**What are the Characteristics of Tiered instruction??**

**Tier I** instructional content is a research-based instructional practice based on the Alabama Course of Study for each specific content area and should include benchmark assessments of all students at least three times a year to identify need for intervention and ongoing progress monitoring. Ongoing professional development should equip teachers with necessary tools to ensure that students receive quality instruction. Instruction should include modeling, multiple examples, corrective feedback, and multiple opportunities for student practice. Tier I (or core) instruction is present at all three levels of the tiered model. Maximize instruction by offering each student more of the following:

• Repeated opportunities for practice and review.

• Additional opportunities for correction and feedback.

• Increased time on task, engaged in instruction and practice.

• Drill repetition and/or practice review.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

Tier I instruction is designed for all students. This core instruction is delivered by the general education teacher and should meet the needs of at least 80 percent of the students. All students should receive high quality research-based instruction that is delivered with fidelity utilizing a curriculum that is viable, rigorous, and standards driven. Tier I instruction should also include universal supports that are available to all students in both academics and behavior. Teachers should routinely use a variety of supports as soon as a student begins to struggle in their classroom. Strategies should include flexible grouping, differentiated instruction, re-teaching, and multiple opportunities for practice. Teachers may also adjust their method of instruction and provide additional support and/or accommodations.

**Assessment**

Assessment should include universal screenings and progress monitoring. Universal screenings are administered to all students to determine their level of mastery of grade level standards. Screening measures should provide an initial indication (baseline data) of which students are entering the school year at risk of academic difficulties because they lack the development of critical academic and/or behavioral skills as well as students who have exceeded benchmarks and need more challenging curricula. This baseline data is the best indicator of that student’s level of performance at the beginning of progress monitoring. Information gathered from these screening tools will allow teachers to differentiate their instruction based on what students already know and can do. Once the baseline has been established schools should create benchmarks for progress monitoring and provide a structure for reviewing and discussing screening and progress monitoring data so that effective adjustments to instruction can be made. Communicating and interpreting student screening and progress monitoring data occurs most easily through graphing student progress.

**Tier II**

Tier II interventions are designed for students who are not adequately progressing in Tier I instruction. These interventions provide additional attention, focus, and support and usually take place in the general education classroom. Tier II interventions should begin as soon as possible after students have been identified through screening or benchmark assessments and should be monitored regularly. Materials and strategies should be specialized, research or evidence-based interventions that are based on the needs of the students needing the intervention and should be implemented with fidelity. Materials and strategies should also be aligned with Tier I instruction, and should include more opportunities for modeling, providing examples, corrective feedback, and student practice. Teacher can maximize instruction by offering each student more of the following:

• Opportunities for practice and review.

• Opportunities for correction and feedback.

• Time on task, engaged in instruction and practice.

• Drill repetition and/or practice review.

• Opportunities for completing tasks in smaller steps.

**Tier II instruction has a two-fold purpose:**

• To remediate skill or concept deficits of students who are not making adequate academic gains or have mild or moderate difficulties in the area of social competence.

• To enrich and enhance the education of students who have demonstrated proficiency in the benchmarks of the standards for a given discipline. The decision to provide Tier II intervention is based on student data and may be made by the general education teacher, a grade level team, a specialist, etc.Tier II intervention can take place inside or outside of the general education classroom. Remember, Tier II intervention is not a place. It is a service that is provided to students needing additional support in the core instruction.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

Tier II intervention is explicit, systematic, and aligned with Tier I instruction. Instructional interventions are differentiated, scaffolded, and targeted based on the needs of individual students as determined by assessment data. Tier II instruction for enrichment should contain sufficient depth, breadth, and complexity to increase individual student skills and concept formation.

**Assessment**

Assessments should be more focused, diagnostic in nature, and should be based on specific skill needs. Results should lead directly to intervention services. Once an intervention is in place response to the intervention should be monitored regularly (i.e., bi-weekly or weekly). When selecting assessments at the Tier II level, the focus should be on identifying the specific skills that need work and how to best meet specific academic or behavioral needs. Discussion of student progress in Tier II should take place formally in team meetings as well as informally between the general education teacher and interventionist or specialized teacher. Communicating and interpreting progress monitoring data occurs most easily through graphing student progress.

**Tier III**

Tier III interventions are designed for students who are not responding to Tier I or II instruction and interventions. These interventions should be provided by a specialized teacher who is highly skilled in the area of weakness. Materials and strategies should be specialized research or evidence-based interventions based on the needs of the students who will receive the intervention. Instruction should include more opportunities for modeling, providing multiple examples and a wider range of examples, corrective feedback, etc. Tier III interventions should be provided by a specialized teacher/counselor or special education teacher who is highly skilled in the particular area of weakness.

Tier III interventions usually take place outside the general education classroom.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

Tier III interventions are intended for students with significant deficits or underachievement and require the most intensive services available. A decision to move a student to Tier III interventions is determined by a problem-solving team after several documented individualized interventions in Tier II have resulted in limited progress (i.e., achievement gap between student’s progress and expected benchmark remains significant). The interventions in Tier III are skill specific and should be delivered by someone highly skilled in that area. The interventions should increase in intensity and require smaller groupings for instruction. The specific nature of the intervention is based on progress monitoring data and/or diagnostic assessment information. These interventions are more likely to occur outside the general education classroom and will require curriculum strategies that focus on accelerating learning.

**Assessment**

The frequency of assessment should increase in Tier III. There is an extreme sense of urgency; therefore, the response to the intervention should be monitored more frequently. Diagnostic assessments should be given to provide a comprehensive look at the student’s strengths and areas of need. Assessments should provide specific information on how to meet the student’s instructional needs. Communicating and interpreting progress monitoring data occurs most easily through graphing student progress. The graph serves as a convenient performance record that can be easily understood by teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

Decisions regarding Tier III intervention services are determined by a problem-solving team and should be based on diagnostic assessments and progress monitoring. Plans should be made by the team to review student progress on a regular basis in order to make timely instructional decisions. When teams are discussing prescriptive interventions at Tier III, they should consider a reasonable target for the student within a specified period of time to implement the intense services. If the student is successful with the intervention and demonstrates sufficient progress the team may consider whether the student is able to move to Tier I or Tier II. If the student does not make sufficient progress in Tier III, the team may consider several options, including referring the student for a special education evaluation. It is imperative that proof is available to confirm that the interventions were implemented with fidelity.