

## Tri-Community Elementary School

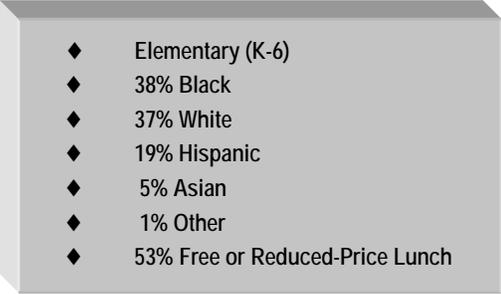
255 Cypress Street

Bressler-Steelton, PA 17113

Principal: Barbara Lamond

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Pennsylvania schools use a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) framework, which emphasizes the importance of high-quality instructional practice in Tier 1 core curriculum. All instruction is aligned to state standards, and all students are taught through research-based instructional practices. Since implementing this framework six years ago, Tri-Community Elementary School has moved from lowest performing in the district to successfully meeting AYP targets.







### State-Level Leadership

In Pennsylvania, RtII is a two-pronged strategy allowing educators to identify and address difficulties prior to student failure. First, it is a comprehensive, multi-tiered, standards-aligned strategy enabling early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk. Second, RtII is an alternative to the aptitude-achievement discrepancy model for identification of students with learning disabilities.

RtII is consistent with Pennsylvania's continuous school improvement process and provides the assessment and instructional framework for implementing the Standards Aligned System. RtII leadership is vested in the Bureau of Teaching and Learning in partnership with the Bureau of Special Education.

Prior to RtII legislation, Pennsylvania had done extensive work in the areas of behavior and effective instruction, with a particular interest in research-validated practices. The state was poised for RtII implementation, which started as a pilot program in seven elementary schools. It was important that schools understood RtII as a framework of shared ownership leading to systems change. Within this system, the state's role is preparing teachers and principals to understand and use RtII, while the schools' role is to discover the best means to intervene and help students succeed. Training and technical assistance is a priority at all levels. Principals receive training in capacity building through standards-based instruction, data use, and tiered interventions; in turn, they are expected to support school staff through ongoing training and coaching.

### Professional Development and Ongoing Support

Tri-Community sustains their data-driven instructional model through strong school leadership and a partnership with the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), an initiative of the State Department of Education that provides rollout in building school capacity for RtII implementation. Partnering with schools and districts has allowed PaTTAN to identify and develop a statewide plan to address needs. Through regional centers, intermediate units, and district-specific professional

development, PaTTAN centers provide multi-year RtII training focused on sustaining practice.

Tri-Community staff receive RtII training and support in content area instruction, data team procedures, developing protocols to identify student strengths and needs, and planning instructional interventions. The school has established RtII teams in reading, math, and behavior. These teams, as well as grade-level teams, are responsible for managing data, assessing student progress, and planning interventions. Data-driven instruction has changed the way students are taught at this school.

### **School-Level Implementation**

Tri-Community has three tiers of intervention—the benchmark, strategic, and intensive skills groups. Student placement is flexible, and progress is monitored continuously to ensure fluid movement across tiers as student needs change. Classroom teachers have learned management strategies to facilitate differentiation and progress monitoring during whole-group core instruction. They check for understanding throughout a lesson and reteach as necessary through more intensive, differentiated small-group and one-on-one interventions as well as additional instruction during an extended day program.

Teachers consistently integrate explicit instruction into lessons, provide ample opportunities for students to practice new skills, and provide immediate corrective feedback. Instruction is scaffolded until the students can perform the skill independently, and teachers do not move on to new skills until students achieve mastery.

Tri-Community prides itself on being a community of learners dedicated to the success of all children. RtII helps sustain high-quality instruction through administration and staff collaboration on instruction and shared responsibility for students. Interventionists and classroom teachers communicate frequently about students and share strategies. The principal is visible daily in classrooms and throughout the school, and she strives to build relationships with staff, parents, and students. Parents are well informed about RtII and updated frequently about their children's progress.