

## West Hartford Public School District

**Agenda Item:** K-12 Reading Report

**Meeting Date:** December 3, 2013

**From:** Dr. Nancy DePalma, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
Kerry Jones, Director of Elementary Education

**Through:** Karen L. List, Superintendent

### **Background: Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI)**

Connecticut's response to intervention model, or SRBI, provides a multi-tiered continuum of academic and behavioral supports to all students. Through use of universal screening assessments, targeted interventions, progress monitoring, and communication/collaboration among classroom teachers, interventionists, and other professionals, educators provide appropriate instruction and intervention for all students. The continuum of supports necessary to assist all students include tiered interventions and programs that support our population of students receiving special education and English as a Second Language (ESOL) services.

For additional information Connecticut's SRBI guidelines, please see *Research Based Interventions: Improving Education for All (August 2008)* [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/SRBI\\_full.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/SRBI_full.pdf).

### **SRBI for Literacy**

A comprehensive literacy support program and process remains in place at all elementary schools in the West Hartford Public Schools. At all middle schools this year, we have implemented a tiered intervention model that aligns with state guidelines for SRBI. Please see detailed information in the secondary/middle school section of this report. At the high school level, we have continued our established reading intervention support system for students in grades 9 and 10 who are performing below grade level expectations in reading.

### **Tier 1: Effective Instruction for All Students**

Central to the SRBI model is high quality Tier 1 core literacy instruction for all students in the general education classroom. Most students (80-85%) will respond to Tier 1 general education best practices. Teacher and administrators regularly monitor the effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction using benchmark assessments, common assessments, and student work analysis. We use that assessment data to examine and refine our curriculum and classroom instructional practices to meet learning needs of all students. Classroom teachers also identify students who are struggling to learn the core curriculum or exhibit gaps in critical skills and strategies. They consult with support staff as needed and implement appropriate supports/differentiation to address literacy concerns. With ongoing assessment and responsive Tier 1 instruction, we strive to reduce the number of students requiring reading intervention or special education services.

**Agenda Item:**  
**VI.B.1.**

## **Tier 2: Supplemental Intervention**

Tier 2 interventions are designed to provide supplemental, focused learning opportunities for the small number (5–15%) of students not making adequate progress toward grade level literacy expectations with Tier 1 instruction. Students who receive Tier 2 interventions also continue to receive Tier 1 core instruction. Tier 2 interventions are designed to address specific reading difficulties and are frequently monitored to determine progress toward targeted skills and concepts.

Literacy interventions are not modifications or accommodations to the existing language arts curriculum. Rather, interventions are supplemental instruction focused on foundational literacy skills. Early, targeted intervention prevents reading difficulties from compounding as expectations increase through the grades. Students who receive Tier 2 reading support may include students receiving English Language Learner (ELL) support and are generally not those who receive special education services.

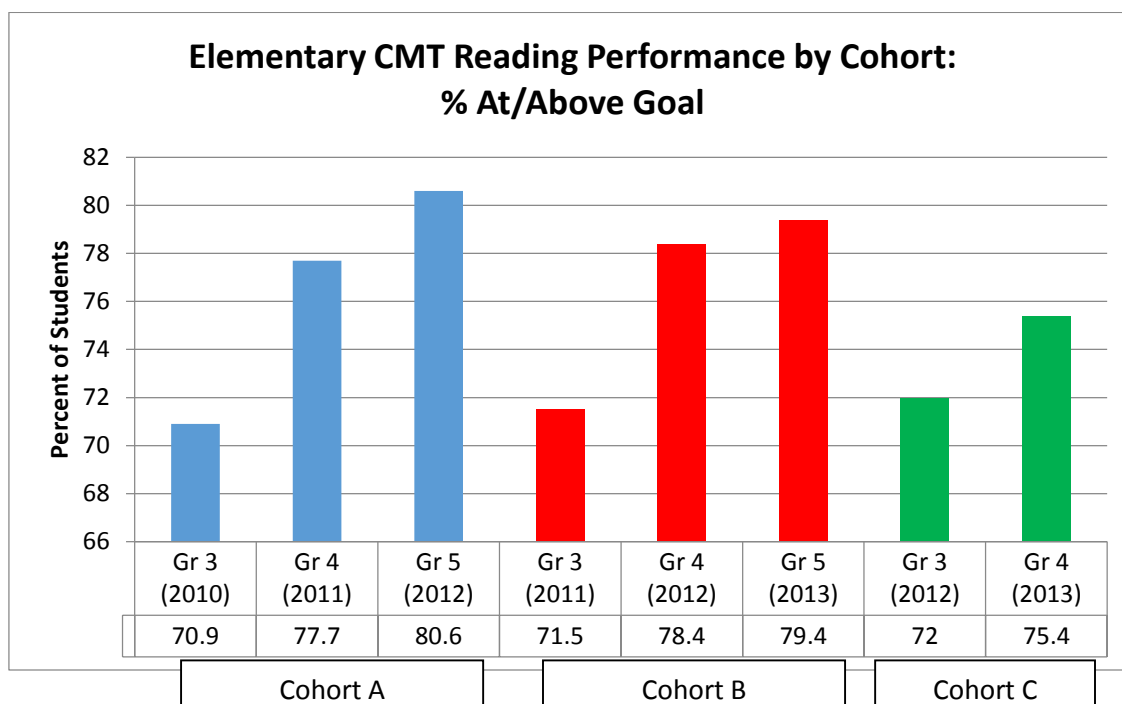
## **Tier 3: Intensive Intervention**

Tier 3 interventions are designed to provide more intensive interventions for students who are not making adequate progress in response to Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports. If students are not responding to interventions, teams of educators collaborate through a Student Support Team (SST) process to modify the frequency, duration, or intensity of interventions. Students who receive Tier 3 interventions also continue to receive Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 interventions.

## Elementary (K-5) Update

### Elementary Student Reading Performance

Elementary Reading Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) results for the three most recent cohorts provide evidence that SRBI is having a positive impact on student reading achievement at the elementary level. For each cohort, the percentage of students at or above goal on the CMT has increased over time in elementary school. In two of three cohorts (Cohorts A and C), we noted a corresponding decline in the percent of students performing at below/below basic levels over time. In Cohort B, the percent of students performing at below basic/basic levels dropped from 14.6% in 2011 (Grade 3) to 11.1% in 2012 (Grade 4) and then remained at 11% in 2013 (Grade 5).



### Elementary CMT Reading Performance 2011-2013

Year	Grade Level	% at/above Goal (Level 4 or 5)	% at Proficiency (Level 3)	% at Basic (Level 2)	% at Below Basic (Level 1)
2013	3	71.7	10.6	8.2	9.6
	4	75.4	12.7	5.6	6.3
	5	79.4	9.5	6.1	5.0
2012	3	72.0	13.4	7.1	7.5
	4	78.4	10.7	4.8	6.2
	5	80.6	8.2	5.4	5.9
2011	3	71.5	13.9	7.2	7.4
	4	77.7	8.7	5.2	8.3
	5	73.5	12.4	5.5	8.5

## Reading Intervention Model

As of November, 334 students are receiving Tier 2 or 3 reading intervention services at our elementary schools. This represents 7.4% of our total K-5 elementary student population and ranges from 1.6% (Kindergarteners) to 11.4% (Grade 2 students). In general, fewer students are identified as needing Tier 2/3 intervention services in Grades 3-5. This early intervention and prevention of reading difficulties has been critical to cohort progress over the past three years.

<b>Elementary Tiered Interventions at a Glance</b>			
	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
Students	All Students	Students who did not respond to Tier 1 instruction and who are not making adequate progress	Students who did not respond to Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention and who are not making adequate progress
Teacher	Classroom Teacher	Classroom Teacher; Reading Specialist; Early Intervention Teacher; Instructional Tutor	Classroom Teacher; Reading Specialist; Early Intervention Teacher; Instructional Tutor
Time	School year, small group teaching and/or individual instruction and practice based on student needs	Additional 30-45 minute sessions 3-4x per week	Additional 30 minute sessions 4-5x per week
Curriculum	Core classroom curriculum for all students	Intensive research-based interventions that supplement Tier1	Intensive research-based interventions that supplement Tier 1 and 2
Instruction	Core curriculum with varied groupings and differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Groups (4-6 students) grouped by same skill or strategy needs</li> <li>• Research-based procedures, programs &amp; materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:1 or small groups (1-3 students), grouped by same skill or strategy needs</li> <li>• Research-based procedures, programs &amp; materials</li> </ul>
Assessment/ Progress-Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal screening assessments &amp; benchmarks;</li> <li>• Ongoing classroom/ curriculum assessments;</li> <li>• Observations by teachers, specialists, support staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic assessments for identification of specific needs</li> <li>• Probes or brief progress monitoring assessments at minimum every 2 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic assessments for identification of specific needs</li> <li>• Probes or brief progress monitoring assessments at minimum weekly</li> </ul>
Setting	General education classroom	General education classroom and/or small-group instruction space	General education classroom and/or small-group instruction space

Adapted from Connecticut State Department of Education. (March 2009). *Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions to Improve Outcomes for All Students.*

## Elementary Reading Staffing

**Reading Specialists** have been in place in all elementary schools since the 2011-2012 school year. They provide guidance, teacher-leadership, and expertise to improve literacy achievement at all grade levels. The Reading Specialists are instructional coaches who provide job-embedded professional development, coach and model use of effective reading strategies, and assist with assessment and data analysis to inform instruction. Reading specialists serve a critical building-based and district role

in supporting classroom teachers with implementation of the Common Core State Standards. In addition, Reading Specialists complete diagnostic assessments, analyze student data to determine intervention needs, support reading interventionists/tutors, and provide direct reading intervention to students. We have two reading specialists (2.0 FTE) shared between Braeburn and Bugbee as well as Norfeldt and Morley. The remaining seven elementary schools have full-time Reading Specialists based on school size and student intervention needs.

**Early Intervention (EI) Teachers** are in place in each elementary school. These teachers have specialized training in the Early Intervention Reading program protocol. Their primary responsibility is to provide intensive one-to-one support with first grade students to improve their foundational reading skills. They also work with small groups of students at other grade levels who have been identified for reading intervention support through the Student Support Team (SST) process.

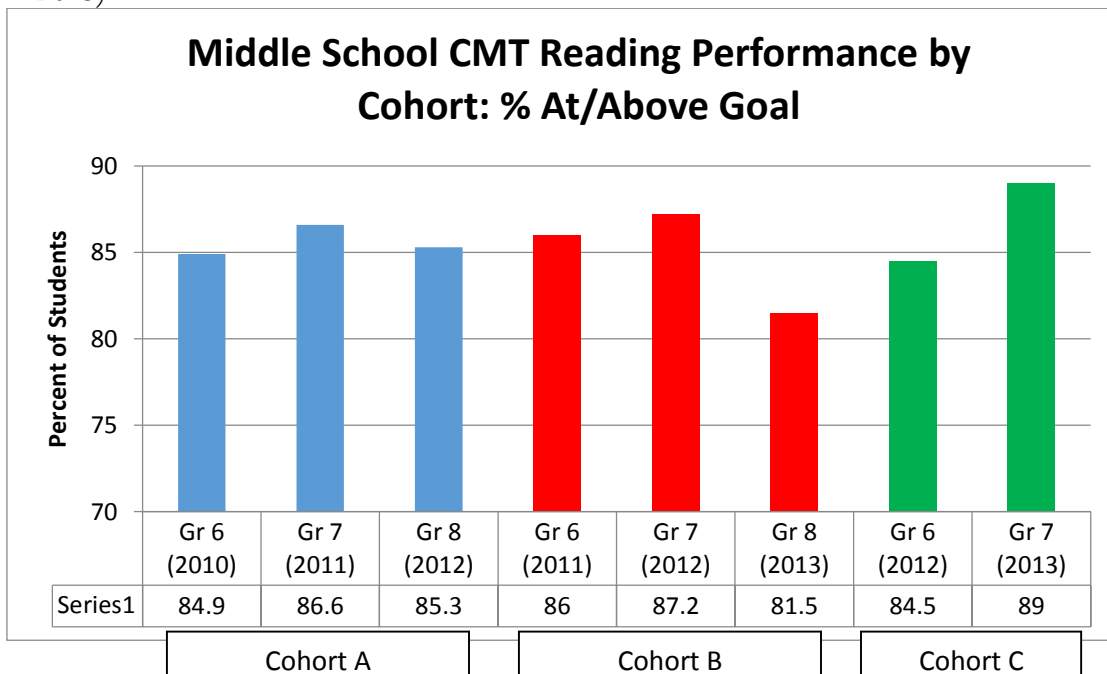
**Literacy Tutors** provide direct support to students identified for Tier 2/3 support at the four schools with part-time reading specialists and at Title I schools based on student needs.

## Secondary (6-12) Reading Update

### Middle School Student Reading Performance

Middle School Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) reading results for the three most recent cohorts show inconsistent levels of performance over time:

- For last year's grade 8 cohort (*Cohort B-Gr 8 2013*), the percentage of students at or above goal on the reading CMT decreased from 86% in grade 6 to 81.5% in grade 8.
- Reading results for the previous grade 8 cohort (*Cohort A-Gr 8 2012*) remained relatively flat during their middle school years.
- Results for the current grade 8 cohort (*Cohort C-Gr 7 2013*) showed improved reading performance, with 89% of students scoring at or above goal. Most gains were seen in students moving from proficient to goal or advanced levels. There was a modest decline in the percent of students performing at basic/below basic levels (7.3% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2013).



## Middle School CMT Reading Performance 2011-2013

Year	Grade Level	% at/above Goal (Level 4 or 5)	% at Proficiency (Level 3)	% at Basic (Level 2)	% at Below Basic (Level 1)
2013	6	83.6	7.1	5.1	4.2
	7	89	4.5	3.3	3.2
	8	81.5	7.9	5.7	4.9
2012	6	84.5	8.2	3.5	3.8
	7	87.2	6.1	3.9	2.8
	8	85.3	6.6	4	4.2
2011	6	86	7.1	3.4	3.5
	7	86.6	4.7	4.2	4.6
	8	81.8	7.6	5.8	4.9

Middle school students enrolled in reading support classes in 2012-2013 were students who:

- scored in bands 1 (below basic), 2 (basic), or 3 (proficient) on the previous year's CMT
- demonstrated need for additional supports based on classroom performance
- were generally not identified for special education services

In our analysis of 2013 Reading CMT results for these students, we observed no clear data trends across all three schools and grade levels. Some students in reading classes improved their reading performance by one or more levels as compared to 2012 CMT, while others performed at or below previous year's CMT level. This data further supported our need to implement a more focused reading intervention model, targeting students with below grade level reading performance across multiple assessment measures.

### **Middle School Reading Intervention Model**

As of November, 99 students are receiving reading intervention services in Grades 6-8. This represents 4.6% of our total middle school student population.

This year, we have implemented a new reading intervention model at our three middle schools aligned with state guidelines for SRBI. This model brings coherence to our reading intervention supports at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

The previous middle school reading program was a social studies-based, Tier 3 program in place for the past 15 years. Students who were enrolled in reading classes were taught the grade-appropriate social studies curriculum, with additional reading support strategies such as comprehension applied. Placement into reading classes was based on CMT results and teacher referral. While some students improved their reading achievement as measured by the CMT, the model did not include diagnostic assessment and the focused, needs-based reading instruction necessary for *all* students to achieve grade level expectations and close the achievement gap.

In our redesigned model for intervention, all students participate in the core (Tier 1) English-Language Arts curriculum. Students who are not meeting grade level expectations in reading also receive daily, targeted reading intervention support.

In the past reading program, reading specialists utilized CMT results to identify students for reading support. In the new model, reading specialists identify students through additional universal screening and diagnostic assessment of literacy skills. Students are identified for intervention after consideration of the following:

- ✓ Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) reading performance (Level 1 or 2)
- ✓ Universal screening assessment (MAZE) score below grade level benchmark
- ✓ Diagnostic screening assessment (Gates-MacGinitie) scores
- ✓ Reading benchmark assessment (Fountas & Pinnell) scores – as needed
- ✓ Prior grade and current teacher recommendation(s) based on classroom literacy performance below grade level expectations

Additional diagnostic assessments may be administered to students identified for intervention to determine their instructional needs. In this first year with the new model, we have established baseline criteria for entrance or exit from reading intervention. We will refine these criteria throughout the school year. Our fall reading diagnostic and benchmark assessments affirm that we have identified the right students in need of reading intervention support. Universal screening assessments for all middle school students in winter and spring will help us determine if there are additional students with reading needs that emerge over the course of the year.

Students identified for reading intervention receive small group reading instruction with a middle school reading specialist. These small groups are organized based on student needs with comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and decoding/word study.

- Tier 2: Intervention scheduled during a Unified Arts (UA) period on a rotational, short-term basis
- Tier 3: Intervention scheduled in lieu of an academic course for a semester or school year as determined by the school Student Success Team (SST)\*

Based on assessment/progress-monitoring of achievement toward grade level reading expectations, students may exit or enter reading intervention support throughout the school year.

*\* In the previous reading model, we provided only Tier 3 social studies-based reading classes. Students were generally enrolled in these classes for the entire school year. CMT scores and classroom performance served as the criteria for entrance/exit to reading support.*

<b>Middle School Tiered Interventions at a Glance</b>			
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Students	All Students	Students who did not respond to Tier 1 instruction and who are not making adequate progress	Students who did not respond to Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention and who are not making adequate progress
Teacher	Classroom Teacher	Classroom Teacher; Reading Teacher	Classroom Teacher; Reading Teacher
Time	School year, small group teaching and/or individual instruction and practice based on student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 minute classes</li> <li>• 5x/week during one (of 2) daily Unified Arts (UA) classes</li> <li>• 6-8 week rotation cycles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 minute classes</li> <li>• 5x/week during one academic period</li> <li>• Semester or all year</li> </ul>

Middle School Tiered Interventions at a Glance			
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Curriculum	Core classroom curriculum for all students	Intensive research-based interventions that supplement Tier 1	Intensive research-based interventions that supplement Tier 1 and 2
Instruction	Core curriculum with varied groupings and differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups of 4-8, grouped by same skill or strategy needs</li> <li>• Research-based procedures, programs &amp; materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:1 or homogeneous small groups of 2-3 students, grouped by same skill or strategy needs</li> <li>• Research-based procedures, programs &amp; materials</li> </ul>
Assessment/Progress-Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal screening assessments &amp; benchmarks;</li> <li>• Ongoing classroom/curriculum assessments;</li> <li>• Observations by teachers, specialists, support staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic assessments for identification of specific needs</li> <li>• Probes or brief progress monitoring assessments at minimum every 3-4 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic assessments for identification of specific needs</li> <li>• Probes or brief progress monitoring assessments weekly</li> </ul>
Setting	General education classroom	Reading specialist small-group instructional space	Reading specialist small-group instructional space

Every 6-8 weeks, reading specialists examine student data/assessments to determine student response to intervention.

If a student at Tier 2 is making adequate progress...

- Exit from intervention and reconvene a two-period UA schedule at the start of the next rotation.

If a student at Tier 3 is making adequate progress...

- Move to Tier 2 UA rotation and reconvene academic class (world language or social studies) at semester transition OR
- Exit from intervention and reconvene academic class (world language or social studies) at a semester transition

If a student at either Tier 2 or 3 is not demonstrating adequate response to intervention...

- Reading specialist will collaborate with the grade level/SST team
- SST team will identify areas of need and modify the student's intervention plan

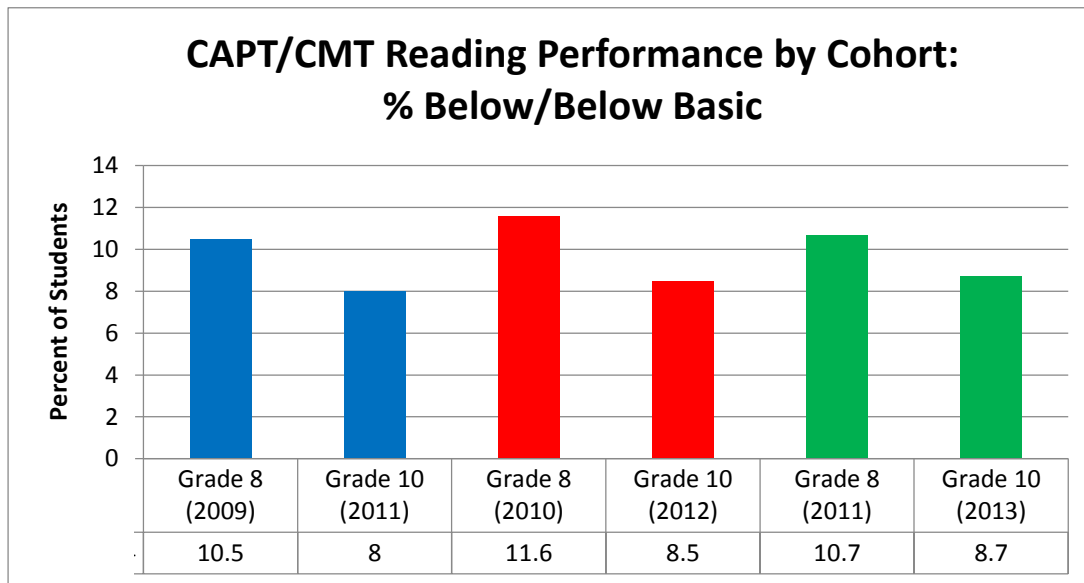
## Middle School Reading Staffing

**Reading Teachers** have been in place at middle school level for the past 16 years. However, their instructional approach and assessments have been re-aligned with the SRBI model this year. The primary role of the middle school reading teachers is to provide targeted intervention to students not achieving grade level expectations. Additionally, they complete diagnostic assessments and work with building Student Success Teams (SST) to determine appropriate small-group instruction and schedules to address student needs. Sedgwick Middle School has three reading teachers (2.8 FTE), King Philip has two reading teachers (2.0 FTE), and Bristow has one reading teacher (1.0 FTE). One Sedgwick reading teacher (.2 FTE) also works at Bristow for two class periods given student/scheduling needs.



## High School Student Reading Performance

CAPT test results for the three most recent cohorts provide evidence of the positive impact of reading intervention as well as special education services to close the achievement gap in reading at the high school level. Cohort data in the chart below shows a decline in the percent of students performing at “below basic” (Level 1) or “basic” (Level 2) on the grade 10 CAPT as compared to their grade 8 CMT. This trend was consistent for students identified for special education services as well as the student population not receiving special education services.



## High School Reading Intervention Model

As of November, 94 students are receiving reading intervention support in grades 9 & 10, representing 6.2% of our total high school student population in those grades.

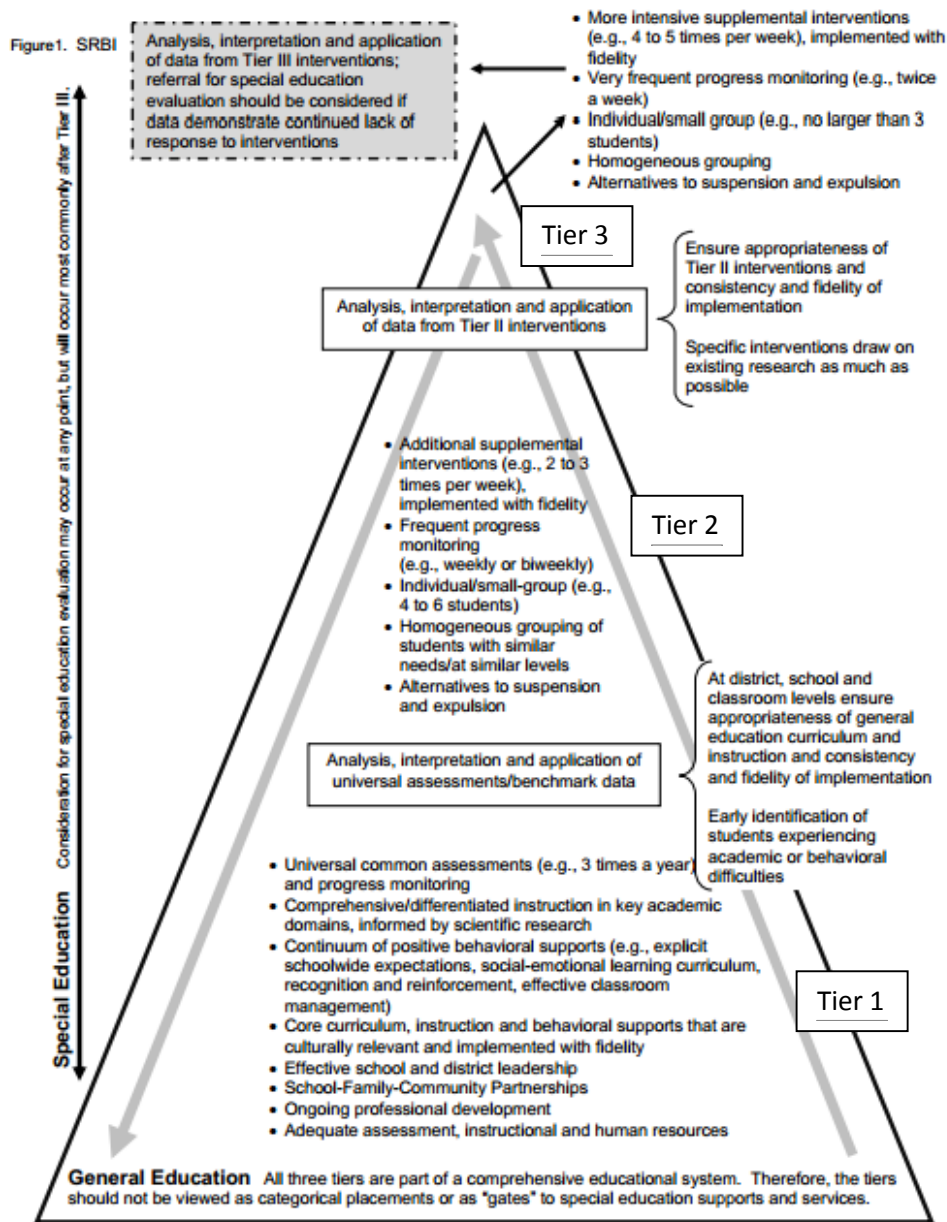
High school students receiving reading intervention are enrolled in a graded, credit-bearing reading course which meets 4x per week. Grade 9 and 10 students are identified for reading support based on criteria including universal screening, state-assessment, diagnostic assessment, and classroom performance data as well as the recommendation of middle school reading staff in collaboration with Student Success Team members. The Tier 3 intervention program targets the components of literacy identified in the research on adolescent struggling readers: vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. Students who exit the program must demonstrate reading proficiency based on standardized Lexile measures.

## High School Reading Staffing

**Reading Specialists** have been in place at both high schools since 2007. The primary role of the high school reading specialists is to provide direct intervention support to students not achieving grade level expectations. They complete diagnostic assessments and work with Student Success Teams (SST) to determine appropriate supports and schedules to address students' overall academic needs. The high school reading specialists also provide professional development and support to content area teachers regarding reading strategies in the content areas.

Each high school has one reading specialist (2.0 FTE). Conard High School has a **literacy tutor** in place to support students with literacy and research-related strategies in content-area classes.

# SRBI Pyramid of Interventions



Source: Connecticut State of Department of Education (February 2008). *Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for All Students. Connecticut's Framework for RtI. Executive Summary*, p. 12.