

# REDBANK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT



920 BROAD STREET  
NEW BETHLEHEM, PA 16242  
TELEPHONE 814-275-2426  
FAX 814-275-2428  
www.redbankvalley.net



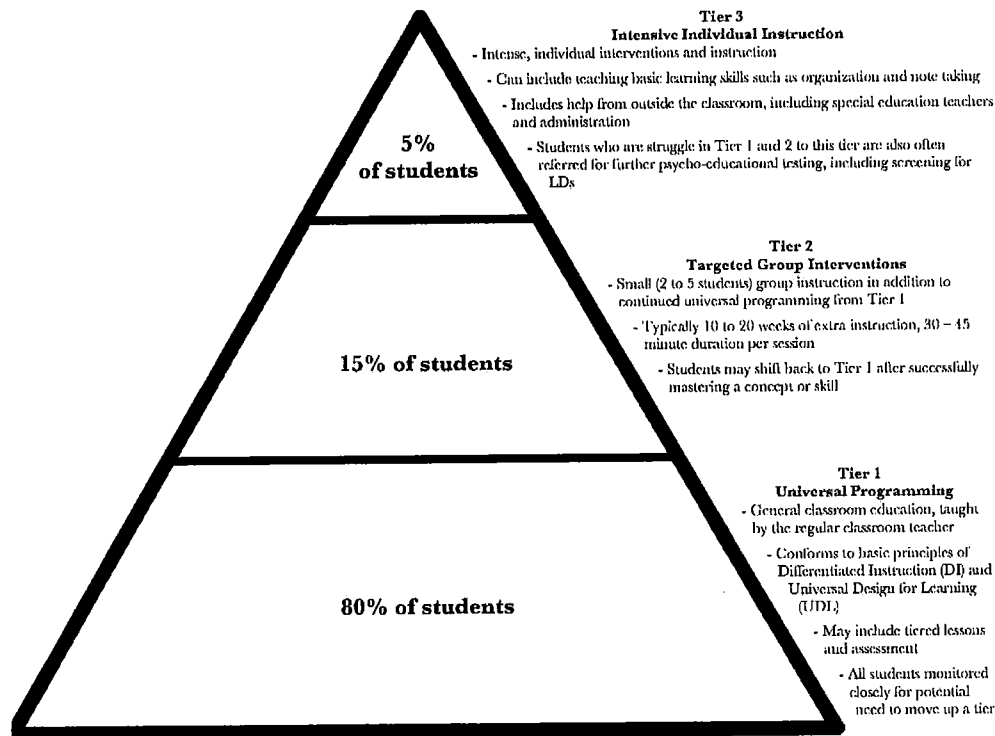
May 28, 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members:

The following information is intended to provide you with information regarding Title Programs and how the Redbank Valley School District intends to utilize the federal funding the District receives to support the education of all of our students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. When making decisions that affect students and staff, deep deliberation is involved to make sure the results of that decision are in the best interest of the students. Furthermore, how that decision can positively impact the greatest number of students.

Title I is a federally funded supplemental education program designed to assist students in the area of Reading and Mathematics. The overall purpose of the program is to ensure that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. A school wide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I campus. Title I programs are designed to help children meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics.

The Redbank Valley School District plans to use Federal funds (Title 1) to provide timely interventions for all students in kindergarten through grade 5 who begin to experience difficulty in the academic area of Reading and Mathematics. This is done through a school – wide model of targeted interventions called Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS incorporates *RtII* (Response to Instruction and Intervention). The goal of the data-driven *RtII* model is to provide varying degrees of intervention through a collaborative approach. Identification of students to receive this targeted instruction is based upon results of state and local assessments, benchmark and diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring assessments, and classroom performance. Each elementary building has developed a unique schedule to address student needs.



The above chart is a reflection of the number of students and the success rate based on their location of instruction when implementing the MTSS model and providing support to students. Tier 1 (bottom) indicates that 80% of all students should be successful receiving instruction in their classroom from their regular teacher. This chart is indicative of all grade levels across a school district. The classroom teacher plays a critical role in ensuring that 80% of their students are being successful through differentiated instruction.

Tier 2 (small group instruction) should consist of 15% of the students. This will be accomplished through the use of the District’s certified Title staff for push-in/pull-out. This group is fluid and will move between Tier 1 and Tier 2 based on the standard/concept they are experiencing difficulty. The additional Mathematics and Reading instruction being implemented next school year is intended to support and reinforce concepts/skills being addressed in the classroom based on benchmark assessment that will be maintained and reviewed regularly by staff. This approach is intended to reduce the number of students needing Tier 2 interventions.

Tier 3 (Individual instruction) should be comprised of only 5% of the students. The students needing this level of intervention will be accomplished through the use of the District’s certified Title staff for push-in/pull-out. This group is fluid and will move between Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 based on the standard/concept they are experiencing difficulty.

The primary goal of a School Wide Title I building program is to ensure that ALL students, particularly those who are low achieving, to achieve a common goal to demonstrate proficient and advanced levels of achievement on State academic standards in mathematics and reading, improving all structures that support student learning, and combining all resources, as allowed.

As a school wide building, the staff is looking at all students' assessment data regularly. Any student displaying a deficit in any Reading/Math area will receive addition support to help that student become proficient. The support offered will be flexible. As a Title I School Wide building, all students are considered Title I students and all teachers are considered Title I teachers. Materials purchased with federal dollars can be used throughout the building for all students and all teachers. Your student will be able to receive additional support from all staff members. All students are everyone's responsibility. Labels should not define who and how we provide instruction and support for our students.

Currently, the district uses Title funds to support three certified teachers and four classroom aides. The Title teachers work with students in small groups on both the Primary and Intermediate Campuses. The aides have historically been assigned to the Kindergarten classrooms for 4 ½ hours each day.

Under this targeted approach, staff being compensated by Title funds should only be working with students who are identified under Title guidelines and who are economically disadvantaged. This reduces the number of students truly affected and supported through the use of these federal funds.

Historically, our students are not out performing surrounding school districts. Our students are not making the grade across our elementary grade levels in standardized assessment. Specific student performance data will be presented at the June 7, 2021 Board Meeting.

There is no question that the Kindergarten aides can make a difference in a student's educational experience AND ASSIST in paving the way for academic successes later in a student's schooling. However, Kindergarten students are not the only grade level students experiencing struggles and difficulties academically.

It is the responsibility of the administration to use the available resources and funds to the maximum extent possible to dramatically impact education for ALL students. In an effort to maximize available resources to affect the greatest number of students, the administration has recommended to the Board that we shift from a 'Targeted Title Program' to a 'School-Wide Program'. This shift allows the administration to hire a new Title Teacher and causes the Title Aides to be reassigned. The Aides reassignment provides them the opportunity to provide support and interventions with all students experiencing difficulties as well as increasing their daily work time from 4 ½ hours a day to 6 hours a day gaining an additional 1 ½ hours a day for each Aide.

The District receives federal funding based on the number of students identified as economically disadvantaged. The following student numbers are based on a state reporting document snap shot date of March 31, 2021. The numbers will reflect the number of students identified as Economically Disadvantage/Total Grade level/Percentage:

Kindergarten – 38/67/57%  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade – 30/62/48%

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – 50/78/64%  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade – 46/85/54%

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – 42/73/58%

5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 32/73/44%

As these numbers indicate, yes, Kindergarten does have a need. However, administration cannot ignore the need for supports and interventions in the other elementary level grades. The aides are being re-assigned to provide support to a larger number of students as well as having additional time during the work day to do so.

In addition to the shift from a ‘Targeted Title Program’ to a ‘School-Wide Program’, the district has invested funds into a leveled literacy library which K – 2 teachers will have access. The Guided Reading will assist staff to introduce, reinforce, and progress monitor student’s reading abilities and in the use of data from Acadience to track the student’s Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) level. This practice will be used vertically and horizontally Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade to focus on at or above grade level reading when entering into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The District’s current program is structured to have one highly-qualified aide assigned to each Kindergarten classroom for 4 ½ hours each day. The program has three certified teachers who remove students from their regular classroom setting to provide interventions and support, therefore the students are missing material and opportunities in their regular classroom setting.

The new structured Title program will consist of four certified teachers providing interventions and support through a variety of ways. Below is an outline of how services will be provided and the approximate number of students affected.

Teacher One – will provide an extra Reading class once a week to all classes K – 2 based on required standards and performance data to support classroom instruction for approximately 200 students.

Teacher One – will provide an extra Mathematics class once a week to all classes K – 2 based on required standards and performance data to support classroom instruction for approximately 200 students.

Teacher Two – will provide interventions and support to approximately 56 students K – 2 implementing pull out/push in

Teacher Three - will provide an extra Reading class once a week to all classes 3 - 5 based on required standards and performance data to support classroom instruction for approximately 230 students.

Teacher Three - will provide an extra Mathematics class once a week to all classes 3 - 5 based on required standards and performance data to support classroom instruction for approximately 230 students.

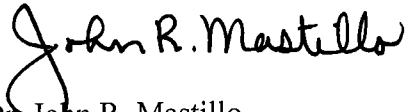
Teacher Four - will provide interventions and support to approximately 45 students 3 – 5 implementing pull out/push in

I would like to circle back around to why the shift from a ‘Targeted Title Program’ to a ‘School-Wide Title Program’ is being recommended to the Board. It is the responsibility to ensure all students are receiving an appropriate education and opportunity to gain the skills, knowledge and abilities to move successfully to the next grade level and ultimately graduate from Redbank Valley prepared to enter the area of choice; whether that be college, the military, a trade school or the work force.

The administration is also responsible to apply available resources in a manner that impacts the largest population of students in a positive effective manner. Historically, our student performance data does not indicate that what we are doing is being effective. The District must change the way it views the educational practices that have been in place. If we expect our outcome to change, hence, increased student performance; we must change the processes in place.

This shift utilizes the federal funding through Title to provide the greatest support to the largest number of students. This isn’t about taking away Kindergarten Aides. This is about using the available funds to support staff so we can impact a larger group of students. Students that also have a need who are not in Kindergarten.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Mastillo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Dr. John R. Mastillo