

# A Guide to Academic Intervention Services



*For parents and teachers  
to help children reach  
their potential*

New York State  
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## *Introduction*

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The New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA<sup>®</sup>) and NYSUT (New York State United Teachers) are pleased to have worked together to produce this guide on Academic Intervention Services (AIS). The partnership of our two organizations reflects the partnership that should exist between home and school to ensure student success.

We fully support higher learning standards for all students and the possibilities that these standards bring to each of them. However, children have a wide range of learning potential and many children will need additional time and assistance to reach these standards. The purpose of AIS is to provide that assistance. We encourage parents to learn more about this important service and to be involved in monitoring their children's progress. The sooner problems are identified and intervention services begin, the sooner the children are on their way to academic success.

It is only when parents, understanding their child, and the teacher, with knowledge of classroom instruction, child development and the curriculum, combine their efforts, that children will reach their fullest potential.

We hope this guidebook will be useful in encouraging parents and teachers to work together to provide assistance and intervention services in all school districts.



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### *1. What are academic intervention services (AIS)?*

Academic intervention services help students who are struggling to achieve the learning standards in English language arts and mathematics in grades K-12 and social studies and science in grades 4-12. These additional general education services include:

- Extra instructional time to help students achieve the learning standards in the subject areas requiring AIS, and
- Support services to help students overcome barriers that are affecting their ability to learn, such as attendance problems, family-related issues, discipline problems and health-related issues. Support services could include school guidance and counseling services to improve attendance and coordination of services provided by other agencies.

### *2. How does a student become eligible for academic intervention services and when should they start?*

There are two ways a student becomes eligible for AIS.

- One way is when a student does not pass an elementary, intermediate or commencement-level state assessment in English language arts, mathematics, social studies or science. Not passing means that a student has not met the “state-designated performance level.”
- The second way is when the school district determines that the student is at risk of not meeting state standards. Each school district’s AIS plan (see question 9) should describe the sources of information it will use in determining at-risk students.





### 3. What is the 'state-designated performance level' on state assessments?

Each year the elementary and intermediate state assessments will have four designated performance levels on each assessment.

- Level 1 means the student has not met the academic standards, has serious academic problems and needs extra help.
- Level 2 means the student has not met the academic standards, has some academic problems and needs extra help.
- Level 3 means the student has met the academic standards.
- Level 4 means the student exceeds the standards and is moving toward high performance.

**All students who score at Levels 1 and 2 must receive academic intervention services.** The services for a particular student should vary in intensity based on the student's needs as measured by state assessments and other information on the student's performance.

Students with the most intensive needs would receive more scheduled services, for a longer duration, with *individualized instruction*. Students with less intensive needs (those in the upper range of level 2) might only receive student support activities such as regular progress checks, additional assessments and meetings with the classroom teacher to adjust instruction, if necessary. Records of this service should be kept, as for all AIS services.

### 4. What state assessments trigger AIS and how soon should parents and teachers be informed that children need AIS?

State tests that trigger AIS are as follows:

#### Grades 3-8

- Mathematics and English Language Arts Tests — Score of 1 or 2

#### Elementary

- Grade 4 ESPET (Science) — Score of 30 or less on objective portion
- Grade 5 Social Studies Test — Fail to meet performance standard

#### Intermediate — administered in grade 8

- Science and Social Studies Tests — Fail to meet state-designated performance standard

#### High school

- Regents examinations: ELA, Math A or Integrated Algebra, any of the four science disciplines (Living Environment, Earth Science, Chemistry and Physics), Global History and U.S. History — Fail to meet the score of 65 for general education students or, for students with disabilities, fail to meet the score of 55, through the class of 2013.

According to the Commissioner's Regulations, school districts must provide AIS to identified students no later than the beginning of the semester following a decision that a student needs AIS. Since most state assessments are administered in the spring, school principals should notify parents in writing of their child's results prior to the start of the next school year (Sept. 1).

### 5. How are students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 identified for AIS?

Each school district's AIS plan must describe procedures to determine if a student lacks reading readiness on a student assessment or is at risk of not achieving a level 3 on the English language arts or mathematics assessment. The district's procedures may also include diagnostic screening for vision, hearing and physical disabilities as well as a screening for possible limited English proficiency.

### 6. How are high school students identified for AIS?

Any student who scores below level 3 on an intermediate assessment must receive AIS in high school. In addition, any student who fails a Regents examination in English language arts, mathematics, social studies

or science must receive AIS. The district's AIS plan must also include procedures for identifying high school students who are at-risk of not meeting state standards at this level of schooling. At the high school level, AIS *cannot* be postponed until students are scheduled for a course in which AIS is needed.

**7. *What options could be used to vary the intensity of services?***

Students should not be taken out of regular instruction. Schools should include as many options as are necessary to meet the range of student needs including:

- Extra time during the regular school day;
- Within-class staffing that reduces student-teacher ratios (e.g., co-teaching, team-teaching);
- Extended school day;
- Before and after school sessions;
- Evening and weekend sessions; and
- Summer school.

Individual academic intervention service plans are not required for students. Students should receive services based on the intensity of services needed.

**8. *Must academic intervention services be provided to students with disabilities?***

Students with disabilities must have access to AIS in the same manner as students without disabilities, that is, by scoring below the designated performance level on state assessments or through the district procedures described in its AIS plan. Academic intervention services are a part of general education and must not supplant special education services.

The school district must provide AIS to the “extent consistent” with the student’s individualized education program (IEP). To the “extent consistent” means that appropriate accommodations, supports and test accommodations must be provided when AIS is implemented to assure that these students benefit from AIS. AIS providers must receive a copy of the student’s IEP.

**9. *Must academic intervention services be provided to English language learners?***

English language learners must have access to AIS in the same manner as general education students, that is, by scoring below the designat-



ed performance level on state assessments or through the district procedures described in its AIS plan.

Academic intervention services for English language learners must be supplementary and “in addition to” and must not replace the bi-lingual and free standing ESL program requirements under Commissioner’s Regulations Part 154 services. AIS must be planned and implemented in coordination with the ELL student’s general education program.

**10. *Is the school district required to develop a plan describing its academic intervention services?***

Each school district must have a written plan of the academic intervention services to be offered in grades K-12. This plan must *specify procedures for identifying eligible students in all grades* including those grades where there are no state assessments in English language arts or mathematics and in those grades where there are no state assessments in social studies or science. The district’s plan must be reviewed and revised, based on student performance results, every two years. School districts should ensure that a variety of developmentally appropriate assessments and other student information must be used to determine if:

- A student is at risk of not meeting state learning standards and in need of academic intervention services: and
- A student is meeting, or is likely to meet, state learning standards and no longer in need of academic intervention services.

The district, in consultation with each school, is responsible for developing the description of services for all schools and presenting it to the board of education for approval. Any variations to the general plan that apply to specific schools must be included in the district description. Variations to the general description should be based on each school's review of its students eligible for AIS.

### *11. Who should be involved in developing the description of the AIS?*

Administrators, classroom teachers, special area teachers, counselors/pupil personnel staff, parents, community members and students, if appropriate, should be involved in the development of the AIS plan. School districts should also identify the roles and responsibilities of these individuals as well as for those responsible for oversight, monitoring and review of services.

### *12. Who is responsible for the implementation of AIS?*

The building principal is responsible for ensuring that *each eligible student* receives AIS according to the procedures and description of services included in the district's AIS plan.

### *13. How should the parent(s) be notified that their child is eligible to receive AIS?*

**Parent(s) must be notified in writing by the principal of the school that the student attends that their child will be receiving academic intervention services.** This notification must be provided to the parent *prior* to the start of AIS. Such notice must be provided in English and translated, when appropriate, into a parent's native language. Other forms of communication may be necessary, as well, for example, for the visually impaired. This notification must include:

- A summary of the academic intervention services to be provided;
- The reason the student needs such services; and
- Consequences of not achieving expected performance levels.



### *14. How should the school notify the parent(s) that a student no longer needs AIS?*

**Parent(s) must be notified in writing by the principal of the school that academic intervention services for his or her child will be discontinued. Such notice must:**

- Include the reason for ending service;
- Include the performance levels obtained on district-selected assessments, if appropriate; and
- Be translated, where appropriate, into the native language of the parent(s). Other forms of communication may be necessary, as well, for example, for the visually impaired.

### *15. Is the school required to provide ongoing communication to the parent(s) of a student receiving AIS?*

At a minimum, the parent(s) of a student receiving academic intervention services must receive the following:

- At least once each semester, an opportunity — such as a parent conference — for consultation with the student's regular classroom teacher(s) and other professional staff providing academic intervention services, including those involved with academic support services.
- Quarterly progress reports during the regular school year. These

reports may be by mail, telephone, telecommunications, or included in the student's report card. Such reports should be translated into the native language of the parent(s), where appropriate. The district must also make additional accommodations for parent(s) with different modes of communication, such as the visually impaired or those with limited literacy skills in English or their native language.

- Information on ways parent(s) can work with their child, monitor their child's progress, and work with teachers and other educators providing academic intervention services to improve their child's achievements.

**16. *May parents refuse to have their children receive academic intervention services?***

**Parents may not refuse to have their children participate in AIS if it is offered within the regular school day.** Parents should freely express their concerns about AIS. School staff should share evidence of the student's need for academic intervention services, and work with the parent(s) to assure the provision of appropriate academic intervention services. Placement in educational programs during the regular school day, however, remains the responsibility of the district and school.

According to the State Education Department, a student is required to participate in appropriate academic programs during the regular school day. Hours of compulsory attendance are district-determined and a school district may, by board resolutions, extend the school day. However, attendance in summer school programs or programs beyond the regular school day are *voluntary and not compulsory*.

**17. *May parents advocate for their children to receive academic intervention services or request changes in services being provided to them?***

Parents may advocate for their children to receive academic intervention services. The district should, in a timely manner, listen to parental concerns and review the student's school record and assessment results to determine if the child meets eligibility criteria for AIS. Parents and teachers may also request changes in the program of academic intervention services being provided to a child. District and school staff should work with parent(s) to:

- Determine the necessity for changes based on additional information; and
- Review scheduling and delivery options that might better meet the student's needs. However, the district retains the responsibility for appropriate placement of the student.



**18. *What should parents and teachers look for in a student's AIS program?***

Here is a list of 10 things:

- A student's intervention is based on a variety of pieces of information, including tests and student work, that identify specific student needs.
- The AIS and classroom teachers know what each student needs to learn to meet the state learning standards.
- Students grouped for specific interventions have similar educational needs.
- Students are evaluated on a regular basis to determine if the AIS should be changed or ended.
- The intervention includes multiple approaches to learning that strengthen a student's skills and strategies.
- Students learn organization and problem-solving strategies, including how to respond to questions requiring critical thinking skills.



- A student's core classes and AIS are scheduled so that students have uninterrupted learning time.
- The student's AIS program uses a variety of material and resources, including technology to meet the various learning styles and instructional need of students.
- Parents are provided with practical assistance to support their child's learning needs.
- Parents, teachers, principals and other school personnel collaborate in meeting the needs of children.

**19. What funding sources can a district use to support the academic instruction and student support service components included in academic intervention services?**

In addition to local funds, school districts may use state and federal funds for supporting academic intervention services. Federal funds include those that are available under the "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001.

**20. What are the qualifications of staff who provide academic intervention services?**

Staff who provide academic intervention services must be appropriately certified for the area(s) of their instructional assignment — reading, English language arts, mathematics, social studies or science, or for the area of their student support service assignment, such as pupil personnel services.

- At the elementary level, appropriate certifications for instructional assignments in mathematics, social studies and science include Common Branch, PreK-6, N-6, B-2 and 1-6. as defined in the Commissioner's Regulations. For the provision of AIS in reading, however, reading certification is strongly recommended.
- At the secondary level (grades 7-12) approvable certifications for AIS instructional assignments include certification in reading and content certifications in English, mathematics, science and social studies.
- At both elementary and secondary levels, appropriate certifications for providing AIS include those for special education as defined in Section 80.6 of Commissioner's Regulations. *However, if a special education teacher provides AIS to a student, it is not a special education service.*

**21. Does AIS affect whether a student can receive a high school diploma?**

The receipt of a high school diploma is based on meeting specific course requirements and successfully passing required Regents examinations. AIS helps students to meet learning standards and to pass their examinations.

**22. Where can you find more information?**

The chart shows several national Web sites that provide information on family involvement:

<a href="http://npin.org">npin.org</a>	ERIC National Parent Information Network	A wealth of information for parents and educators working with parents.
<a href="http://www.ed.gov/free">www.ed.gov/free</a>	Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE)	A rich resource on teaching and learning, including A Parents Guide to the Internet.
<a href="http://www.ed.gov/pubs">www.ed.gov/pubs</a>	U.S. Dept. of Education: Publications and Products	Publications for parents, plus educational research, improvement reports and studies, partnerships and family involvement.
<a href="http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/parents.html">www.cse.ucla.edu/products/parents.html</a>	Parents Pages	Excellent source on assessment, specifically for parents.
<a href="http://www.pta.org">www.pta.org</a>	National Parent Teachers Association	Information on programs and advocacy to help children achieve.

## Resources

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Questions relating to policy issues should be directed to the State Education Department (SED) Office for Compensatory Education at (518) 473-0295; inquiries concerning technical assistance in implementing academic intervention services should be directed to the Office of New York City School Improvement at (718) 722-2636 or the SED Office of Regional School Improvement at (518) 474-5923.

## Ordering information

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To order additional copies of this guide, please contact NYSUT. Ask for Publication #111, *Guide to Academic Intervention Services*.

Per copy cost: 25 copies or fewer, 30 cents each; more than 25 copies, 25 cents each. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

For more information or to comment on the *Guide to AIS*, please contact either organization below.

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