

Why Should We Implement Systematic Interventions?

“High-performing schools and school systems set high expectations for what each and every child should achieve, and then monitor performance against the expectations, intervening whenever they are not met. . . . The very best systems intervene at the level of the individual student, developing processes and structures within schools that are able to identify whenever a student is starting to fall behind, and then intervening to improve that child’s performance.” (Barber & Mourshed, 2007, p. 34)

In order to raise student achievement, schools must use diagnostic assessments to measure students’ knowledge and skills at the beginning of each curriculum unit, on-the-spot assessments to check for understanding during instruction, and end-of-unit assessments and interim assessments to see how well students learned. “All of these enable teachers to make mid-course corrections and to get students into intervention earlier” (Odden, 2009, p. 23).

“A criterion for schools that have made great strides in achievement and equity is immediate and decisive intervention. . . . Successful schools do not give a second thought to providing preventive assistance for students in need.” (Reeves, 2006, p. 87)

“The most significant factor in providing appropriate interventions for students was the development of layers of support. Systems of support specifically addressed the needs of students who were ‘stretching’ to take more rigorous coursework.” (Dolejs, 2006, p. 3)

“Reforms must move the system toward early identification and swift intervention, using scientifically based instruction and teaching methods.” (President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 8)

Characteristics of high performing schools include setting high expectations for all students . . . using assessment data to support student success . . . and employing systems for identifying intervention (Council of Chief School Officers, 2002).