



## Instructional Decision Making

Instructional Decision Making is a systematic process of using student achievement and other data to guide instructional decisions. It is supported through the Iowa Department of Education's Instructional Decision Making (IDM) initiative. IDM is designed to improve the learning of all students. IDM is the terminology used by the Department of Education and the stakeholders designing and supporting the initiative aimed at increasing the use of this systematic process in Iowa schools. There are other terms used by individuals and groups to describe processes that contain the same essential elements as IDM. These terms, initiatives, or models are not in opposition with IDM. Indeed, they support one another. IDM supports a unified schoolwide or districtwide system of assessment, curriculum, and instruction addressing the needs of high, average, and low-performing learners. The process of using data systematically to make instructional decisions provides a framework for aligning resources to meet the needs of groups of students as well as individual students.

### Key Features

- Instructional Decision Making focuses at the student level.
- Plans are developed to ensure appropriate instruction for all students even at the individual level if needed.
- The structure allows immediate feedback regarding effects.
- The process is repeated frequently throughout the school year.
- Data are used to match students with similar needs to resources and strategies to meet those needs.
- It is not just all children...but each child!

### Essential Steps

Instructional Decision Making is based on a continuous improvement cycle. This cycle is repeated throughout the school year attending to the needs of all students including those in general education, special education, at-risk programming, English Language Learners (ELL) and gifted and talented students. The specifics of implementation are dependent on the school, but there are some basic steps or components that will be present in every site.

1. A process (based on student performance data) will be utilized to identify those students who may be in need of differentiated instruction and what their specific instruction needs might be.
2. Students are grouped for instruction with some students needing more intensive instruction than others.
3. The progress of those students receiving differentiated instruction is monitored as well as the implementation of that instruction. Changes are made as needed.
4. The process is repeated (usually three times per year).

### Instruction and Assessment

Three levels of instruction are typically provided to meet the needs of all students within a school. Several types of assessment are needed to determine student instructional needs.

- **Core Instruction:** Comprehensive instruction provided in general education for **all** students. All students must have access to core instruction.\*
- **Supplemental Instruction:** Instruction provided to **some** students that is differentiated to meet their needs. This instruction may look very different based upon student need. Some students may need preteaching or reteaching.
- **Intensive Instruction:** Instruction provided to a **few** students who need significant differentiation and greater intensity in their instruction.

- **Screening Assessments** are linked to district standards and benchmarks and used to identify students at-risk of not meeting expectations or those who are exceeding expectations. (Screening in some situations needs to occur at least 3 times per year.)
- **Diagnostic assessment processes** are used to specify the individual needs of students (Administered when indicated by data.)
- **Progress monitoring and formative assessments** are used to determine the effects of instruction and to make instructional changes when needed. (Monthly, biweekly, or weekly)
- **Summative assessments** are large scale assessments linked to statewide learning outcomes. In Iowa the measures primarily used are ITBS and ITED.