establishing the foundational elements of RtI², without requiring RtI²'s most resource- and time-intensive aspects.**

ERIA's 5 Steps provide a framework to respond to student literacy skill needs through a comprehensive, collaborative, data-informed process. This is an effective, evidence-based approach to improving the outcomes of students receiving general and special education services, as well as for English-language learners. Research on similar programs demonstrates that:

- Students with disabilities benefit considerably when structures exist to serve their needs within the general education curriculum.
- Implementation of RtI² reduces the disproportionate representation of certain groups of students identified as needing special education services.

While ERIA has been implemented in California since 2004, the 2010-11 school year debuts a revision of ERIA which reflects best practices as they are recognized today, **with a particular focus on establishing these practices in middle schools and high schools.**

Taking the First 5 Steps Along the Pathway Towards RtI²

ERIA is an ongoing, five step process that addresses the needs of struggling readers and creates a pathway of foundational practices to support more-advanced implementation:

- Step 1: **Identify** struggling students through CST ELA or CELDT scores.
- Step 2: **Assess** specific student needs.
- Step 3: **Deliver** interventions to address specific needs.
- Step 4: **Monitor** student progress to adjust instruction and intervention as needed.
- Step 5: **Improve** content literacy instructional practices to engage all students.

As sites establish implementation of ERIA over the three years of support they receive from CalSTAT, each site will identify opportunities and resources which are unique to their school, as well as challenges which may impact delivery of some of ERIA's 5 Steps. ERIA accommodates these realities by giving the ERIA Site Team the initiative and autonomy to make decisions and adapt how they implement the 5 Steps to maximize outcomes in a way that is effective for their own school and district.

Many of the following descriptions of the 5 Steps provide basic and advanced implementation options. Sites are encouraged to develop each element towards advanced ERIA implementation, and eventually RtI², over time.

Step 1: Identify struggling readers through universal literacy screening early in the school year using statewide English-language Arts test scores.

Struggling readers may have underlying skill needs which, once assessed, can be addressed within an intervention program. The previous year’s CST English-language Arts scores are referenced for each student (or CELDT score) to determine if he or she should be referred for further assessment.

While all students may have specific needs which could be detected through assessment, **Site Teams make the decision about which students to further assess based upon available resources.**

Step 1: Identify		
CST ELA/ CELDT Score	Proficiency Level	Next Step
299 or less	Below Basic and Far Below Basic	Definitely refer for further assessment
300 to 349	Basic	Refer for assessment if resources are available
350 & above	Proficient or Above	Refer for assessment in schoolwide implementation

CST or CELDT (for English-language learners) proficiency levels are the primary means of identifying at struggling readers. Proficiency levels, generated for all students during STAR testing, are provided by CDE as a scaled score between 150 and 600. A score of 350 or above is defined as “Proficient” or “Advanced,” and scores below 350 are less than proficient. Federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Program Improvement (PI) determinations are based on the percentage of students scoring 350 or above.

Students with scores less than “Proficient” (less than 350) have underlying skill needs, and the next question is to use a further assessment to find out which skills need to be further developed through intervention.

Students who are Below Basic or Far Below Basic will definitely need interventions to reach grade-level ELA proficiency, and should all be referred for further assessment.

Students who are Basic may be given effective supports within the core curriculum alone, though sites are strongly encouraged to refer these students for testing as well. Often, as schools increase the number of staff and volunteers who are trained to give assessments, Site Teams will be able to increase the number of students who are referred for assessment, and should be able to meet this standard in Year 3 of ERIA.

In a full RtI² model, all students are referred for skills assessment. Even for students Proficient and Above, frequent and timely assessment may identify skill needs which can impact outcomes over the course of the school year.

Step 2: Assess the decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension skills of struggling readers to guide intervention placement and instruction.

All identified struggling readers are given an **oral reading fluency (ORF)** assessment to detect whether they have a fluency or decoding word-level skill need. Based on testing, a determination of student needs is made. **Interpreting assessment data is a collaborative process, integrating the Site Team and, when available, input from teachers, parents, and even the student.**

Oral Reading Fluency Assessment

Reading fluency is a student’s ability to read accurately and quickly, a function of word-level reading skills, and is assessed through an ORF assessment. Commonly, schools implementing ERIA will form an “assessment team” of 3-4 people who can make ORF assessments during brief classroom pull-outs without a substantial interruption of classes. This method can reliably assess around 150 students per week.

Working one-on-one with a teacher, paraprofessional, or parent volunteer, students read three different grade-level passages (or 8th grade passages for high school students), each for one minute. The person administering the test makes notes about how many errors were made, how many words were read correctly (WCPM or Words Correct Per Minute), and other notes.

- A struggling reader who completes ORF passages **slowly and/or with multiple errors has a fluency need, and may have an underlying decoding need as well.**
- A struggling reader who completes ORF passages **quickly with few errors may have mastered fluency, but is likely to have comprehension skill needs.**

Three examples of evidence-based ORF assessments are:

- *AIMSweb*
- *Read Naturally Fluency Monitor*
- *DIBELS* is a K-6 assessment (not appropriate for middle or high school students)

Step 2: Assess

ORF Test Outcome Errors	Median WCPM	Determination of Specific Skill Needs	Additional Assessment (if resources are available)
More than 3	Less than 70	Definitely a word-level need (fluency or decoding needs)	Determine decoding or fluency need with a decoding assessment
Fewer than 2	70 to 120	Maybe a decoding need Probably a fluency need	Gather more data: assess for decoding and/or comprehension skills
Fewer than 2	More than 120	Comprehension needs only	Determine comprehension level with a comprehension assessment

(This table presents broad guidelines for conducting and interpreting assessments.)

Using ORF assessments with all students identified as struggling readers provides a substantive basis for guiding the delivery of interventions to specific skill needs, both for struggling readers with and without a word-level skill need. However, schools with more resources may improve outcomes by making additional assessments, to target interventions more precisely to student needs.

It is strongly recommended that schools with sufficient resources conduct a second round of assessments using a new set of tools to further refine understanding of each student's specific needs. Using the ORF assessment as a guide, struggling readers with a word-level need should receive a decoding assessment, and those without a word-level need should receive a comprehension assessment.

Decoding Assessments

If a struggling reader does have a word-level need and resources are available, an additional decoding assessment can determine whether they need decoding supports or if a fluency-only intervention would be more appropriate.

Decoding is a student's ability to decipher words and sentences. Students who make many reading errors on a fluency assessment or struggle to decode polysyllabic words are especially likely to have a decoding need.

Ruling out a decoding skill need allows intervention to focus on fluency specifically. Meanwhile, discovering a significant decoding skill need may indicate a need for more intensive, individualized intervention.

Three examples of evidence-based decoding assessments are:

- *CORE*
- *Quick Phonics Screener*
- *BPST (Basic Phonics Skills Test)*

Comprehension Assessments

Those who are identified as struggling readers, but for whom a word-level skill need has been ruled out by an oral reading fluency test, will still benefit from intervention. If resources are available, a comprehension assessment can determine comprehension level, to more-effectively direct delivery of comprehension interventions.

Comprehension is a student's ability to extract useful knowledge from a text and integrates all the elements of the reading process. Even without additional assessments, low CST ELA/CELDT scores suggest a comprehension need which can be addressed directly, once any potential underlying word-level needs have been resolved.

Three examples of evidence-based comprehension assessments are:

- *MAZE* (most affordable, includes pencil-and-paper option)
- *Accelerated Reader's STAR*
- *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (most costly, linked most-directly to CST ELA)

Step 3: Deliver interventions to address specific skill needs for success in the core curriculum using evidence-based programs and practices with fidelity.

Sites implementing ERIA **deliver specific interventions** to struggling readers based on their assessed needs. Students receiving interventions continue to participate in the core literacy curriculum. Interventions are delivered as an additional service, most commonly through classes within the master schedule or after-school programs.

Individual schools identify and obtain appropriate evidence-based intervention programs based upon the assessed needs of students at their school. Examples of evidence-based intervention programs designed to address specific skill needs are provided below, though sites may implement any evidence-based intervention which has been vetted by the What Works Clearinghouse (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>) or Florida Center for Reading Research (<http://www.fcrr.org/>). Sites receive training, coaching, and other support from the ERIA Content Experts and Cohort Coaches in implementing intervention programs with fidelity.

Step 3: Deliver		
	Assessed Student Needs	Examples of Intervention Programs
Key Intervention ➔	Decoding/Fluency (word-level skill needs)	REWARDS
	Fluency (not decoding)	Read Naturally
	Comprehension (not decoding/fluency)	REWARDS Plus

Decoding/Fluency Intervention

Many evidence-based intervention programs exist for students assessed with word-level skill needs, which may include fluency and/or decoding skill needs. These programs are useful in meeting the intervention needs of students with a variety of skill levels. Some examples of evidence-based decoding/fluency interventions include:

- *REWARDS*
- *Lexia*
- *SIPPS*
- *Corrective Reading*

Fluency Interventions

These intervention programs are suitable for students with fluency needs in cases where decoding needs have been ruled out with additional assessment. Two examples of evidence-based fluency interventions include:

- *Read Naturally*
- *Six-Minute Solution*

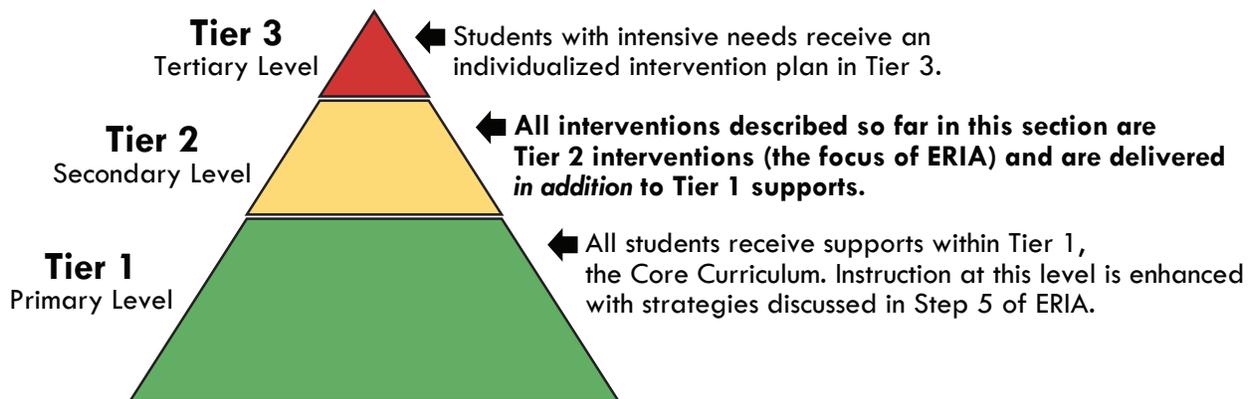
Comprehension and Vocabulary Interventions

Students with a scaled CST or CELDT score of less than Proficient, but who aren't assessed with a word-level skill need, have comprehension and/or academic vocabulary skill needs which can be addressed with a comprehension intervention. Some schools build these interventions into the core curriculum to address schoolwide comprehension needs, if they exist. Three examples of evidence-based comprehension interventions include:

- *REWARDS Plus*
- *Soar to Success*
- *Collaborative Strategic Reading*

Multi-tiered Intervention Models

Many sites deliver interventions within a multi-tiered framework, much like RtI². In a three-tier model, all students participate in the core curriculum, **Tier 1**. Students with moderate needs also receive **Tier 2** supports (the focus of ERIA), which may include the needs-matched intervention programs described in the above table. Students with the most intensive needs receive individualized, **Tier 3** supports.



To learn more about multi-tiered interventions, browse the National Center on Response to Intervention library, online at <http://www.rti4success.org/>.

Interventions for Students with Intensive Needs

ERIA sites are encouraged to consider delivering individualized, Tier 3 interventions for students who are (1) in the “Far Below Basic” range on CST/CELDT tests and (2) have substantial word-level needs, reading fewer than 70 words correct per minute in fluency assessments. Two examples of evidence-based intervention programs which are appropriate for students with intensive needs include:

- *Read 180*
- *Language!*

Step 4: Monitor the progress of struggling students to ensure that interventions are helping students improve and to adjust intervention placements accordingly.

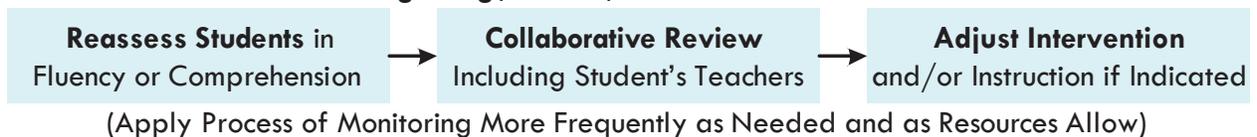
Monitoring student progress is a process of assessment and collaborative review, followed by a change in student placements and/or instruction if one is warranted.

In ERIA, assessment and monitoring happen at least three times per year, at the beginning of school and again at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters.

Monitoring student progress starts with the collection of new data through reassessment, discussion of the data with teacher input, and a determination of whether the student is properly situated, needs additional supports, or is ready to exit intervention.

Step 4: Monitor

At the **Beginning, Middle, and End** of the School Year



Progress monitoring estimates rates of improvement, identifies whether students are or are not demonstrating adequate progress, and considers different strategies and intervention programs to guide delivery of more effective, individualized instruction. **All students who are receiving interventions are assessed with either a fluency or comprehension assessment regularly.** Data is charted and used with pre-established targets to determine if individual students are responding to intervention.

The Site Team should consider any changes in student instruction and intervention through a collaborative process informed by re-assessment data. The guidelines and criteria for initial placement used in Step 2 should be considered, and the judgment of the students' intervention and core curriculum teachers, as well as parents and the student when appropriate, should play a large role in making this determination.

Progress Monitoring in RtI²

In fully implemented RtI², monitoring happens at least monthly, and some ERIA schools have found weekly reassessment to be relatively easy and quite helpful once a robust and computerized assessment infrastructure has been established.

ERIA requires a 3 times per year monitoring schedule that is intentionally less rigorous than the comprehensive progress monitoring of RtI². However, ERIA sites are encouraged to expand their progress monitoring schedule throughout the year as well as constantly monitoring student progress through the curriculum-based measures that are embedded in the intervention program being used. All of these progress monitoring events present an opportunity to reevaluate intervention and/or strategies as needed to improve student outcomes.

Step 5: Improve content literacy instructional practices to actively and effectively engage all students in the core curriculum.

Improving instructional practices and student engagement is an ongoing aspect of ERIA, both in the core curriculum and in interventions. Student success across the core curriculum depends on mastering reading comprehension, a goal which can be best served through schoolwide use of best practices and improved instructional methods.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) conducted a research synthesis resulting in five recommendations presented in the practice guide, *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*, which are supported by ERIA. The guide can be downloaded for free from the IES website, at <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=WWC20084027>.

Step 5: Improve

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES)'s 5 Recommendations For Improving Adolescent Literacy

1. Provide **explicit vocabulary** instruction.
2. Provide **direct and explicit comprehension strategy** instruction.
3. Provide opportunities for extended discussion of **text meaning and interpretation**.
4. Increase **student motivation and engagement** in literacy learning.
5. Make available **intensive and individualized interventions** for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.

All five of IES's recommendations are supported by ERIA, building these strategies into all ERIA trainings and emphasizing their importance for participating stakeholders at all levels. While early ERIA trainings focus mainly on establishing a schoolwide framework (screening, assessment, intervention and monitoring), strategies to enhance instruction become an increasingly important part of ERIA trainings in the second and third years.

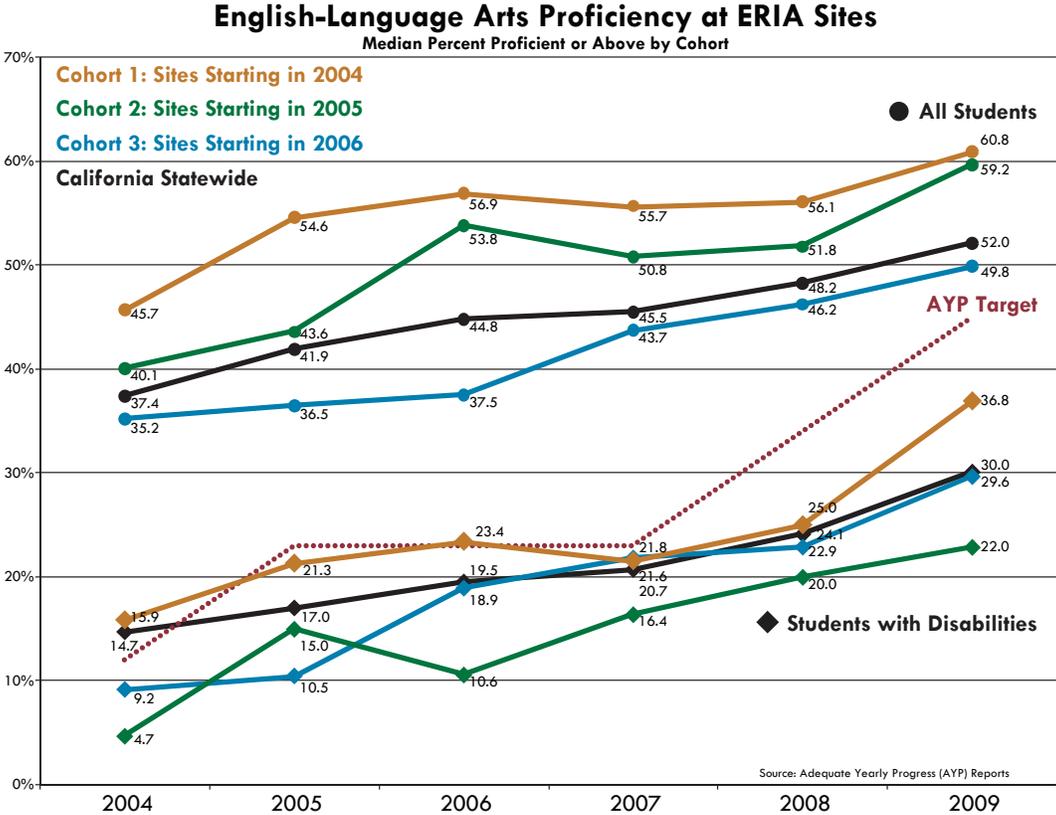
Improved Practices Supported by Training, and In-Class Coaching

Teachers and paraprofessionals, teaching both in the core curriculum and in intervention programs, receive coaching and support throughout the year from the ERIA Site Team and Cohort Coach, in addition to traditional support personnel already in place. These people work with teachers to suggest and guide the use of strategies by educators, enhancing instruction and improving outcomes.

Personnel in these roles can also make direct observations of fidelity of implementation in the school and classroom, a coaching strategy which has been identified as key to achieving successful replication of evidence-based best practices and processes.

Increasing ELA Proficiency at ERIA Sites

Since 2004, CalSTAT has funded training and other supports to assist over 60 sites in implementing ERIA at 23 school districts in 8 counties. In that time, ERIA sites have seen collaboration, the use of interventions, and enhanced instruction help many struggling readers develop English-language Arts (ELA) proficiency. In the chart below, notice the big leap made by each cohort in the year following their start in ERIA.



Follow-up surveys and site interviews have been conducted with educators who have attended ERIA trainings, Some of those educators’ comments include the following:

- “It has improved all of our small group lessons”*
- “Money is always helpful... [B]ut, many of the things that make a program like this work can be done without money, just using current resources.”*
- “We have newer teachers on campus... they can hit the ball out of the park.”*
- “Due to ERIA’s support, our school was selected to be a site model for the county department of education’s RtI Network. We shared how much the support of ERIA and the systems support helped us make huge gains in our RtI journey.”*
- “It’s been so drastic that [parents] noticed it and even have made a point to say, ‘Thank you so much for helping them.’ And the students themselves see that they are growing.”*

ERIA’s pathway towards RtI² offers supports and tangible, practical steps schools can take to foster increased ELA proficiency among all of their students.