

# Video Transcript

## The Dynamic Nature of Tier 2 Literacy Instruction

[Upbeat music plays.]

**Narration:** The Dynamic Nature of Tier 2 Literacy Instruction.

**Narration:** Since the Ontario Human Rights Commission released its Right to Read Report recommendations, fundamental changes have taken place in the way reading is taught in Ontario schools. Educators across the province have begun using science-based, systematic, and explicit instruction in their classrooms. However, every student is different, and some may require more support to learn reading skills. So what are the next steps when a student's reading isn't improving despite having access to strong, evidence-based, classroom instruction?

**Narration:** The Ontario Ministry of Education advocates for the use of the "Tiered Approach" in teaching. This is sometimes referred to as Response to Intervention or RTI outside of Ontario. Instead of waiting for a student to fail an assessment or the entire grade, before getting extra help, the tiered approach allows educators to respond to children's needs as they happen.

**Narration:** Tier 1 is a classroom wide tier providing effective intervention for all students. Tier 2 is an intensive intervention, creating subgroups of students who have not progressed despite effective teaching practices in tier 1. And tier 3 is specialized and individualized interventions, for students whose difficulties in reading persist even after tier 2 interventions. Tier 2 instruction is in its nature dynamic and changing, depending on the needs of the students. It also provide educators an opportunity to assess if a student's difficulty in reading is simply a lack of knowledge, or if there are more complex issues in hand such as a learning disability.

**Narration:** We spoke to the Keewatin-Patricia and Waterloo Region District School Boards and they both agree the following steps are necessary.

**Narration:** Frequent Assessment with Evidence-Based Tools. Universal screeners allow schools to quickly and efficiently identify which children are at risk. These help identify which students may need additional support in their reading. When students are identified as at risk, careful analysis of reading subskills allows them to differentiate instruction and plan intervention. These assessments also allow educators to determine which specific skills or knowledge a student has mastered, and which skills or knowledge need to be taught.

**Narration:** Struggling readers do not have time for a “wait and see” approach so regular and timely assessment is key. Instead of waiting until the next whole class assessment, potentially several months in the future, the schools use additional progress monitoring assessments to quickly measure a student’s response to any required additional instruction. This allows educators to quickly and clearly establish patterns and improvements in at-risk students allowing for more rapid adjustment of instruction if required. Data collected during these frequent assessments is used to group and regroup students according to their strengths and needs.

**Narration:** Small groupings. All students continue to receive foundational reading instruction, while students who are having difficulty mastering specific concepts are identified and given extra support in small groups of four to five students.

**More frequent intervention:** While all students will continue to take part in the literacy block, these small groups of four to five students receive additional tier 2 support, which is generally delivered by the classroom teacher. These short but frequent sessions meet for approximately 10 minutes, 5 days a week, to support students in building the reading skills they are lacking.

**Narration:** Tier 2 in Action. In addition to taking all these steps to support students in tier 2, Keewatin-Patricia District School Board has also begun a program called Walk to

Learn. During the last 20 minutes of the school day, teachers take small groups of students with similar needs and focus on building specific reading skills. These groups are fluid and multi-grade, just like the needs of the students.

**Narration:** Interventions like these are not reserved for the primary grades. Waterloo Region District School Board has a tier 2 project that is focused on grade 7 and 8 students. Screeners showed that many of these students were struggling with accuracy and reading rate. In response, classroom teachers began to focus on decoding during foundational classroom instruction. This led to an improvement in accuracy for most students but not reading rate.

**Narration:** So the board decided to make a shift in how the literacy block flowed. The teachers have a one hour literacy session to focus on whole class and small group instruction, and they break up the hour into smaller sections: It starts with 15 minutes of whole class morphology and word work, followed by 5 minutes of community focused learning about how and why they engage in small group instruction. This is followed by 30 minutes of small group instruction, allowing teachers 10 to 12 minutes to work with small groups of students with identified needs that require tier 2 instruction. The last ten minutes of the hour is for consolidation and whole group feedback on learning skills.

**Narration:** While the progress of their students is still being monitored, the board is seeing very promising results so far.

**Narration:** Conclusion. The educators and administrators at Keewatin-Patricia and Waterloo Region District school boards have identified many gains and successes through their tier 2 interventions, and they will continue to collect reading data from all students. This data allows administrators to monitor their school-wide goals and change focus as necessary.

**Narration:** If a student in your class or school is falling behind in their reading skills, consider adding more time and support that does not exclude the student and doesn't

interrupt the foundational classroom instruction...this is the fluid nature of tier 2. For more information on how to apply tiered learning to your reading program visit the LD@School website.

[Upbeat music fades out.]