

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is this initiative required?

This initiative is supported by the state and by Grant Wood AEA 10, but is not mandated. However, in AEA 10, the Intensive Instruction plan is a required document when students are being considered for eligibility for special education services.

2. How does this initiative fit with other initiatives?

IDM is a systematic decision-making framework for supporting effective practices to meet the needs of all students. It is a way of looking at and analyzing student achievement and other data that supports other initiatives within a system. What IDM adds to other initiatives is a focus on the use of data to determine that each student's educational needs are being met. Defining a comprehensive system for using data can streamline and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing building practices. For example, the CSIP and IPDM processes involve collecting and analyzing student data to set goals, develop a plan, and determine content for professional development. IDM ensures that we are examining data from each student to meet the needs of each and every learner and continues to provide specific student data to assist with formative and summative evaluation. Effectively using CSIP, IPDM, and IDM together will help more students be successful.

3. How does Instructional Decision Making support differentiation of instruction?

This process directly supports the notion of differentiation. While few argue the need to differentiate, the decisions about what and how to differentiate for each student are more difficult. Content, process, context, and student characteristics should be considered as decisions are made about the individual student's needs for differentiation. These considerations should be data based. Differentiating core instruction, however, will not address the needs of individual learners who require skill-building instruction or advanced learning. Likewise, providing supplemental, skill-building instruction for short periods does not mean that students will be able to handle the large group instruction provided throughout the day. IDM looks at all parts of the curriculum, ensuring that the core is differentiated and there is differentiated instruction for students who need it.

4. Is this a special education initiative?

No. Instruction Decision Making is focused on the continual challenge of meeting the needs of ALL students. It provides the framework for creating a seamless process of decision making across ALL levels of student instructional need. A seamless process emphasizes shared responsibility for the students within a school and creates a seamless response to the student's instructional needs using various resources, programs, and services developed for students of similar instruction needs. Identification for such services as ELL, gifted and talented, Title I, special education, and other targeted services and programs can be enhanced using this more systematic process.

5. This sounds like problem solving. Don't we already do this?

IDM applies problem solving practices in a systematic manner. The intent of IDM is to be proactive in response to instructional needs rather than reactive. It uses a screening process to identify low-and high-performing students at risk for not having their needs met, and provides intervention at the earliest possible moment.

6. Will schools be required to use certain assessments and instructional programs?

Each school will determine which assessments they will use and what instructional practices will be implemented to respond to student needs.

7. Isn't it more important that we improve our core instruction? (Won't this take away from those efforts?)

Improvements to core instruction are essential and continuous. At the same time core instruction is improving, there will be students with individual needs. Doing both is our responsibility and it is the only way we can truly serve our students.