

## The Leader's Role in RTI Implementation

March 28, 2012 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

### About this Talk

THE TALK IS CONCLUDED.

SCROLL BELOW FOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

**Please take a few moments at the completion of this event to give us your feedback by taking our [survey](#)!**

The leader's role is key in supporting the development of a school culture that promotes the collaboration and problem solving necessary for any RTI initiative. While passion is an important component, an effective leader must have a range of strategies in order to initiate and sustain change over time.

Join Albert DuPont as he answers your questions about building consensus in the face of resistance to change, encouraging active participation, and determining when it is necessary to establish non-negotiables that everyone must follow. Dr. DuPont will also offer tips and strategies for leading change initiatives based on his experiences implementing RTI in elementary schools.

Read more about [Albert DuPont](#).

---

### Transcript

**Q Nancy Dutot**

Much of the RTI research has been done at the elementary level. What are some additional tips and strategies for leading change initiatives, i.e., RTI, at the middle school level where many of the secondary-trained staff members do not have the initial skill set for teaching reading/comprehension strategies?

**A Albert DuPont**

There are a couple of advantages to the secondary school's implementation. One thing is the amount of data you have on the student, including information dating back to kindergarten. A high school student's file is data rich. However, above all else, good first teaching is critical. This is where the school staff needs to focus on the core curriculum. I would recommend working with your leadership team to develop a comprehensive plan for having teachers use reading strategies in all subjects. This will take lots of professional development for everyone. A strong professional development plan will provide teachers with the skills they need to be effective. You may want to consider working with one team versus the whole school to start. For example, you can support your social studies department teachers and provide them training first. Social studies and reading are wonderful places to start integrating. Once this team starts to be successful you can focus on a new team like the science department. You can also start with a grade level and work your way up.

**Q Peg Higgins**

How can the leader maintain and encourage teachers who are resistant?

**A Albert DuPont**

Peg, This is one of the more difficult issues to conquer. It is also multi-faceted. It is also an issue about one's leadership style. There are quite a number of strategies I use to deal with resistance. First, be sure that everyone is part of the process from the very beginning. Staff should have a chance to participate in the designing the plan for implementing RTI in the building. I have found that if people participate in the process and help develop the systems, then they tend to be more supportive and less resistant. Another strategy I use is to have the resisting teacher as part of the RTI leadership team. Having them involved at that level allows them to air their concern in a different venue. It is good to have a nice cross-section of the school on the leadership team. You want people who support the goals and do not support the goals. I promise that a better product will be developed as a result. But beware - you need an excellent facilitator at the meetings so that no one person - negative or positive - monopolizes the conversation. Another strategy I use is to confer with the teacher. Listen to him or her and find out what is it that they are resisting. In my experience, people are usually fearful of losing something or being unsuccessful. Maybe it is planning time. Maybe it is independence. Maybe it is the fear that they will look incompetent. All of those issue are legitimate and need to be dealt with individually. Celebrating successes is always a great strategy. Show people that what they are doing is making a difference. This will help resisting teachers see that maybe there is another way of doing business in the school. Also, let other teachers present and not just the principal or RTI coordinator. Teachers tend to treat other teachers presenting a little more gently. Lastly, I have one recommendation that should be used when other strategies have not been successful. The supervisor of the teacher (usually the principal) must sit down with the teacher and deal directly with the issue. This is extremely important if the teacher is effecting the morale of the other staff members.

**Q Geneva M Oatman**

I am new to this district and have observed that we have "lots of stuff," but don't seem to have identified the range of strategies to sustain change over time. Each district is left to develop on their own. Are there any states or districts that have done well in this area and do they have anything that can be shared with others struggling to bring about change in this area?

**A Albert DuPont**

Geneva, When I started at two different schools, I had the same situation. So here is what I did, I held a meeting where I gave a detailed overview of RTI. We focused on two main areas - interventions and assessments. We had chart paper on the walls and asked staff to go around and list all the academic and behavior interventions by tier that we had in the school. It did not matter if their thoughts were right or wrong. We just wanted them to do a brain dump. After we listed all of the interventions, we listed all of the assessments (CBMs and CBAs) that we used in building by grade level. After the staff meeting, the RTI leadership team created a triangle with all of the

**A** interventions and a comprehensive list of assessments. We played with the triangle a long time before we got it to a place we liked. We moved interventions into different tiers. We added some where we saw gaps. We took away things that were not needed. By the end, we had our own triangle. The staff also began to see RTI as a part of what they did and not as an add on. RTI is best when it is based on what the staff is already doing. I recommend that you start with what you have and grow from there.

**Q** **Beverly Weiser**

What strategies do you recommend to get teachers to actively participate in RTI on a daily basis?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Beverly, That is a great question. Getting teachers actively involved in RTI daily is critical to the success of the students. The first thing I would recommend is to take a look at the culture in the school. Do staff members see themselves as belonging to a professional learning community (PLC) in the school? If not, you may want to take a closer look at the PLC research and see how you can begin to develop one throughout the school. Once you start to develop the mission and vision in the school, then comes to fun part - developing the systems to align to RTI. Much of the research I did for developing a PLC came from the work of Rick Dufour and his team. Regarding the processes in the school, I would recommend looking at how time is spent in the school. One of the first things I did with my RTI building team was to analyze how time was being used. How many staff meetings a month? How many weekly meetings? How much planning time for individuals and teams? How often did the teachers meet for professional development (PD)? Once we did that, we began to see how we could incorporate conversations regarding RTI (e.g., data chats, PD, individual student problem solving meetings, etc.). We developed a PD plan to use the maximum amount of time for our RTI conversations. We have lots of time, it is how we view that time and use it that makes the difference for student achievement. Another strategy we used was to develop a team meeting format that supported the RTI conversation. The format asked teachers to pick an assessment, analyze the data, and distinguish upgrades to the teaching and learning that occurred in their classrooms. This reinvented process kept teachers focused and accountable to the conversations regarding student achievement. We spent a great deal of time modeling and coaching teachers to reframe their thinking and focusing on the teaching process. Lastly, I would recommend that the "position" leaders in the building begin to change the questions they are asking teachers. Work with your leadership team to brainstorm the critical questions they should be asking of teachers to focus their instruction. Teachers will get used to answering the questions and begin asking the questions themselves.

**Q** **Vicki Hartsell**

As a leader how do you make teachers aware of the importance of "structured" RTI time?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Vicki, This is where the non-negotiables start. Be clear on what the expectations are and hold them

**A** to it. You should also provide teachers support so they are successful. At the beginning of our journey, I assigned a coach to each team to ensure that the meetings were occurring. The coaches and I debriefed every week. It was extremely successful. Once the results started to show gains, the teachers bought into it even more. They saw the benefits and wanted to do it. They have to see it to believe it!

**Q** **Elizabeth Deserly**

How do you address a teacher who completes the universal screening tools (e.g. DIBELS) but chooses not to use the data for any interventions, but then would like to refer students for a special education referral? Even with repeated explanation of the importance of the data and how she can use it, there is no buy in on her behalf. I was told that the DIBELS doesn't relate to how she assesses her students for quarterly grades, so that she finds it useless (the case in point is a Kindergarten level teacher). The report card grades then are not congruent with the data that DIBELS and our other resources have shown for certain students. Any feedback would be appreciated. Thank you.

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Based on what you are saying, it sounds like the teacher does not understand how the DIBELS data relates to other skills. It is possible that the teacher is missing some of the bigger picture. You might have to be explicit with her and show her how scoring well on the foundation skills relate to the quarterly grade. I can promise you that they do relate. I am sure you see it, but does she? This is also where the non-negotiables come in. Does the school have structure times when this data is analyzed by teams? This was a critical process I used in my schools to analyze the progress monitoring data. Each time we analyzed the data we created action plans for teachers (e.g., try intervention "x" in the classroom with these students). The next staff meeting teachers would have to come back and share the results. We developed a capture sheet for the teachers so that they could tell us what they did differently in their classroom. As the principal, I read that information and monitored the implementation as I did my daily observations.

**Q** **Christine Randall**

We have just started an RTI book club in my elementary school. So far, the biggest resistance to the implementation is finding a quality list of research-based interventions or strategies that are free or inexpensive. Can you provide guidance as to best to respond to their inquiry?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

The first place I send people is the [What Works Clearinghouse](#). This website provides information on interventions and their effectiveness. It is a great place to start. However, not all of these interventions are free or inexpensive. I would also recommend leveraging the support of your school psychologist. They are trained to develop interventions for students. In my experience, they are the experts regarding a well-designed intervention. Lastly, search the Internet. There is a ton out there. Buy books with different strategies in them. This is a big help when it comes to the core

**A** curriculum implementation.

**Q** **Kathy Morris**

How, as a leader, can I shift some of the responsibility of using the RtI process to the classroom teacher without making them think of it as "one more thing to do"?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Kathy, The way we did it was to clearly define the process and the triangle. When we first developed our school-based triangle, we looked at the list of interventions. We said that Tier 1 interventions would be the responsibility of the classroom teacher and grade level team. After the grade level felt that it had successfully implemented the interventions for a period of time (6-8 weeks or more), then they could recommend that the RTI building team consider taking on the case. The RTI building team would review the intervention plan and data from the grade level team and decide if there was sufficient information to have the student receive Tier 2 services. If not, the building team would send the case back to the grade level team with recommendations. The student would not go further in the process until the teacher and grade level team did what they needed to do. We also assigned grade level coaches to the team to monitor the progress of the intervention plan. Additionally, we had to develop the teachers' skills regarding classroom-based interventions. We developed their abilities and knowledge of different strategies that they could try in the classroom. This was our focus on the core curriculum. When teachers saw how easy it was to provide interventions to students, they started to see it as something manageable that they could do.

**Q** **Ellie Boyd**

When you are working to build consensus, what are some of the things that warrant being declared "non-negotiable"? And do you announce that those things are predetermined right from the outset or once resistance becomes clear?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Ellie, One of the major non-negotiables for me was that teachers had to be prepared with comprehensive data at each meeting. I announced that was a non-negotiable expectation after I realized that teachers were not bringing data to the meeting that helped make good decisions. However, as part of the expectation, we also provided support to the teachers to meet the expectation. The RTI leadership team created a data worksheet that teachers would complete prior to the meeting. The data worksheet was inclusive of every data point possible. I would recommend that the leadership team meet and decide on what the non-negotiables are. Once those are decided you should develop supports for teachers to meet those expectations. For example, my RTI leadership team and I recommended that all teams meet once a week to discuss data. As a support, each team was assigned a RTI coach to help them through the process and an agenda template to guide their discussions. Additionally, as the supervisor, I attended those meetings and provided informal feedback to individuals and the team.

**Q** *Mary Ann Hartwick*

How can I show teachers the benefits of RTI when they are frustrated with the student's lack of progress and "just want them tested"?

**A** *Albert DuPont*

Mary Ann, As a leader, you will have to start to examine the culture of the school. Often times a teacher just wants her students tested because she is feeling unsuccessful. How do teachers feel when they seek support for someone? Do they feel supported? Teachers really do want students to be successful. You need to begin to work with the teacher to get them to understand that there is nothing magic about the testing process. Yes, it does give us good information about a student; however, it still does not make a difference. What makes a difference is being taught by a great teacher. We need to use the problem-solving process when a student is not being successful. Are there built-in checkpoints during the implementation process? Did the teacher have buy-in into the plan? Was the teacher heard during the problem-solving process? Begin to view a teacher's cry for testing as a request for help. If the teacher feels unsuccessful, so does the student. I also recommending celebrating successes as much as possible for the teacher right now. Big successes and small successes. Begin to have teachers focus on what is going well rather than what is not going well. Begin to make realistic goals as well. Goals that the student will be able to make and where everyone including student will feel successful. I also think that developing a culture of early identification at the youngest ages is best. If we intervene as early as possible, the success rate for students later will be much higher.

**Q** *Joe (pseudonym b/c our administrators my also be on this webinar)*

Opinions or guidance regarding the goals and resources for a school where less than 70% are reading at state standards? Specifically in this situation, energy and resources often are (and should be to some extent) geared towards bringing up "bubble" state testing students (20-40th %ile) and not necessarily the students needing the most intensive support (less than 20th%).

**A** *Albert DuPont*

From my experience, focusing on the "bubble kids" does not work. It actually has a negative impact on the whole school. I would begin to look at the whole school program, specifically the core curriculum. If you really focus on beefing up the core curriculum, you can have a greater impact on all students even students who need to be accelerated and enriched. If people still feel strong about focusing on the bubble, maybe you can have an after-school program for select students who--based on the data--need that little extra support. Additionally, teachers might be able to provide some small support to students directly in the classroom who need the extra boost.

**Q** *Jo Benns-Scott*

Special Education has always been run as its own entity within most school districts; now that RTI is expanding and being implemented in school districts, how has this affected special education

**Q** leadership, in as far as your knowledge and experience?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

For me, special education and general education staff have had to open the doors and join forces. The walls have been broken down and everyone is now at the table. I think one of the greatest benefits to the general educators is the knowledge of the special educators. They are quite skilled in meeting the individual needs of students. They have a wealth of strategies. I have also seen the opposite. The general educators are now teaching the special educators about how the curriculum works and what standards have to be mastered. The bottom line is that now people have to work together like they never did before. The lines are getting blurred. People now have to focus on the child and not the label of identification.

**Q** **Jane Brooks, Ed.D.**

I am the designated leader of the RTI team in our building. However, finding a time to meet is becoming a huge problem in our middle school. Due to union issues and a 6 period day, we have been unable to complete our lists of interventions. Any suggestions?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Jane, The first step is for you and your leadership team to do a time analysis. Begin by listing all the possible times that your staff has (e.g., before school, after school, sub time, team meetings, planning time, etc.). After you have listed all the time they have, start to negotiate how that time should be used. How much time for individual planning? How much time for administrative? How much time for professional development? How much time will be used for data chats? Be creative. You will have to use your best negotiation skills for this task. Another way is to have your RTI leadership team complete the list of interventions and then seek feedback from staff. Be up front that you will be developing the plan then seeking feedback. Offer anyone who would like to help the chance to participate. You can only provide them the option - it is up to them to take you up on your offer.

**Q** **Bev Collom**

What is the first step a school needs to take to implement RTI or what is the key component to RTI that needs to be in place first?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

The first step is to determine readiness in the school. This can be done using a needs assessment. When I first started, I developed a needs assessment using the [RTI Blueprints for Implementation: School Building Level](#) resource from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. This blueprint provided my leadership team with the essential components for implementation. It also helped us to create an action plan and first steps for training and developing staff. As a result of the data, we developed an action plan that involved training and developing staff and parents and creating processes to support RTI implementation. I recommend guiding staff through an

**A** exercise where they take a look at what they are currently doing to support the RTI process. You will be amazed at how much you are currently doing to support the process. This will ensure that they do not see it as an add-on, but an alignment to what they are doing.

**Q** **Allison Stanley**

How would a private school implement an RTI initiative? Do you know of private schools in the U.S. that use an RTI model?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Allison, There is no difference. The process would remain the same. There is one private, pre-school program in Washington, DC called AppleTree Institute. A couple of staff members from AppleTree did the last RTI Talk on implementing RTI into a preschool program. I would recommend reading through that RTI Talk. You will see that there is no difference.

**Q** **June Lucas Zillich**

As a leader for effective change, specifically addressing RTI variables, who do you need with you at the table? Whom do you surround yourself with? Do you see the school psychologist as an important member of your team and how do you see their role?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

June, my simple answer - EVERYONE! When planning meetings for individual students, I always expect that anyone with intimate knowledge of the child be at the meeting. This includes (but not limited to) the parent, classroom teacher, counselor, ESL teacher, administrator, etc. There are also other people that I highly recommend attend meetings. They may not have intimate knowledge of the student, but they can provide invaluable insights and strategies for the team to use in developing a well-designed intervention plan. Some of these people are psychologists, special educators, speech pathologists, social workers, etc. These people provide critical consultative services that help a team view the issues from multiple perspectives. They also can provide other services including observations or direct support on the intervention plan. In my opinion, they are some of the best diagnosticians. When holding school leadership team meetings, I recommend the same group of people. You need to have as many perspectives in those conversations as possible. Take care to invite your best thinkers to the table. I also always invite the "resisters" to the meetings. They will help you develop a better system.

**Q** **Rebecca**

How do you work with a teacher who doesn't think they need to make any changes (i.e. blames the student, blames the administrator, etc.)?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Rebecca, This is a difficult challenge. Changing someone's belief system is always a challenge. I



**A** think what is important here is that the principal or direct supervisor take an active role in supervising and observing that teacher. As a principal, I would use a directive leadership style with that person. The behaviors usually do not change in my experience unless that person is held accountable. There is also a strategy of using peer pressure. You can consider placing that person on a team where she is outnumbered by those that are positive and believe that they can make a difference. The final thing I would recommend is to take a look at the research on teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy occurs when a teacher truly believes that she can make a difference in a student's achievement. It sounds like this teacher has low efficacy. There is a ton of research on this issue.

**Q** **Nicole Bucka**

I am a consultant for the state who provides technical assistance to schools/districts. My question is: How do you suggest a provider handle a leader that won't "step up" (e.g. Won't declare non-negotiables; Won't hold people accountable; Keeps making system excuses like we can't because \_\_\_\_\_ [union, contracts, money, scheduling, etc])?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Nicole, The buy-in of the principal and others in leadership positions is critical. But you already knew that. You will not be able to do much in my opinion. I would recommend having an open conversation with the principal and district leaders and let them know why RTI won't work. Without their support, you will get no where. You need to find out what the issues are. If they did not buy in from the beginning, then you might be spinning your wheels. If you can get no where, have an honest conversation with yourself about where you can help. Start to focus on the areas you have control - maybe it is with a team or even a single teacher. Start there. Let the momentum build. After they start to see the results you may start to get them on board. Another idea is to take a look at the components of RTI (e.g., progress monitoring, fidelity of implementation, parent involvement) and decide if you can take just one of the components and make a difference. You do not need to do everything immediately. Picking one of the components and doing that well will help to build momentum. After that one is done and implemented well, you can go on to the next one. Baby steps may be best in your situation.

**Q** **Jim Dunham**

What is the best way to connect with passive participants to solicit their views? I have several people on the team who sit quietly and don't contribute. They seem amenable, but I'm not always sure they're on board and carrying the changes back to their classrooms.

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Jim, As a leader, I would recommend two different approaches. First, you may need to focus on the individual. Begin to pinpoint why this person is not contributing. You may want to sit down with that person and see if you can determine what is happening. Have an honest, open conversation. Praise the person for what they can offer the group. You can do a trial run of the the meeting with the teacher, if she is uncomfortable sharing in public. You can also work with the teacher on

**A** planning what they will share in the meeting. Come with ideas on how the teacher can begin to share. The second suggestion I have is to work at the group level. First develop group norms for engagement with the team. Be sure to include that everyone has to contribute to the conversation. Then as a team hold everyone accountable. You will also need to develop a group process where everyone is expected to participate in meetings. One thing I have done is create an agenda that expected everyone to go around and share data about their student performance. This gives people structures for sharing. Now, implementation back in the classroom is a different issue. This is an issue of monitoring the implementation (fidelity of implementation) to determine if the teachers are implementing the intervention as it was designed. This can be done several ways. To begin, everyone should be aware of the interventions that are taking place in the classroom. After the team agrees on the instruction or intervention to be delivered, how are they communicating the information to the principal and RTI coordinator? Are there notes that are generated from the meeting that is shared with everyone? Once everyone knows what is expected, the principal and other staff should do regular observations or walkthroughs of the teachers and provide feedback on the implementation process. Also, teachers should be expected to come back as part of the team meeting and share what they did and the results they produced. This will give them individual and group accountability.

**Q** **Connie Pohlgeers**  
What types of formats have you seen used in the make up of a school-based problem solving team? Representatives, an entire grade level team, etc.?

**A** **Albert DuPont**  
Connie, I typically think of problem-solving as the responsibility of every team. It is a habit of mind that needs to be nurtured in the school. Thinking at a deeper level is a critical skill for all staff members to have. When developing a school-wide team, I make sure that everyone is represented. I also make sure that there are specialists from each area. Example may include administrator, upper grade teacher, lower grade teacher, ELL teacher, special education teacher, speech pathologist, psychologist, social worker, pupil personnel worker, reading specialist, professional development teacher, instructional assistant, etc. I tended to have more people on the team and had a relatively large team. I wanted to make sure that everyone was represented. I also think you should have those that support the RTI process and those that do not on the team. You need all points of view. Parents should be part of the team. I am very transparent and allowed parents to participate in all conversations. For those in the middle and high schools, a student representation would be terrific. Bottom line - the more, the better.

**Q** **Tom Mendoza**  
Can you offer tips/examples of how a principal can develop an expectation of shared leadership and peer coaching within an Rtl framework?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

**A** Tom, The best way for this to occur is for you to model as much as possible what you expect of your leadership team. As a principal, I would have a core team of leaders that I would mentor and coach myself. I would model for them what I expected them to do with the staff. Each week we would meet and they would present a challenge to the team. I would guide the questions and encouraging the other team members to ask the "tough" questions. My intent was to have people begin to think deeper and more globally about the challenge presented. After we would problem solve, I would debrief the team and ask them about the types of questions I asked and the process I used. I then arranged to go into one of their meetings and observe each leadership team member and give that person feedback. Since I could not be at every meeting, this strategy multiplied the effect I had on the staff. Another recommendation I would have is to develop a belief that everyone in the building (teachers, support staff, parents, and students) have the right and responsibility to be a leader in the school. A principal needs to be willing to give up control and empower teachers to make decisions. Instead of solving staff problems, the principal should be coaching the staff to resolve their own problems. The more you solve the staff's problems, the less they can think on their own. They become so dependent on you that you become a crutch even for the smallest things. Another valuable strategy I have used is a peer visit model. Teachers were expected to observe one another and provide feedback to a peer. The teacher would decide what they want feedback on and then select a peer to come and observe them. The information was not used for evaluation purposes, but just as a support to teachers. The last strategy I would recommend is the school walk through. Develop a walk-through process where the staff run it. You can sit in the debriefing session, but they are the ones who run the process and debrief the whole staff. Make sure that the walk-through team is made up of a cross-section of the staff. The more you can place the ball in their court the more leadership they take. It is a win for them and for you.

**Q** **Walt Taylor**  
Do you have any suggestions for low-cost/no-cost ways to show appreciation for exemplary teachers who are embracing new strategies and leading the way in collaborating with colleagues?

**A** **Albert DuPont**  
There has been a lot of new research on ways to appreciate and motivate staff. Acknowledging staff is a great way to gain momentum to implement RTI. I use several strategies. One that my staff love is a personal letter to them for their portfolio or evaluation file. Another great way is to have the staff present to one another at staff meetings or to host professional development training. This is a great way to acknowledge them. At one of my schools, we had awards that staff members gave to each other when they did something well. The staff had to acknowledge someone who was not on their immediate teams based on a set criteria (e.g., assisted in the classroom with a struggling student, helped analyze data, went above and beyond to help the classroom teacher gather data, supported a student without being asked). We had several trophies that were passed from staff member to staff member each month.

**Q** **Bev Collum**

**Q** Should a school purchase boxed intervention programs if there are limited funds to hire trained interventionists?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Bev, When deciding on your interventions, you have to take a look at your human resources as well as the materials you have. You will want to make sure all of your resources are aligned. Another thing you want to consider is how you can use your current staff to conduct the interventions. Analyze the master and individual schedules. Determine if there is any way that duties can be reassigned or things can come off the plate of staff. This should be a collaborative decision. Through this process, you can also determine which staff members could be trained. You also want to take a look at which interventions you are currently using. If the interventions are not being successful for students, don't use them. Pick ones that will make a difference and make sure your staff use those instead.

**Q** **Debra Melvin**

What ways can a district team provide ongoing support to school leadership teams?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Debra, One of the best ways for a district team to provide support is to serve as partners and coaches to the schools. Schools cannot be in this process alone. A great district team will be in the trenches with school teams. District team members can attend school-based meetings and provide formal and informal feedback to the school staff. District teams also can help bring schools together with common needs for professional development purposes. Because district teams see all schools, they can identify how they can connect schools as models for one another.

**Q** **Marion Miller**

What are some effective ways to get continued support from the administrative leadership in the school?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Marion, You need to have a conversation with the administrative leadership in the schools. Being a school leader is difficult working with many competing priorities. In my experience, administrators have the intention to complete certain tasks, but day-to-day things get in the way. When meeting with the administrators, find out how you can help them. Just because they sit in a position of power does not mean that they don't need support. Be very clear about what is working and not working and what kind of support you will need.

**Q** **Kathy**

**Q** Other than using the teacher evaluation process to exit ineffective teachers, how do you transform the mindset of a large staff to truly believe all students can and will learn when they are resistant to change?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Kathy, This is an issue of school culture. I would recommend to any principal that they begin to have conversations with their staff about belief systems. You can use book studies as a way to engage staff about their beliefs. Choose a book that you know that will really get people thinking. Use time that is already in the schedule (e.g., staff meetings) to hold the conversations. Start celebrating teachers who show their commitment to students. This issue will not be solved without a well-designed professional development plan. You and your leadership team should make this your primary mission. Without a strong belief in students, nothing else will make a difference. You can also go to the RTI Action Network's home page and click on the [Checklist link](#) at the top of that page. There you will find a [Beliefs Survey](#) and [Perceptions of RTI Skills Survey](#) PDFs to use. This may help you gather additional information on the beliefs and perceptions of the staff.

**Q** **Jennifer Tucker**

My district has been working towards fully implementing RtI for the last few years. We are blessed with an abundant amount of resources and support personnel. We are now at a point where we need to take a step back, and examine and formalize our processes. Although this is a necessary step for the achievement of our students and the functioning of the school, how can this best be approached when the majority of the staff may not feel this is necessary and will likely become resistant to this change? How can we ?rewind? when we have seemingly come so far?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Jennifer, This is also an issue of school culture. Based on what you have said, people do not believe in the continuous improvement process. You want to begin to sell this as a critical component of their work as professionals. It may also be an opportunity that people can see what needs to come off of their plates. You could do it as a celebration - what have you done well? Make it informal. During a staff meeting, have staff go around the room and answer questions on chart paper. If you can find a way to get them actively involved in the improvement process, and not as another task that has to be done, then you will get the feedback you want.

**Q** **Lisa Detrych**

Where and what are some of the most effective resources to use for RTI?

**A** **Albert DuPont**

Lisa, The [RTI Action Network](#) and [The National Center for Response to Intervention](#) websites are great resources. Every time I go to those websites, there is something new up that I can use. The websites have provided for me a lot of tools for training and developing staff and parents. Use them! You will not be disappointed.

**Q** *Jean Colner*

What constitutes an effective Tier 1 curriculum? Do you have examples?

**A** *Albert DuPont*

Jean, My determination for a successful Tier 1 core curriculum is the success rate of the students. Using the triangle, you want to have 80% or better of your students successful with the core curriculum. If they are not being successful, you should do a comprehensive review of the curriculum by analyzing data to find out why. You should be careful not to just look at the curriculum but also the implementation of the curriculum - maybe it is not the curriculum but the skills of the teachers. Look at all components of the teaching and learning process - curriculum, instruction, assessments, learner needs, etc.

**Related Reading from RTINetwork.org:**

- [Building Support](#), by George Batsche, Ed.D.
- [Creating Shared Language for Collaboration in RTI](#), by Barbara J. Ehren, Ed.D.; Barbara Laster, Ed.D.; and Susan Watts-Taffe, Ph.D.
- [RtI Leadership That Works](#), by Stevan J. Kukic, Ph.D.
- [The Leader's Role: RTI in Early Childhood Settings](#), by Luann Sheilds

**Additional Resources:**

- [National Implementation Research Network](#)
- [NASDSE's Response to Intervention Blueprint Series](#)
- [Building a Capacity for Shared Leadership in School: Teachers as Leaders of Educational Change](#)
- [Guide to Collaborative Culture and Shared Leadership](#)
- [Fostering Shared Leadership](#)
- [Leading Professional Learning](#)
- [Establishing a School-Based RTI Leadership Planning Team](#)