

Gentry Intermediate School's Response to Intervention (RTI) Program

The mission of the Gentry Intermediate School is to work in partnership with students, parents, and the community to establish a strong foundation for life-long learning in literacy and math by providing a safe, nurturing, child-centered environment. As we foster intellectual growth, we will contribute to the character and physical development of each student.

That is a fancy way of saying we will work together to educate your child so that they may continue to learn and achieve academically, emotionally and physically throughout their life. If you were to count all of the years of experience we have together as educators there would be several hundred years and thousands of students. All of that experience has taught us that every child can and will learn, but not necessarily the same way or at the same rate. When I was a teacher in the classroom we had a certain amount of curriculum we had to cover each year just as teachers do today. If a child didn't understand what was being taught I would take a few minutes to go back over (re-teach) whatever it was he or she didn't understand. If the student still didn't get it, well it was really too bad, because we had to move on to the next thing. As you might imagine, that really doesn't work for many kids. The children who need more time to learn and practice, end up further and further behind and eventually end up failing.

To prevent that from happening, so no child is left behind, Gentry Intermediate School has a Response to Intervention (RTI) program designed to give students the extra instruction and time they need to be successful learners. RTI is three levels, or as we call them "tiers of intervention of instruction" to help every child achieve in literacy and math.

Tier 1 is in the regular classroom with the students' regular classroom teacher taking the time to re-teach concepts individually or in small groups of students as needed.

Tier 2 is a 45 minute period of time each day in which students that need additional help are in a small group of students with their classroom teacher. Some grade levels are using this Tier 2 time to co-teach or team-teach. Generally, this includes your child's teacher and at least one other, sometimes two other classroom teachers. One teacher will provide a mini-lesson with instruction in a particular concept. Then each teacher will sit down with a small group of students to reinforce that concept yet again and be certain everyone understands. This is called Team-teaching and it is very effective because another teacher

may say or teach just a little differently and suddenly the student gets it. Teachers are monitoring each child's progress continuously. If the student appears to be catching up to grade level, they are moved out of Tier 2 so another student has a place for help. If the student does not make sufficient progress they may be assigned to Tier 3.

Tier 3 is another level of intervention which takes place in the same 45 minutes as Tier 2. If your child is in Tier 3, he or she would receive instruction from a trained academic intervention teacher. Again that teacher monitors the students' progress continuously to determine if the extra instruction is effective.

Encore. Students who do not require the extra instructional assistance go to Encore each day while other students are in Tier 2 or Tier 3 or Quest. Students in Encore go to the Specials Teachers (Art, Music, P.E., Library, Computer Lab) for higher level thinking skills or in the case of library, extra time to read.

So you may be thinking, "I wonder who decides where my child goes during RTI?" We have a School-Based Intervention Team, (SBIT) made up of the principal, counselor, two of our intervention teachers and our ESL teacher with many, many years of experience. This team meets weekly to review where students are, who needs more help, etc. Classroom teachers make referrals to the team when they recognize a student is struggling for one reason or another.

Every child that was not proficient on the Benchmark test last year will have an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) which means they too will be assigned to at least 9 weeks of Tier 2 assistance during the school year. Teachers are also giving interim assessment this year provided by The Learning Institute. These are designed to help the teacher determine exactly what the student has learned and where they may need additional instruction. It is from these formative assessments that the teachers know what needs to be taught in Tier 2 and Tier 3.

It all amounts to this, all year we are asking ourselves these questions: What is the student learning? How do I know? If the student is not learning, what will we do about it?

Here is my commitment to you and your child:
"Whatever it takes, our kids are worth it!" No one leaves GIS without knowing we care and have done everything we can to support his or her learning.