

January 13, 2021

Dear Ryan Road Families/Caregivers,

Like other caregivers, you may be wondering “Is my child learning? Is my child making progress in school?” One way that the Northampton Public Schools tries to answer these questions is through a process called “Screening and Benchmarking” wherein we check in on every student’s math, reading, and social emotional skills several times a year. This is an important part of how we support students in schools through a process called “Response to Intervention” or “RtI”. RtI is a framework for screening students, thinking about how to provide targeted support, and monitoring their progress so instruction can be adjusted or other supports provided if necessary. There is a more detailed explanation at the end of this document if you wish. As we did in the fall, we will again be completing some benchmarking during the next few weeks. Some will be completed in person and some will be completed remotely. **Your child’s teacher or I will send more information as we figure out the specific schedule. If we have not returned to Hybrid Learning, this whole process will be postponed until that time.**

What will your role be?

- For any in-person, whole class testing, we will have in-person assessment areas in the gym. All students should wear a mask. Desks will be set up at least 6 feet apart. Students should enter the gym at the side of the building (an adult will be there to direct and offer sanitizer). Gym doors will be left open and we will have HEPA filters in the testing area. Students should bring their own headphones, but we will have Chromebooks here. The Chromebooks will be disinfected in between users.
- You are asked to wait while your child completes the screening.
- The screening will take approximately between 45-90 minutes, depending on whether they are taking both the ELA and Math on the same day.

On the scheduled day of your child's assessment, there will be no class Zooming or synchronous teaching. Teachers will communicate with you about the plan.

- For any remote testing, the current plan is to screen students in the home with you supporting the process. One-to-one assessments (very quick) are being completed in Zoom break-out rooms by one of our Title 1 teachers, special education teachers, or trained ESPs.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions or concerns.

You will be receiving additional, more detailed information about this process as we prepare to schedule these assessments. We will work out a way for it to work given your current situation. We look forward to working with you to help all students have a successful school year.

More Detailed RtI Information:

What is RtI?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-tier model that is used to help identify students in need of support, and to direct resources to support students as soon as they need it. RtI is a tool schools use to help honor their commitment to meet the educational needs of every student, and to help guide individual, class, school, and district wide educational decision making.

How does RtI work?

1. The RtI process begins with screening all students in the school to assess foundational skills using normed measures. In Northampton Public Schools, this is accomplished using Aimsweb Plus for math and reading, alongside the SAEBRS social-emotional screener.
2. This information is expanded upon with the instructional assessment tools AVMR for math and BAS for reading.
3. All data is reviewed to look at each student's strengths and weaknesses.
4. Plans are created to provide support for students who have demonstrated weakness in foundational skills.
5. Student progress is monitored and support is adjusted based on how well they are working for students.

There will also be additional screening later in the year to assess how students are progressing during the school year.

Why are we using RtI at the elementary schools during remote learning?

The 2020-2021 school year will present challenges and opportunities like no other school year in our recent history. As a result, it is more vital than ever for us to use every tool available to us in the service of supporting students, families, and educators. Because school is happening remotely, we will be asking families to help complete screening tasks in late January and early February.

Sincerely,

Sarah Madden, Principal