RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION: CREATION OF A MODEL, RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

A Project

Presented to the faculty of the Graduate and Professional Studies in Education

California State University, Sacramento

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Education

(Special Education)

by

Stacie Ohara

SPRING
2013
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION: CREATION OF A MODEL, RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

A Project

by

Stacie Ohara

Approved by:

__________________________________, Committee Chair
Elva Duran, Ph.D.

__________________________________
Date
Student:  Stacie Ohara

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this project is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the project.

__________________________, Department Chair      ___________________  
Sue Heredia, Ph.D.                       Date

Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION: CREATION OF A MODEL, RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

by

Stacie Ohara

While the concept of response to intervention has been documented in the literature for many years (Wright, 2007), in the last decade response to intervention (RtI) has become a source of significant educational reform for schools across the nation (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). In fact, federal legislation currently supports principles of RtI. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 supported the use of RtI as a means for identifying students with specific learning disabilities. Further, IDEA 2004 promoted key components central to RtI, such as utilizing research-based instruction, data-based decision making, and analysis of student response to quality education.

Research shows that most states across the country have taken steps to begin developing and implementing RtI systems within their schools (Berkeley, Benders, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). However, the literature also indicates school districts frequently struggle with RtI implementation, as they feel they lack the resources needed to develop an effective and efficient RtI model (Searle, 2010).
The purpose of this project is to describe an RtI model developed at an elementary school to address the literacy needs of students. In addition, the author created an RtI Resource Binder to compile essential materials needed for RtI implementation at this school. The RtI Resource Binder is meant to improve the quality of RtI and be utilized as a training resource for staff members. In previous years, this school did not implement several components of RtI appropriately, such as documenting interventions, fidelity of instruction, frequent progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. In addition, this school had a high turnover of special education and intervention staff members. This lack of consistency made it difficult to establish a cohesive RtI program.

An RtI model developed by the author and the school site’s RtI team was implemented for one year. Results of the RtI model at this elementary school were analyzed for areas of strength and weakness. Results indicated that the school improved in documentation of RtI meetings and interventions, providing high-quality instruction in general education, and engaging in data-based decision making when determining reading interventions for students. Further, more steps were taken to ensure students were appropriately referred to special education. Results also indicated that the school had a significant population of English language learners receiving RtI interventions; however, limited resources were available to address the language needs of these students. Recommendations for steps to improve the resources and instruction available to English language learners are made. Finally, recommendations are made for more effective allocation of resources to provide earlier intervention for students in
kindergarten as well as provide more equitable intervention services to students in all grades.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Elva Duran, Ph.D.

_______________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Dr. Elva Duran, for all she has taught me. Not only has she taught me to be a well-researched and equipped reading instructor, but she has also provided me with the support needed to complete this project. Her dedication and commitment to her students has pushed me to become a better special education teacher for all of my students.

I would also like to acknowledge the school I am currently employed at, as the school site leadership team gave me the opportunity to pilot an Response to Intervention model at their school.

Appreciation also goes to my family and friends who have supported me throughout my graduate education in my personal and academic life. Their positive support has fueled me with the dedication and motivation to pursue higher education.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and dedicate this project to all of the students I have worked with. These students have inspired me to continue growing and learning as an educator.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Project</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Project</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Project</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Terms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Project</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Response to Intervention</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Features of Response to Intervention</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Models of Response to Intervention</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier One Primary Intervention</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier Two Secondary Intervention</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier Three Tertiary Intervention</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

ix
Description of Students Receiving Tier 2 Interventions

The Problem Solving Team (PST) Process

After-School Program Interventions

Small-Group, Pull-Out RtI Interventions

Tier 3 Outcomes

Referrals for Special Education Assessment

Description of Students in Tier 3

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Recommendations

Recommendations for English Language Learners

Recommendations for Tier 1

Recommendations for Tier 2

Recommendations for Tier 3

Recommendations for the RtI Resource Binder

Appendix A. Response to Intervention (RtI) Resource Binder Materials

Appendix A-1 Description of Roles and Responsibilities for Team Members

Appendix A-2 Flowchart of Response to Intervention Process

Appendix A-3 Initial 9-grid Form

Appendix A-4 Sample of Completed 9-grid Form

Appendix A-5 Problem Solving Team (PST) Note Templates
Appendix A-6 Sample of Completed Problem Solving Team (PST) Notes ..... 138

Appendix A-7 Reading Intervention Parent Permission Form.......................... 150

Appendix B.  Response to Intervention Professional Development Materials....... 153

  Appendix B-1 PowerPoint Presentation for General Education Teachers ....... 154

  Appendix B-2 General Information Sheets on Response to Intervention ....... 162

  Appendix B-3 Flowchart of Response to Intervention Process...................... 165

  Appendix B-4 Check-list of Response to Intervention Meeting Materials ....... 167

  Appendix B-5 Response to Intervention Calendar Meeting Dates.................. 169

References .............................................................................................................. 171
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>DRA Guided Reading Benchmarks, by grade-level</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Reading Rates of Expected Growth, per week</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Number of 9-grids Completed, by grade</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Students Receiving Tier 2 Interventions, by grade-level</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Number of Problem Solving Team Meetings per Grade Level</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Percent of Students Meeting Oral Reading Fluency Goals</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Reading Achievement for 2nd graders, first 8-week intervention</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Reading Achievement for 2nd graders, second 8-week intervention</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Reading Performance for 4th/5th graders, first 6-week intervention</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Reading Performance for 4th/5th graders, second 6-week intervention</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>Disability Identifications for Students in Tier 3</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12</td>
<td>Students in Tier 3 in March, 2013, by grade-level</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1 Graph of Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Scores</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In the last decade, Response to Intervention (RtI) has become a significant source of educational reform for schools across the country (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). Many researchers in the field have advocated RtI because of its capacity to address the academic and behavioral needs of students (Lembke, McMaster, & Stecker, 2010). While school-wide implementation of RtI is relatively recent, the concept of RtI has been documented in the educational field for more than a decade (Wright, 2007, p. 7). In the 1980s, to address and monitor the learning needs of students, schools began experimenting with several components of RtI, such as creating intervention plans for students, using different forms of progress monitoring, and measuring progress on short-term goals (Deno, 1986). A few years later in 1991, Frank Gresham pioneered the phrase “resistance to intervention” in reference to his research analyzing the responses of students to behavioral interventions. Gresham defined resistance to intervention as “the lack of change in target behaviors as a function of intervention,” (Gresham, 1991, p. 26). In his article, he proposed students should be identified with behavioral disorders only after several interventions have been tried and “resistance to intervention” was found. In other words, students are identified with behavioral disorders only when they do not show significant behavioral improvements after interventions have been implemented with fidelity. He went on to suggest several environmental factors contribute to a student’s resistance to intervention and school teams benefit from analyzing these.
Gresham’s concept of “resistance to intervention” encompassed the hallmarks of RtI and was later rephrased as “response to intervention.”

In 2001, the concept of RtI gained more recognition with the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB). NCLB 2001 promoted features central to RtI. For example, NCLB 2001 mandated states to use “evidence-based instruction” as well as monitor the progress of students to gauge the effectiveness of interventions. Further, the legislation required states to have “reliable and valid research evidence that the program activities are effective in helping teachers to improve student academic achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b, p. 53). NCLB 2001 did not label this approach as response to intervention, but it did require the use of evidenced-based practices to improve academic achievement, a feature central to RtI.

Further, in 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) was reauthorized and set forth significant federal regulations for the use of RtI. This legislation supported the use of RtI as a means to identify students with specific learning disabilities (IDEA; P. L. 108-446). Specifically, states could no longer require schools to use the traditional discrepancy model (documenting a severe discrepancy between a student’s IQ and achievement). While IDEA 2004 does not explicitly use the phrase “response to intervention,” it gave schools the option of using a student’s “response to scientific, research-based intervention” as a means for determining specific learning disabilities (34 C.F.R. 300 & 301, 2006, p. 46786). IDEA 2004 also required schools to “ensure that underachievement in a child suspected of having a specific
learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction” (34 C.F.R. 300 & 301, 2006; p. 466787). It is further specified that “appropriate instruction” consisted of high quality instruction in general education as well as the use of data-based progress monitoring to assess student progress. IDEA 2004 was pivotal legislation which promoted the use RtI components, namely research-based instruction, data-based decision making, and analysis of student responses to quality education. Following this legislation, most states have begun developing and implementing RtI systems in their schools (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009).

However, because RtI is a relatively new concept for most educators, many schools are struggling when setting up RtI programs at their sites. Schools often feel they lack the resources or the expertise needed to implement RtI effectively. Commonly cited concerns of educational leaders include questions regarding the steps necessary for developing RtI at their schools, where to find research-based interventions, how to group students into the different tiers, and how to use assessment data to make educational decisions (Searle, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Currently, an elementary school in the Central Valley is in the beginning stages of RtI implementation. However, due to a lack of awareness and understanding of RtI, several essential components of RtI have not been utilized consistently at this school. For example, the after-school program at this school, which serves the greatest number of students in Tier 2, has not been using pre-intervention student data to determine instructional grouping of students or choose appropriate interventions. Further, research-
based reading programs have not been implemented with fidelity, as many after-school intervention teachers have not been adequately trained in using these curriculums. In addition, the RtI team has not been documenting the interventions students have received or monitoring student progress in various interventions.

Another challenge this school has faced is a high turnover of special education staff at this school. This has made it difficult to develop a cohesive RtI team including general and special educators. Because the RtI team has not been consistent, RtI procedures have not been fully developed or have changed each year. This has caused the teachers at this school to be unclear of their role in RtI and the procedures they need to follow before referring a student to special education. This has led some teachers to be reluctant and hesitant to participate in the RtI process, as they do not fully understand it.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to describe the framework used to address the literacy needs of students at an elementary school in the beginning stages of RtI implementation. Since many schools are in the same position and are unclear of where to start, this project is meant to outline the steps one school took. It is the author’s purpose to provide an example of an RtI model which is practical and grounded in current research in the hopes that other schools can re-create effective aspects of the model. In addition, another purpose is to reflect upon the positive and negative results of this school’s efforts to implement RtI. This reflection will allow the author to identify components that did or did not work well and will be used to improve the school’s RtI system in the future.
The second purpose of this project is to create an RtI Resource Binder, which included the necessary materials for implementation of the RtI model described in the paper. This Resource Binder is created as a way to organize RtI materials so staff members could more easily access and understand the RtI process. In addition, use of a common Resource Binder should help this school develop more consistent procedures for RtI, as it can be used to train new RtI team members or other school staff. All of the materials in the RtI Resource Binder created by the author are available in the appendices of this paper so these materials are easily accessible to those interested in using them at their school site as well.

**Significance of the Project**

Current statistics related to the high rates of students at-risk of reading failure highlight the need for schools to provide high-quality instruction and effective reading interventions for students to boost the reading achievement of their students. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported in 2009 that 33% of fourth grade students were at or below the “Basic” level on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading tests. The percentage of students scoring below “Basic” on the NAEP reading test was 49% when including only students eligible for free and reduced price lunch (National Assessment of Education Statistics, 2009). These statistics show a large percentage of students in the country were not reading with grade-level proficiency, with a greater number of students from low-income backgrounds reading below grade-level. Furthermore, the number of high school seniors who score
“Proficient” or above on the NAEP reading tests has decreased since 1992 (National Assessment of Education Statistics, 2009).

Statistics related to the number of students receiving special education services also underscore the importance of providing preventative academic intervention to appropriately meet the needs of special learners. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics (2012) indicated that the percentage of students in special education increased from 8.3% to 13.8% between 1976-1977 and 2005-2005. This increase in students in special education can be attributed to the growth of students identified with specific learning disabilities (SLD) from 1976-1977 to 2004-2005 as the percentage of students with SLD more than doubled from 1.8% to 5.7%. Currently, the percentage of students identified with a specific learning disability (SLD) continues to be the highest of all disability categories. The U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics (2012) reported that 4.9% of all students in this country were identified with SLD in 2009-2010.

Current statistics show a large percentage of students would benefit from increased academic supports and intervention to address literacy needs and to reduce the number of students in special education. RtI is a valuable area of study because it presents a framework of early intervention services geared to meet the literacy needs of students with and without disabilities (Wright, 2007). RtI has the ability to contribute to positive reading outcomes for students who are at-risk of reading failure (Denton, 2012). Further, RtI implementation can potentially decrease the amount of students referred to special education and improve the accuracy of special education eligibility decisions.
(Hoover, 2010). In addition, it offers an alternative method for identifying students with a specific learning disability (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). For these reasons, RtI is an important area of research and is the focus of this project.

Considerable research has focused on RtI, however Response to Intervention is still a work in progress and poses several limitations for school implementation (Wright, 2007). Thus, because of the varied resources available at each site, schools should be given flexibility when adopting an RtI model (Wanzek & Cavanaugh, 2012). Schools may utilize school personnel and available resources differently to meet the needs of their school (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). In fact, it should be expected that school districts approach RtI from varying perspectives and make decisions based on their specific circumstances (Searle, 2010). This may make implementation of RtI difficult, since a set of universal steps does not currently exist; however, when making decisions related to RtI implementation, school-site teams should be informed by the current research available and include basic components found to be effective in the literature (Searle, 2010).

In this project, the author synthesized research related to RtI and collaborated with the school’s RtI team to set the groundwork for a model of RtI. More specifically, the RtI framework will focus on addressing the literacy needs of students through development of high quality instruction and providing appropriate reading interventions. While this school previously offered reading interventions to students, it did not have a unified system for documenting and progress monitoring students. In addition, several staff members were responsible for implementing interventions but limited collaboration
occurred amongst team members. Therefore, creating a unified RtI model was not possible and many components of RtI were missing.

This project will describe the steps this school took to initiate RtI and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the model. In addition, the creation of an RtI Resource Binder will serve to provide the materials needed to implement the model and to train new staff members about RtI procedures at this school.

**Limitations of the Project**

Several limitations of this project should be noted. First, this project describes the first year of active RtI implementation at a school so the author is unable to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the model. While data may show the short-term impact of interventions to be positive during the first year, the author cannot predict whether these positive results will have a lasting impact on students in future years. To accurately evaluate the effectiveness of an RtI model, it would be necessary to analyze results from several years. Since this data is unavailable, the author has chosen to focus more on the steps of implementing RtI, rather than long-term effects of RtI.

It should also be noted that the intervention reading programs used in this model were chosen primarily because they were already available at the school site. The school-site did not have room in its budget to purchase new reading programs which may have more closely aligned with research-based practices. Budget constraints did limit the available materials used in the RtI model.

Further, because this is not an experimental study, causal relationships between the reading interventions used and positive or negative results on students’ reading
achievement cannot be determined. The information presented in this paper is not meant to prove the effectiveness of interventions. Rather, the goal is to present a model of RtI implemented at a school and reflect on ways to strengthen the program for following years. This reflection may identify additional materials that should be included in the RtI Resource Binder.

**Definitions of Terms**

*California Standards Test (CST)*

The CST measures students’ progress toward achieving California content standards in various content areas, including English language arts, mathematics, science, and history/social science (Standardized Testing and Reporting Program, 2013). The CST was developed to measure student proficiency towards grade-level content standards. Students in second through eleventh grade complete the CST each year.

*Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)*

DIBELS is a type of assessment extensively researched at the University of Oregon and created by the authors Ruth Kaminski and Roland Good. DIBELS are widely used for universal screening and progress monitoring of literacy skills for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. They consist of short one-minute fluency measures assessing skills related to phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and oral reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary (Good & Kaminski, 2009).

*Individualized Education Program (IEP)*

All public school students receiving special education services are legally required to have an IEP (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). An IEP is a written
document which describes the individualized supports and services a student needs for educational benefit. An IEP requires the participation of several IEP team members, including the special educator, general education teacher, principal, related service providers, parents, and student.

*Problem Solving Approach*

The problem solving approach is a theoretical approach to RtI involving more individualized interventions than another approach to RtI called the standard treatment protocol. The problem solving model requires an educational team to design interventions to target specific student needs. A greater variety of research-validated interventions and assessment tools are considered in the problem solving approach (Searle, 2010).

*Problem Solving Team (PST)*

A problem solving team (PST) is a multi-disciplinary team formed to develop individualized intervention plans for students in general education who continue to perform below grade-level after receiving interventions (Wright, 2007). A PST consists of several team members, generally including the principal, intervention teachers, special education teacher, school psychologist, general education teacher, and students’ parents. This team works together to identify additional supports to help students, set short-term academic goals, and continually monitor the progress of students.

*Progress Monitoring*

Progress monitoring in RtI refers to scientific measures used to monitor the progress of students receiving supplemental interventions. The goal of progress
monitoring is to measure if positive growth results after implementing interventions. Progress monitoring data is meant to track the short-term rate of growth, as it should be collected several times a month (Searle, 2010). Tools used for progress monitoring should be sensitive to small changes in growth and provide specific data that can be used to make instructional decisions (Searle, 2010). Progress monitoring is different than universal screening because it shows if a student is making positive growth after receiving an intervention, rather than identifying the students needing additional support (Sailor, 2009).

**Reading Benchmark**

Benchmark assessments are given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to measure student achievement in different content areas. Each grade has a different benchmark assessment which assesses student performance related to grade-level content standards. A reading benchmark assessment specifically measures skills related to California reading content standards. Benchmark assessments are used to determine if a student is performing above, at, or below grade-level.

**Research Validated Interventions**

Research validated interventions refers to instructional strategies or curriculum which has been shown effective by several research studies to address the academic and/or behavioral needs of students (Brown-Chidsey & Seege, 2005). Research validated interventions are an essential part of RtI to address student learning needs with scientifically based practices. Both the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA)
of 2004 and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 mandate the use of evidence-based practices found effective by research.

**Response to Intervention (RtI)**

RtI consists of systematic and data-based activities for the purpose of “identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and/or behavioral difficulties” (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005, p. 144). Response to intervention analyzes the relationships between academic interventions and the student’s response to intervention (i.e. does an intervention result in positive, negative, or no measurable changes?). Based on a student’s response, additional interventions are chosen at various levels of intensity to match student need (Collier, 2010). RtI is meant to occur before referral to special education and can be used as an alternative to the discrepancy model in identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Collier, 2010).

**Standard Treatment Protocol**

Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs (2008) describe the standard-treatment protocol as a theoretical approach to RtI utilizing standardized interventions and prescriptive procedures to address general areas of academic needs. All interventions are validated by research and practitioners choose interventions for students based on general needs. Standard-treatment protocol interventions often consist of scripted, research-based programs. The standard treatment protocol is different than the problem solving model because it prescribes the same intervention for students who show similar difficulties and is not as specific to individual students.
Three Tier Model

One of the central features of RtI is the three tier model (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2012). RtI systems generally include three different tiers of increasing intensity in interventions so students receive appropriate interventions matching individual needs. Tier 1 is considered primary prevention provided to all students in the form of high-quality instruction in general education. Tier 2 is referred to as secondary prevention offering supplemental interventions to students identified at-risk of reading failure. Tier 3 is called tertiary intervention providing more intense supplemental intervention for at-risk students who showed inadequate response to Tier 2 interventions. Tier 3 is characterized as including “the most difficult-to-teach” students and requiring intensive, individualized interventions (Fuchs et al., 2012). Tier 3 can include students in special education.

Universal Screening

Universal screening refers to using scientific, systematic procedures to identify students who are performing below expectations. The goal of universal screening is to gather data from multiple sources to identify students who are not responding to high-quality general education curriculum alone and may benefit from additional interventions (Sailor, 2009).

Organization of the Project

The remainder of the project begins with a review of the literature in chapter two. In this chapter, a definition of RtI, common features of RtI, and two different theoretical approaches to RtI are outlined. In addition, current research explaining the outcomes of
various research studies as they relate to best practice in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 of RtI are described.

Chapter three explains the methods used to develop an RtI framework at a Title I elementary school. First, the demographics of this school are described. Then, initial steps taken by the RtI team to set-up a functional model are stated. Next, the structure and organization of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 are explained in detail. The author outlines the different interventions used in each tier, how students were grouped into different reading interventions, the methods used for progress monitoring, and the staff responsible for implementing various procedures. Finally, a description of the RtI Resource Binder created in this project is given. The materials in the binder are listed and the purpose of the binder is clarified.

Chapter four will provide the reader with a description of findings gathered from the RtI model implemented for one year at the school-site. This information will be used to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the model and the effectiveness of the RtI Resource Binder. Chapter five will include the author’s conclusions and recommendations for future practice and research regarding RtI implementation. A copy of materials in the RtI Resource Binder, which were created by the author, are available within the appendices.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature will focus on how Response to Intervention (RtI) can be utilized to address the academic reading and literacy needs of elementary student. The review of the literature is divided into seven sections: 1) a definition of RtI; 2) a summary of the common features of RtI; 3) a description of two models of RtI; 4) a review of literature related to Tier 1 interventions; 5) a review of literature related to Tier 2 interventions; 6) a review of literature related to Tier 3 interventions; and 7) a summary and conclusion from the literature review.

Definition of Response to Intervention

Federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 promote the use of RtI. However, neither NCLB 2001 or IDEA 2004 formally define it. Therefore, several conceptualizations of RtI exist in the literature. According to the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD), RtI is defined as an “assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data,” (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006). To address the learning needs of students, the NRCLD recommends selecting various research-validated interventions and then implementing with fidelity to determine students’ response to intervention.
In addition, the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) defines RtI as a “combination of high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction; assessment; and evidence-based intervention” (What is RTI, para. 1). According to the NCRTI, the purpose of RtI is to provide high quality instruction to all students, identify students needing additional academic support, provide research-based supplemental interventions, and allow practitioners an alternative method of identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Gersten et al., 2008).

Overall, RtI consists of systematic and data-based activities for the purpose of “identifying, defining, and resolving students’ academic and/or behavioral difficulties” (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005, p. 144). Similar to Gresham’s (1991) conceptualization of “resistance to intervention,” response to intervention analyzes the relationships between academic interventions and the student’s response to intervention (i.e. does an intervention result in positive, negative, or no measurable changes?). Based on a student’s response, additional interventions are chosen at various levels of intensity to match student need (Collier, 2010). RtI occurs before referral to special education and can be used as an alternative to the discrepancy model in identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Collier, 2010). While definitions of RtI may vary, the literature generally supports common features of RtI.

**Common Features of Response to Intervention**

In the literature, there are common features considered essential to the implementation of RTI. Sailor (2009) cited five common features for the effective execution of RtI: universal screening, a three-tiered model, research-validated
interventions, regular progress monitoring, and decisions rules for placing students in different tiers.

First, Sailor (2009) suggested completing universal screening of students, using scientific, systematic procedures to identify students who are performing below expectations. Universal screening measures can be internally normed, meaning a student’s performance is compared to peers in their class, or can be externally normed, meaning a student’s performance is compared to same-aged peers students across the country. Sailor (2009) recommends using both internal and external universal screening measures to increase accuracy of identification. The goal of universal screening is to gather data from multiple sources to identify students who are not responding to high-quality general education curriculum alone and may benefit from additional interventions.

Second, RtI systems generally include three different tiers of increasing intensity in interventions so students receive appropriate interventions matching their individual needs. Of the common RtI features, one of the central features of RtI is the three tier model (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2012). Tier 1 is considered primary prevention provided to all students by high-quality instruction in general education. Tier 2 is referred to as secondary prevention offering supplemental interventions to students identified at-risk of reading failure. Tier 3 is called tertiary intervention providing more intense supplemental intervention for at-risk students who showed inadequate response to Tier 2 interventions. Tier 3 is characterized as including “the most difficult-to-teach” students and requiring intensive, individualized interventions (Fuchs et al., 2012). Tier 3
can include students in special education. However, there is current disagreement in the field over the role special education should play in RtI and when it is appropriate to identify students who qualify for special education services (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010; Fuchs et al., 2012).

The third component of RtI consists of research-based interventions to address the academic and behavioral needs of students. This is an essential part of RtI and reflects an effort to address student learning needs with scientifically based practices. Scientifically based and/or evidence-based practices refer to instructional strategies or curriculum which has been shown effective by several research studies (Brown-Chidsey & Seege, 2005). Both IDEA 2004 and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 mandate the use of evidence-based practices.

Fourth, practitioners use scientific measures to monitor the progress of students receiving supplemental interventions. Progress monitoring is different than universal screening because it shows if an intervention is working, rather than identifying the students needing additional support (Sailor, 2009). Progress monitoring should be completed at all tiers in the RtI model. The goal of progress monitoring is to help teams match the interventions used to a student’s individual needs.

And lastly, decision rules must be outlined to determine which interventions to use and when students should move to different tiers in RtI. Sailor (2009) recommends using data from progress monitoring tools to make decision rules for determining interventions most appropriate for students. He cautions against creating universal decisions rules for all students, stating that decisions in RtI need to be individualized and...
unique to the needs of students. Research in early literacy has led to an emergence of
general decision rules related to early literacy measures. However, more research is
needed to determine appropriate decision rules related to other areas.

Two Models of Response to Intervention

While researchers generally agree about the common features of RTI, two
conceptually different approaches to RtI exist (Sailor, 2009). The first method is referred
to as the standard-treatment protocol and the second is the problem-solving approach.
Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs (2008) explain how these two approaches differ. The standard-
treatment protocol is an approach utilizing standardized interventions and prescriptive
procedures to address general areas of academic needs. All interventions are validated by
research and practitioners choose interventions for students based on general needs.
Standard-treatment protocol interventions are often easier to implement as they usually
consist of scripted, research-based programs. In comparison, the problem solving
approach requires more individualized interventions designed by an educational team to
target specific student needs. Sailor (2009) also refers to the problem-solving approach
as a method for behavioral RtI. Behavioral RtI is used to identify interventions
addressing behaviors interfering in students’ learning and utilizes positive behavioral
supports. An advantage of the problem-solving approach is that interventions are much
more specific to a student and can better meet their individual needs. However, problem-
solving interventions are often much more difficult to implement because of limited
resources in schools. Further, the quality of interventions is impacted by various factors,
such as the effectiveness of the team’s design as well as the expertise of the teacher implementing the design.

Research by Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young (2003) compares the standard-treatment protocol approach and problem-solving model. After reviewing empirical evidence for both models, the authors concluded they prefer the standard-treatment protocol model. They felt more research has shown the effectiveness of standard-treatment protocol methods rather than the problem-solving model. In addition, they suggest another benefit is that schools are more likely to implement RtI interventions with fidelity when standardized curriculum is used. Problem solving interventions necessitate more expertise and highly skilled instructors, which makes it more difficult to implement appropriately. While Fuchs and colleagues (2003) acknowledge the benefits of both models, they prefer the standard-treatment protocol because it appears more practical and efficient for schools to use.

In his article describing the two different approaches to RtI, Shapiro (2009) recommends using the standard-treatment protocol for Tier 2 interventions, to maximize school resources and meet the needs of a larger group of students, and the problem-solving approach for Tier 3, to meet the needs of a smaller group of students with more intensive needs. Shapiro (2009) advocates combining both approaches to be the most effective strategy for meeting the needs of students. The current literature supports both approaches as producing positive results, as the standard-protocol approach (Simmons et al., 2011; Gravesk Brandon, Duesbery, McIntosh, & Pyle, 2011) and problem-solving
approach (Gelzheiser, Scanlon, Vellutino, Hallgren-Flynn, & Schatschneider, 2011) have led to positive student growth on reading outcomes.

This review of the literature focuses on RtI as it relates to elementary literacy interventions because the majority of RtI research has thus far focused on reading in the early elementary grades (Sailor, 2009). Therefore, more information is established about effective literacy-based interventions. In addition, literacy continues to be an important area of focus, with high rates of students at-risk for reading failure (Lembke, McMaster, & Stecker, 2010). However, research has shown RtI can effectively address this problem, as early intervention can prevent reading failure in future grades (Simmons et al., 2008; Torgesen et al., 2001) and can have a significant impact on students’ reading performance (Blachman et al., 2004; Lovett et al., 2000; Simmon et al., 2011).

**Tier One Primary Prevention**

The first tier of RtI is referred to as primary prevention. Tier 1 is provided in the general education classroom in the form of high-quality instruction. In an article by Stecker and colleagues (2008), they recommended and described a sample multi-tiered framework for RtI implementation at the elementary-grade level. They promoted a three-tiered model as a system for addressing the learning needs of struggling students. In regards to Tier 1 intervention, they considered this to be “high-quality” instruction provided in the general education classroom. They suggested choosing general education core curriculum, programs, and instructional procedures carefully, selecting ones found to be effective with diverse learners. For Tier 1 instruction to be effective, school teams need to research instructional practices before implementing them. In addition, staff need
to be trained how to use instructional practices with fidelity. This training should be ongoing in the form or coaching, observations, and professional development opportunities. Instructional practices used in general education should be scientifically validated with research supporting its effectiveness.

When administered with fidelity, research has shown high-quality Tier 1 instruction enables the majority of students to make adequate growth and meet expected benchmark levels (Otaiba et al., 2011). Otaiba et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study investigating Tier 1 kindergarten reading instruction in 7 socioeconomically diverse schools with 21 credentialed teachers. They used end-of-the-year reading performance data for 203 kindergarten students’ to make predictions about their first grade reading achievement the following year. From observations, they found instruction in Tier 1 was generally rated effective and teachers focused more time on code-based instruction rather than meaning-focused instruction. Analysis of end-of-the year reading data showed that most students (80-95%) showed adequate growth from Tier 1 instruction alone. From this study, it can be suggested that more intensive interventions in Tier 2 are not needed for the majority of students, but rather effective instruction in Tier 1 could significantly impact students’ academic growth. Thus, it is important to provide professional development opportunities to train teachers how to use core curriculum correctly as well as undergo ongoing observations and/or coaching to check for fidelity of instruction (Stecker et al., 2008; Hill et al., 2012).

Berkeley and colleagues (2009) did a descriptive study and reviewed RtI data from all 50 states regarding the procedures and processes used to implement and develop
RtI in schools across the country. To gather information, they reviewed each state’s department of education websites and contacted state department educational representatives to clarify data. Results indicated that all states were in different stages of RtI development. More specifically, the level of professional development offered to teachers varied from state to state. In addition, most state models have not developed a method for monitoring the fidelity of instructional practices in the different tiers, including Tier 1. Lack of fidelity data could compromise the quality of Tier 1 instruction.

This finding was also found by Hill et al. (2012) where a review of 22 empirical studies related to efficacy of Tier 2 interventions was conducted. The purpose of their research was to evaluate the studies to determine the fidelity measures used and instructional alignment between Tier 1 and Tier 2. Results showed that most studies did not include information on how fidelity of instruction was measured in Tier 1. From the data, it appeared that researchers were more likely to report fidelity data for Tier 2 instruction. Also, Tier 1 fidelity data was rarely included when the researchers were involved only in Tier 2 intervention. However, when researchers were more involved in supplementing Tier 1 instruction, they were more likely to report fidelity measures for Tier 1. Overall, the study suggested that data from Tier 2 interventions would be more meaningful if data was also provided on the fidelity of instruction in Tier 1. This would allow a better understanding of alignment between Tier 1 and Tier 2. While it is challenging to monitor, it is essential efforts are taken to improve, maintain, and monitor the quality and fidelity of Tier 1 instruction (Johnson, Mellard, & Byrd, 2005). By taking
these efforts to improve instructional quality, educators can more accurately conclude student learning difficulties are not a result of their instruction but rather show a need for additional support (Stecker, et al., 2008).

In addition to providing high-quality instruction, another important component of Tier 1 is universal screening. Universal screening refers to administering short assessments which are efficient, reliable, and reasonably valid to all students at the beginning of the year to identify students who are at-risk of reading difficulties (Gersten et al., 2008). The purpose of universal screening is to determine which students are not responding adequately to Tier 1 instruction alone and will likely benefit from supplemental interventions (Sailor, 2009). In an article by Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton (2012), the authors described a model for Smart RtI, referring to an RtI model where schools efficiently use their RtI framework to target student academic and behavior needs. In their article, they described the importance of universal screening of students, citing that the use of universal screening to provide early identification of at-risk students represents a big change in previous service delivery at schools. They proposed two different methods of universal screening, including one-stage screening or two-stage screening. A one-stage screening involves administering a single assessment to all students to determine which students did not meet benchmark goals and, thus, should receive additional intervention. A two-stage screening also involves administering a single assessment to all students, but then requires an additional, more in-depth assessment be given to students who did meet benchmark goals. The purpose of this
second assessment is to gather more detailed data for students who are shown to be at-risk before determining supplemental intervention (Fuchs et al., 2012).

One criticism of universal screening is that it may inaccurately identify students at-risk of reading difficulties. So, a two-stage screening approach has been proposed to increase the accuracy of universal screening data. For example, Compton et al. (2010) conducted an experimental study to investigate ways of eliminating false positives resulting from universal screening. A false positive is when a student scores below a benchmark cut-off point but is not truly at-risk of reading difficulties. If universal screening results in a high number of false positives, schools provide extra intervention to students who do not need it. In comparison, a false negative is when a student scores above a benchmark cut-off point but is in need of extra intervention to show adequate growth. A high number of false negatives results in at-risk students not receiving early intervention. Compton et al. (2010) used a two-stage approach to screening for 712 first grade students to see the effects on the number of false positives which resulted. In Stage 1, students were given a single standardized word-level measure. This was a short screener that was simple to administer to a large group of students. If students did not meet benchmarks for this screener, they moved to Stage 2. In Stage 2, students were given a more in-depth screening battery to collect more data. Students considered at-risk also received short-term progress monitoring assessments, which consisted of two word identification fluency (WIF) screeners and a dynamic assessment (DA). Results from the study indicated that adding WIF progress monitoring and dynamic assessments for students identified at-risk significantly decreased the number of false positives after
universal screening. Thus, it appears the addition of these two assessments can help make screening measures more efficient and reliable. It was also important to note that the study found oral reading fluency and running records were less effective and did not contribute to less false positives.

To improve accuracy of identification and utilize school resources effectively, research suggests practitioners pick universal screening measures which are scientifically and research validated to avoid inaccurate identification of students, such as false positives and false negatives (Compton et al., 2006). Various measures can be used to conduct universal screening. Scholin & Burns (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 18 studies to investigate the different screening measures used in the studies and the relationship of these screening measures to students’ reading performance following intervention. Scholin & Burns summarized the different screening measures administered in the studies they examined: curriculum based measurement (CBM), standardized measure of achievement, informal reading inventories, and IQ measures. From their research, Scholin & Burns (2010) recommend using informal measures and standardized measures rather than IQ models. They found that IQ screening data had a small to moderate relationship to post-intervention outcomes, so they were not considered an effective pre-screening measure. In their discussion, the authors concluded that universal screening data can be used to identify what interventions students need and the intensity of interventions needed (Scholin & Burns, 2012). Generally students not showing adequate progress in Tier 1 become eligible for Tier 2 interventions, as it is
generally best practice to start students in less intensive interventions (Scholin & Burns, 2012).

Stecker and colleagues (2008) recommended using progress monitoring measures to determine if students should continue in Tier 1 or move to Tier 2. In addition to using universal screening and benchmark assessments, progress monitoring is an essential part of Tier 1. In fact, they cited progress monitoring as one of the most important components to RTI, as this enables educators to make data-based decision making. Progress monitoring measures refer to brief assessments which are given frequently to assess if students are making adequate progress in reading skills. Progress monitoring allows educators to use baseline data to determine long-term goals. Students are considered to show adequate progress if their rate of improvement matches their projected goals. Similar to universal screening measures, curriculum-based measures (CBM) are often used to progress monitor students on various reading skills (i.e. letter-sound fluency, word identification fluency, passage reading fluency, and maze fluency). CBM progress monitoring materials can be used for students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Stecker and colleagues (2008) suggested administering progress monitoring measures weekly for students at-risk. For these students, progress monitoring data is collected for five to eight weeks. After this period of time, educators can use the data to assess if students are making adequate progress, as measured by a student’s performance and rate of improvement as compared to peers. Students who responded well to Tier 1
instruction do not need further intervention. However, students who did not make adequate growth would then be referred to Tier 2 services.

However, some researchers advocate skipping Tier 2 and jumping immediately to Tier 3 services. In their synthesis of the literature, Vaughn, Denton, & Fletcher (2010) stated that students should spend a “reasonable time” in Tier 2 services. However, it may be more appropriate to move certain students more quickly to Tier 3 services. They go on to specify that practitioners should consider students’ characteristics (i.e. the extent of a students’ reading impairment) and intervention characteristics (i.e. the level of intensity offered in Tier 2) to determine a “reasonable time” for each individual student.

**Tier Two Secondary Prevention**

The second tier of RtI is referred to as secondary prevention. The goal of Tier 2 is to provide research-based interventions and accelerate the learning of students at-risk for reading difficulties (Vaughn, Denton, & Fletcher, 2010). To boost students’ growth in reading, practitioners can alter three components: length of time of instruction, intensity of instruction, and number of opportunities to practice reading skills (Vaughn et al., 2010). Tier 2 interventions are often provided to students in a homogenous small-group format and can be provided by a variety of school personnel, such as the general education teacher, intervention teacher, reading specialist, paraprofessionals, special education staff, or volunteers (Wanzek & Cavanaugh, 2012).

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the What Works Clearinghouse recommends the following features for Tier 2 intervention (Gersten et al., 2008). First, groups should consist of 3-4 students with similar academic needs, as determined from
universal screening results and other assessment data. It is recommended that the size of groups decreases for students in upper elementary grades who have shown inadequate progress (Wanzek & Cavanaugh, 2012). Next, groups should meet 3-5 times per week for sessions ranging 20-40 minutes each. The amount of instructional time should be influenced by the grade and academic needs of students. For example, kindergarten interventions are commonly shorter than those in first through third grade (Gersten et al., 2008; Wanzek & Cavanaugh, 2012).

An experimental study by Gunn and colleagues (2000) supports the Tier 2 suggestions described above. In the study, 256 students in kindergarten through second grade were assigned to two conditions. The first received a supplemental reading instruction focusing on explicitly building phonemic awareness and decoding skills. The second condition received Tier 1 instruction only and did not receive any extra supplemental support. Consistent with recommendations for Tier 2 interventions made by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the What Works Clearinghouse, supplemental reading groups consisted mostly of two to three students, with groups meeting about 25-30 minutes five days a week. Participants were assessed on multiple areas of reading achievement three times during a two year period. Results from this study were positive; at the end of the two year period, students who received Tier 2 intervention scored significantly higher on measures of word attack, word identification, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Overall, the literature also supports using explicit and systematic approaches to teach reading skills (Gersten et al., 2008). Explicit instruction refers to clear teacher
modeling of specific skills while systematic instruction refers to using a careful sequence of introducing reading skills in isolation then generalizing skills to other situation, stating clear objectives, and providing multiple opportunities to practice (Carnine et al., 2010). A study by Simmons and colleagues (2011) provided evidence for the effectiveness of explicit and systematic reading curriculum. In the study, the authors compared the effectiveness of different Tier 2 interventions (an explicit, systematic commercial program and a school-designed intervention) with 206 kindergarten students who were found to be at-risk of reading difficulty. Results indicated that after at-risk kindergarten students received an intervention utilizing a systematic and explicit reading program, they demonstrated significant results on alphabetic phonemic and decoding skills. While students on both Tier 2 interventions showed accelerated learning, those in the systematic and explicit intervention showed more growth.

While the Simmons et al. (2011) study provided evidence for the success of a systematic and direct instruction approach, it has also been found that Tier 2 reading interventions from different theoretical perspectives can be effective as well. A study by Mathes and colleagues (2005) investigated the effects of two supplemental reading interventions from different theoretical perspectives (i.e. direct instruction behavioral approach versus responsive reading cognitive approach). Data was collected from six different schools and included 91 first grade students who were identified at-risk for reading difficulties. After about eight months of intervention, results showed both the direct instruction behavioral approach and responsive reading cognitive approach were equally effective and resulted in positive outcomes related to decoding, oral reading
fluency, spelling, and phonological awareness. While students receiving supplemental intervention did not accelerate their scores to levels of their typically achieving peers, they showed more positive growth than at-risk students who had not received either intervention. The authors of this study concluded that a “one size fits all” approach to reading instruction does not exist, attributing the success of both approaches to be related to the use of research based strategies which provided a comprehensive and integrated method for teaching reading. They noted that, while each intervention delivered instruction in different ways, they both integrated common research-based features. They used this evidence to suggest that schools should have flexibility when selecting reading interventions but cautioned practitioners to make sure interventions include research-based strategies before implementing them. Implications from this study also suggest the importance of providing high quality Tier 1 instruction alongside research-based Tier 2 interventions. The authors found students showed more positive growth after Tier 2 intervention than in other studies where Tier 1 instruction was not monitored for fidelity.

In addition, studies using intervention materials addressing the five major components of reading instruction recognized by the National Reading Panel—comprehension, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary—have been found to have positive results on reading outcomes. For example, a quasi-experimental study by Graves and colleagues (2011) compared the effects of a Tier 2 reading intervention to a control group receiving no intervention on the reading achievement of 60 sixth grade students, identified at-risk by scores on standardized tests. The Tier 2 intervention targeted all five areas of reading recommended by the National Reading
Panel and consisted of one hour sessions, meeting three times a week. During the hour sessions, students received 20 minutes of phonics/phonemics awareness practice, 20 minutes of fluency practice, and 20 minutes of comprehension and vocabulary practice. Results from the study showed that students in the treatment and control group improved their performance on reading measures. However, for each measure, the treatment group showed more growth than the control group. In fact, growth on oral reading fluency scores was significantly higher in the intervention group. Students in the intervention group improved 30% more than those in the control group. In terms of comprehension outcomes, students in the intervention group showed more growth but results were not significant. As summarized above, results indicated that Tier 2 intervention targeting phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary had positive outcomes, as students receiving intervention show more growth than those who do not receive the same targeted instruction.

To determine if students are appropriately placed in Tier 2, most schools implement ongoing progress monitoring of students. The purpose of short-term progress monitoring is to determine which students are showing adequate growth and no longer need intervention or which students are showing inadequate growth and require more intense intervention (Compton et al., 2006). Sailor (2009) suggested important guidelines to consider when progress monitoring students. For example, before making instructional decisions, analyze data from multiple sources, such as progress monitoring data, classroom work samples, benchmark scores, etc. Also, practitioners must remember there is a difference between learning and performance; there are times when students do
not perform well on assessments because of factors unrelated to their actual learning (i.e. anxiety, motivation, behavior). Poor results on an assessment do not necessarily indicate a student did not learn a skill. Thus, it’s important to also consider multiple factors when interpreting assessment results.

It is recommended that students’ progress is evaluated after 8-15 weeks of receiving Tier 2 intervention. At this point, if students have made adequate growth, they are considered “high responders” and can move back to Tier 1 (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008). However, it should be cautioned that these students continued to be monitoring after moving back to Tier 1. If students show inadequate growth after 8-15 weeks, they are considered “low responders” and the team should consider moving them to Tier 3 intervention to receive more intensive services.

**Tier Three Tertiary Intervention**

The third tier of RtI is referred to as tertiary intervention. Through a review of RtI data collected from schools across the country, it appears Tier 3 is the least defined and consistent RtI tier across schools and states (Berkeley et al., 2009). Researchers and practitioners have difficulty specifying the required components of Tier 3 implementation (Fuchs et al., 2012) as well as determining if special education services are initiated when entering Tier 3 or when exiting Tier 3 (Berkeley et al., 2009). How Tier 3 is structured often depends on the school. At some schools, Tier 3 is similar to Tier 2 but with more intensive interventions; while at other schools Tier 3 is considered an automatic referral or placement in special education (Sailor, 2009). More research needs to be conducted to develop a clearer conception of Tier 3 intervention as well as its distinction from Tier 2.
Regardless of the varying pathways to special education services in Tier 3, students generally receive Tier 3 interventions if data shows Tier 1 high-quality general education curriculum and initial Tier 2 interventions were unsuccessful in producing adequate progress toward benchmark goals (Sailor, 2009). Generally, Tier 3 is appropriate for students found to be “non-responders” even after multiple attempts at Tier 2 interventions (Stecker et al., 2008; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2010).

While less is known about Tier 3, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) makes the following recommendations for Tier 3 (Gersten et al., 2008). First, when students enter Tier 3, the intensity of instruction should increase. This can be achieved by increasing the time of intervention, decreasing group sizes, and providing more individualized instruction on high-priority skills or focusing on smaller objectives and skills. The IES also recommends meeting with a school-site team to create an individualized plan for students in Tier 3, as these students require more expertise and individualization than students in other tiers. It is important to note that the IES cited a low level of evidence for their recommendations outlined above. Gersten et al. (2008) explained there is limited evidence in the research supporting the effectiveness of the recommended strategies. Continued research needs to be done to evaluate the most effective teaching practices which meet the needs of the 3 to 5 percent of students exhibiting the most significant reading challenges and are chronically unresponsive to intervention (Torgesen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1997).

As evidence to this, studies have found mixed results on the impact of varying factors related to intensity in Tier 3. For example, an experimental study by Torgesen et
al. (2011) compared two instructional programs targeting phonemic awareness and decoding skills. The first program was called Auditory Discrimination in Depth Program (ADD) and the second was Embedded Phonics (EP). Participants in the study were 60 students identified with learning disabilities between the ages of 8 and 10 years old. Researchers manipulated variables related to intervention intensity by dramatically increasing the length of daily intervention (consisting of two 50 minute sessions per day with a short break in between), shortened the number of weeks the intervention lasted (8 weeks), and provided one-on-one instruction. These alterations resulted in significant student gains in measures of broad reading ability, which were maintained at the end of a 2-year follow-up period. In fact, a year after the intervention was completed, 40% of the students no longer needed special education services. It was also found that the ADD and EP programs both yielded equally effective results, which also highlighted the finding Mathes and colleagues (2005) found regarding different theoretical approaches having in similar results. While the results in the study by Torgesen et al. (2011) show more positive growth than many other studies focusing on Tier 3 intervention, it is difficult to say which factor contributed to the study’s success since many variables were manipulated.

In another experimental study, Vaughn et al. (2009) examined the impact of additional, more intensive intervention for 14 second grade students considered to be “low responders” to previous interventions in 1st grade. Students were identified as low responders if they received Tier 2 intervention in 1st grade but did not meet an established benchmark in the beginning of second grade. In this study, the low responding students
received Tier 3 interventions which increased in intensity by adding an additional 26 weeks of interventions (about 100 sessions) for these students in 2nd grade. Results indicated positive outcomes; after prolonged intervention, lower responding students showed statistically significant progress in areas of reading comprehension and accuracy. This study suggests that lower responding students may require more intensive interventions in Tier 3 but that ongoing, intensive intervention in Tier 3 can result in statistically significant progress on reading achievement, even for students who have previously shown inadequate progress.

Furthermore, in a longitudinal follow-up study by Berninger et al. (2002), researchers sought to study the relationships between 128 students identified as faster and slower responders to initial interventions in first grade and the long-term effects in second grade. In addition, they looked at the growth slower responders made with additional intervention in second grade. Results showed that with additional intervention a second year, the slower responders did make progress in measures of reading skills. Studies like these suggest that students with more significant reading needs learn better from different instructional approaches and strategies than other at-risk students with less reading deficits (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2008).

Another study by Wanzek & Vaughn (2008) examined the effects of increasing intervention intensity by lengthening the time of intervention (i.e. providing a “single does” or “double dose” of intervention). Researchers studied two cohorts of first grade students identified as demonstrating low response to previous intervention. The first cohort consisted of 50 first grade students and the second cohort consisted of 36 first
grade students. Participants either received a single dose of intervention, a double dose of intervention, or no extra intervention. Results from the study showed positive outcomes; students in the intervention groups (single and double dose) had greater growth over time than students who did not receive the intervention. Interestingly, when comparing the effects of a single and double dose of intervention, researchers found student performance was similar over a period of time, regardless of being in the single dose or double dose intervention group. This leads to questions about the long-term effectiveness of increased time in intervention, as extending the duration of daily intervention alone does not appear to accelerate learning. Further, less research has been conducted to provide evidence for the impact of increased instructional time on the performance of students in upper elementary grades (Vaughn et al., 2010).

The size of instructional groups is another variable which can be manipulated to increase the intensity of Tier 3 interventions. Studies suggest decreasing group size leads to more positive results (Schwartz, Schmitt, & Lose, 2012). An experimental study by Schwartz, Schmitt, & Lose (2012) compared the results of one-on-one instruction with small-group conditions of 8 or 9 students. Results showed significantly better results in the one-on-one condition than the small-group condition, suggesting a correlation between decreased reading outcomes and increases in instructional group size. However, it was noted teachers who received effective training and professional development on instructional practices achieved similar results in one-on-one and small-group conditions. This highlights the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers and the impact of unique factors related to teacher experience and expertise.
An experimental study by Vaughn et al. (2003) compared the performance of second grade students at risk of reading difficulties in three different teacher-to-student group sizes: one-to-one, one-to-three, and one-to-ten. All participants in the study received the same intervention but the group sizes differed. Results indicated that no significant differences on reading measures were found between the one-to-one and one-to-three conditions. The authors attributed this finding to the level of training and experience of the participating teachers, as all participating teachers were experienced and highly qualified. Results on reading measures for students in the one-to-ten condition were lower than the other two conditions, suggesting that a smaller group size is beneficial even if significant results were not found. While much is still to be learned about the optimal instructional grouping size, researchers tend to agree upon general guidelines when forming groups. First, groups should be a small enough size where all students can participate and teachers can effectively monitor and provide feedback to students (Vaughn et al., 2010).

Modifying intervention curriculum is another way of increasing the intensity of Tier 3. Individual studies provide evidence for research-based practices found effective for certain student populations. A review of the literature by Wanzek & Vaughn (2010) studied outcomes of Tier 3 RtI interventions in early elementary grades (kindergarten through third grade) and upper elementary grades (fourth through sixth grade). Their review suggests the following instructional practices for students in the early elementary grades. First, the most effective interventions targeted skills for letter-sounds correspondences, word patterns, phonics, and blending. Instructional materials matched
the level of text with the students’ individual reading level. In addition, they concluded it is critical for early identification and intervention, as it appears students in kindergarten and first grade generally show larger growth after intervention than students in second and third grade. Other researchers also emphasize the importance of implementing interventions to improve attention and engagement of students during instruction. For example, Dion et al. (2011) conducted an experimental study to see the effects of using peer-tutoring activities and a positive behavior incentive game to improve student attention. In this study, 58 first-grade classrooms from 30 different schools implemented the peer-tutoring and positive behavior incentive game interventions. Results indicated that both strategies supported students in strengthening reading skills and increasing student attention during lessons. However, students identified as more attentive before the study began showed greater growth than inattentive students on non-word recognition reading assessments, and measures of reading comprehension. While the Good Behavior Game did increase student attention during lessons, it does not appear that increased attention led to increased reading outcomes for students identified as inattentive.

Wanzek & Vaughn (2010) also shared recommendations for Tier 3 reading intervention in the upper elementary grades. To address comprehension needs, most studies utilized teacher-developed measures instead of norm-referenced materials. Various comprehension strategies found to be effective with fourth through sixth grade students include self-instruction and attribution training (Miranda et al., 1997), using explicit expository text (Ritchey et al., 2012), the interactive strategies approach (Gelzheiser et al., 2011), the TWA (Think before reading, think While reading, think
After reading) strategy (Mason, 2004), and using technology to teach vocabulary (Xin & Reith, 2001). Reciprocal teaching is a strategy showing mixed outcomes, resulting in no significant differences after intervention (Lederer, 2000). To address reading fluency needs, studies using repeated reading and sustained/continuous reading strategies have found mixed results, leaving it hard to know if these interventions would be successful with different students (Mathes & Fuchs, 1993; O’Connor, White & Swanson, 2007). Other studies have also evaluated the use of multi-component interventions which address multiple areas of reading (i.e. phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary). Studies by Ritchey et al. (2012) and Gelzheiser et al. (2011) utilizing multi-component interventions both found positive results on several areas of reading, such as basic reading skills, accuracy, comprehension, and content knowledge.

Student engagement and attention to instruction is another factor to consider when developing Tier 3 interventions for students in all elementary grades. To maintain student engagement, it is important to use progress monitoring data to adjust interventions to match student need. This allows students to receive intervention at their instructional level. Just as progress monitoring is an essential component of Tier 2, progress monitoring is generally more frequent in Tier 3. Stecker et al. (2008) recommend weekly progress monitoring in Tier 2. The same progress monitoring measures can be used in Tier 2 and 3 but it may be necessary to use measures which are more individualized for each child (Sailor, 2009).
Summary and Conclusions

With the reauthorization of NCLB in 2001 and IDEA in 2004, RtI has become recognized by federal legislation and has become an influential educational movement across the country. While RtI programs will vary from state to state, as all states are in different stages of RtI development, common features of RtI have been generally accepted. Common features of RtI, as cited in the literature, include universal screening, a three-tiered model, evidence-based practices, research-validated progress monitoring, and decisions rules guiding appropriate interventions and/or tier.

Currently, there are two different models for RtI. The standard-treatment protocol uses standardized interventions for students exhibiting similar academic needs. The problem-solving model aims to individualize the intervention to match the specific needs of each student. Research has shown the validity of both models.

RtI generally consists of three different tiers. Tier 1 consists of high-quality instruction provided in general education. Important components of Tier 1 is universal screening to identify students needing extra intervention, use of research-based curriculum implemented with fidelity, and frequent progress monitoring of students. Tier 2 generally consists of research-based interventions which are meant to accelerate the learning of students behind grade-level (Vaughn, Denton, & Fletcher, 2010). The interventions used and the format of instructional groups in Tier 2 varies by school district, as schools individualize interventions to fit the needs of their students. Tier 3 is considered the least defined tier of RtI (Berkeley et al., 2009). Some schools conceptualize Tier 3 as a stage of adding more intense academic interventions for
students who did not respond to Tier 2. Other schools conceptualize Tier 3 as referral to special education (Sailor, 2009).

In the last decade, considerable research has focused on RtI which has significantly impacted the way schools address the needs of students at-risk of reading difficulties. For example, in their article reflecting on the progress of RtI in the last decade, Fuchs & Vaughn (2012) summarized several noteworthy accomplishments in the field. One success of RtI cited was the increased use of screening measures to identify students needing academic intervention. These efforts have led to more accurate identification of students who would likely be at-risk of academic failure without intervention. They also recognized advances in progress monitoring. Extensive research has been conducted to develop progress monitoring measures primarily in reading. This has enabled educators to more easily and frequently track the progress of their students. Overall, these achievements in RtI are encouraging as more schools begin to refine their system. Across the country, almost all states have begun implementing a form of RtI (Berkeley et al., 2009). The specifics of RtI vary state-to-state, district-to-district, and school-to-school, but a nationwide push has begun to set the foundation for RtI.

While many components of RtI have been deeply studied, many questions still remain in regards to effective implementation of RtI. For example, Fuchs & Vaughn (2012) recognized fidelity of Tier 1 is difficult to achieve, as teachers need more professional development to effectively differentiate their instruction for diverse learners. In addition, most schools struggle to determine what interventions to use, which staff should provide instruction, and how to determine when students move through the
different tiers. Further, Fuchs & Vaughn (2012) cited most RtI research focuses on the primary grades and there is limited research related to middle-grade students. Continued research is needed to more clearly define and conceptualize procedures and interventions in Tier 3 as well as clarify decision rules indicating when students should move between tiers.

Overall, descriptions and guidelines for RtI are needed and can greatly assist schools in developing RtI systems. However, due to the varied resources available to schools, it seems schools need the flexibility to adjust and adopt RtI to meet their individual needs (Wanzek & Cavanaugh, 2012). Approaches to RtI will vary, as the resources available to schools impact the ways RtI is conceptualized, the number of tiers used in their model, the staff responsible for implementing interventions, and how RTI is used for special education qualification (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). School-site teams need to be informed by the research when making important decisions related to the implementation of RtI. As the field continues to learn more about RtI and literacy, schools can continue to improve their methods of addressing the unique needs of students.
Chapter 3

METHODS

This chapter provides information on the methods used to develop and implement an RtI program at a Title I elementary school. By describing the RtI program at this school, the author means to provide the reader with a contextual understanding of how materials in the RtI Resource Binder were used. In addition, the materials included in the RtI Resource Binder are outlined and the purpose the binder is clarified. Information found in this chapter will describe: a) the demographics of the school in which RtI was implemented b) initial steps for developing an RtI program; c) Tier 1 structure and interventions; d) Tier 2 structure and interventions; e) Tier 3 structure and interventions; and f) Description of the RtI Resource Binder.

School Demographics

The focus school for this project was a Title I elementary school located in the Central Valley. The school served 384 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The student population of this school was composed of 67% Hispanic or Latino, 23% African American, 7% Asian, 2% White, and 1% two or more Races. This school had a high population of students from low-income backgrounds, with 90.6% of students considered to be socioeconomically disadvantaged and 85% of students receiving free and reduced lunch. About 45.4% of students were English language learners and about 5.5% of students were identified with disabilities. The school’s Academic Performance Index (API) score from 2011-2012 was 815. California Standards Test scores from 2011-2012 showed that 57% of students were proficient in English Language Arts, 67% were
proficient in Mathematics, and 40% were proficient in Science. This school did not meet its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria, so this school entered its first year as a Program Improvement (PI) school.

All teachers at this school site were fully credentialed. Five teachers were in their first year at this school, while nine teachers were returning and had two to ten years of teaching experience. The principal was in her third year as the school’s administrator. All new teachers to this school received a full week of training focusing on Guided Reading and the Reading Workshop model. In addition, all teachers received ongoing training in literacy instruction from the school site reading and writing coaches.

**Initial Steps for Developing an RtI Program**

The author wanted to work with her school-site team to develop an RtI system that followed research-based principles to improve their current intervention program. In previous years, intervention was provided for students but it was not documented, tracked, or executed with fidelity. So, this project was designed to meet this school’s need by working together to implement RtI with greater fidelity and effectiveness.

Before implementing an RtI program, the author took many steps prior to the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year to prepare this school’s RtI system. The steps taken when implementing the RtI system were informed by research gathered from this project and cited in the literature review. Before beginning RtI implementation, key steps were followed to prepare the staff. For example, members of the RtI team were defined, RtI materials were updated and revised, and professional development was offered to general education teachers to explain their role in the RtI process.
Defining the RtI Team

First, the school leadership team met to define RtI team members. From this meeting, the following staff members were identified as playing an important role in the RtI process: principal, education specialist, school psychologist, speech therapist, intervention coordinator, reading and writing coaches, school counselor, and after-school director. The role of each staff member was further defined. The principal would act as the main point person for overseeing the implementation of RtI, facilitating PST (problem solving team) meetings, and making decisions regarding the allocation of resources for RtI. The school psychologist was responsible for attending PST meetings, observing students in the RtI process to provide feedback to the team, and completing special education assessment for students identified for Tier 3. The author (who was the education specialist on-site), intervention coordinator, and reading and writing coaches were responsible for supporting general education teachers in the RtI process by providing ideas on ways to differentiate academic reading instruction in the classroom, providing small group intervention for students identified in Tier 2 or Tier 3, and collecting progress monitoring data for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. In addition, the author was responsible for explaining and clarifying the RtI process to teachers, staff, and parents as well as coordinating and gathering the information necessary for meetings with teachers and parents of students receiving RtI interventions. The speech therapist was the point person for questions or concerns related to student speech and language issues. The school counselor was identified as the lead for addressing emotional or behavioral concerns which impacted student learning. Finally,
the after-school director was responsible for providing appropriate, targeted after-school intervention for students performing below grade-level in 2nd through 5th grade. A document created to describe the roles of RtI team members is included in Appendix A-1. The RtI team also agreed to meet every week on Friday for one hour to address RtI needs and concerns. In this way, the RtI team was identified and roles were defined.

*Updating RtI Materials and Forms*

Before the school year began, the author also collaborated with the RtI team to update materials and forms used in the RtI process. These materials were all included in the RtI Resource Binder and examples are shown in Appendix A. First, the team created an RtI computer shared drive so materials were saved in one spot and accessible for all staff members using their computers. The purpose for this was to improve documentation and data collection procedures. In the previous school year, all RtI forms, progress monitoring data, and meeting notes were handwritten, so they were frequently lost and misplaced. In addition, all staff members did not have easy access to these forms, since they were all kept in one binder and copies were rarely made for teachers. This made it very difficult for the RtI team to analyze data. So, the creation of a shared drive was meant to improve organization of the RtI system.

Next, the author revised forms used in the RtI process. For example, the flowchart of steps in the RtI process, located in RtI Resource binder and Appendix A-2 of this project, was revised to reflect more specific timelines and specific team members responsible for each step. Further, the RtI team decided to focus more attention on strengthening Tier 1 general education instruction, so they developed “9-grid” forms.
These 9-grid forms provided a template for teachers to identify ways to differentiate their instruction in nine different areas. The nine different areas of instruction included: quantity, level of support, time, input, output, difficulty, participation, alternate goals, and substitute curriculum. In the previous year, teachers were given blank 9-grid templates. The teachers gave the feedback that these were difficult to complete because they were unable to generate ideas on their own. Thus, these forms were updated so ideas for differentiation were given for each of the nine areas. In addition to completing the 9-grid template, the 9-grid forms were also revised to include a page documenting the specific areas of academic concern and an action plan to set short-term realistic academic goals and identify ways to measure these goals. The author also created and added a 9-grid “follow-up” page, which was used to document the results of the 9-grid 6-8 weeks after implementing. This form was new, as there was no form documenting 9-grid follow-up last year. The 9-grid forms were updated so they were more streamlined and easier for teachers to complete. An example of 9-grid forms are located in Appendix A-3.

In addition, the author revised the meeting notes template for Problem Solving Team (PST) meetings. PST meetings were held for students identified in the RtI process who continued to perform below grade level or far below grade level even after receiving RtI interventions. PST meeting notes are an important part of the RtI process because they provide documentation of current academic performance, describe the academic interventions that have been tried and/or being currently implemented, set short-term academic goals, and document progress towards these goals. PST meetings help determine if students move to Tier 3 and receive more intensive services as well as
special education assessments. In previous years, PST meeting notes were handwritten, difficult to read, and often become misplaced or lost. The author revised the PST meeting template to be an electronic copy so notes could be typed and saved directly on the shared drive. This ensured that meeting notes were neat and easy to read, saved in a safe place, and all staff members could view them. Finally, the author created a meeting notes template for an initial PST meeting and a follow-up PST meeting, as both required different date to collect or document. Examples of PST meetings note templates are located in Appendix A-5.

Of the revised materials described above, all were uploaded onto the RtI shared drive and were available for all staff members to access. In addition, hard copies were printed and included in the RtI Resource Binder, which all lead teachers received. Examples of all of these forms can be found in Appendix A.

Professional Development

After revising the needed forms and materials for the RtI process, the author created and provided professional development for staff to explain the new forms and procedures. Teachers had previously participated in two presentations focusing on RtI during the 2011-2012 school year. So, the professional development for 2012-2013 was created as a follow-up to refresh and remind teachers about RtI and their specific responsibilities. While intended to occur at the beginning of the year at the staff retreat, due to unforeseen circumstances and scheduling issues, the professional development did not occur until mid-year in December. However, ideally, this professional development
would have been offered at the beginning of the year so teachers better understood their role in the RtI process.

This professional development opportunity was structured so the author met with teachers from each grade-level, rather than meeting as a whole staff. This allowed the author to provide more individualized information since she presented to a smaller group (2-3 teachers at a time). At each professional development meeting, the author gave an overview of the purpose of RtI, the role staff members played in the process, and clarified the flowchart outlining steps in the RtI process. In addition, the new shared drive and forms located on the shared drive were explained. The author showed teachers how to navigate and access the shared drive and documented saved on it.

During the professional development meetings, the most time was spent explaining the updated 9-grid forms. When teachers identified students reading below grade-level, they were instructed to create a 9-grid for this student. The goal of the 9-grid was to identify the specific academic needs of a student and then determine ways to differentiate instruction in the classroom to best meet students’ needs. At the professional development, the author supported each grade level team in starting a 9-grid form for a pre-selected student. Teachers had experience creating 9-grids last year, but the format of the forms was new this year. So the author provided training for this at the professional development. In this way, the process for initiating and completing a 9-grid was modeled. See Appendix B for an example of professional development training materials used.
Tier 1 Structure and Interventions

High Quality Core Reading Instruction

To align with research citing the importance of providing high-quality instruction in general education, the author and RtI team at the elementary school took steps to ensure fidelity of Tier 1 instruction and interventions. The school-site leadership team chose to use guided reading as the primary format for core reading instruction. Guided reading is a research-based approach to teaching reading. Students are placed into small groups of 4-6 students who all have similar reading levels. For each group, the teacher chooses a trade book considered to be at the students’ “instructional” level (i.e. students can read the text with about 90% accuracy). Teachers are responsible for meeting with each guided reading group five days a week. Guided reading lessons last about 20 minutes for each group. Lessons begin with 5-10 minutes of word work practice focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, or vocabulary. Then the teacher introduces the new book or chapter and poses a “guiding question” for students to think about while they read. Next, students read an assigned section in the book quietly to themselves, with the teacher listening and providing direct feedback to students. During guided reading, students learn reading strategies, such as sounding out words, looking for word chunks, using contextual clues, and self-monitoring while reading. The teacher’s role in guided reading is to teach reading and comprehension strategies and then provide authentic reading experiences which guide students in applying these strategies. While the teacher is meeting with individual small groups for guided reading, the rest of the class is engaged in reading centers. Reading centers consist of different activities linked to
grade-level content standards. For example, most classrooms have writing, listening, poetry, math/science, and word work centers. The activities completed in each center vary on the grade-level.

To ensure teachers were following instructional guidelines and adhering to research based literacy instruction provided in Tier 1, the school principal and two instructional coaches frequently observed in classrooms and provided ongoing training. From these observations, it was found that guided reading was being implemented with high fidelity.

*Universal Screening*

In addition to efforts taken to improve the quality of Tier 1 instruction in general education, the RtI team also used universal screening measures to identify students at-risk of reading difficulty. Teachers administered an informal reading assessment called the Development Reading Assessment (DRA) to all students at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The DRA is an informal assessment which identifies benchmark levels students should reach to be considered at-grade level in reading at each point in the year. The DRA assesses reading fluency and comprehension. First, the DRA requires students to read a short story aloud. The level of the story chosen is based off of the level of books the student reads in class. DRA levels range from level A to 80. While reading out loud, the teacher records student errors. If the student passes specified accuracy, prosody, and speed requirements, then the teacher continues and gives students the comprehension portion of the test. If students do not pass these requirements, the teacher picks stories at a lower level until fluency requirements are met. Once fluency
requirements are met, students move on to the comprehension section. The comprehension section consists of short answer questions, such as giving a story retell, making connections to the text, or answering inferential questions (i.e. What do you think is the most important part of this story? What do you think the author is trying to tell you in this story?). Teachers use a rubric to assess if students meet comprehension requirements. If students meet both fluency and comprehension requirements, as outlined in the rubric for each story, the student passes the DRA assessment. The level of the story passed is considered the “independent” reading level for students. This indicates the level of book students should be able to read independently, without support from a teacher. A thorough understanding of DRA administration is an important part of this school’s RtI program, since the DRA is the main tool used for universal screening of students in all grades.

The DRA assessment outlines the specific benchmark levels students should meet at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to be considered reading at grade-level. Thus, the RtI team used these benchmark levels to identify the students who were reading at grade-level or below grade-level, as measured by the universal screening DRA assessment scores. Table 1 shows the expected DRA Guided Reading Benchmarks for each grade level at different points in the year. The DRA level indicates the level of books students should be able to read independently at each point in the year.
Table 1. DRA Guided Reading Benchmarks, by grade-level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>DRA Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After using DRA Guided Reading benchmarks to identify students reading below grade-level, another screening measure was used. Similar to a two-stage universal screening model described by Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton (2012) and found to be effective by Compton et al. (2006), the RtI team also administered a more in-depth reading assessment called the CORE Phonics Survey, which measures skills related to phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, and vocabulary. This data was then used to determine areas of specific reading need for students found at-risk. This data informed decisions in Tier 2 when forming intervention groups, which will be outlined in the Tier 2 section.
While the DRA was used as the universal screener to initially identify students reading below grade-level, the CORE phonics survey is another critical part of this school’s RtI program as it provides in-depth data on the specific areas of reading students are struggling with. This data is essential when determining appropriate Tier 2 interventions for students.

*Creation and Implementation of 9-Grids*

In addition, teachers used results from universal screening data described above to identify students performing below-grade level who would benefit from scaffolds and differentiated instruction. Teachers identified students most at-risk of reading failure in their class and then created a “9-grid” for each of these students. As explained in the previous section, the purpose of the 9-grid form is for teachers to identify students’ specific areas of academic need, ways to differentiate instruction to best meet students’ needs, and set short-term goals for tracking student progress. Teachers were given specific time each month to meet with their grade-level teams and develop 9-grids together. This allowed teachers to collaborate and brainstorm ideas together. In addition, the author and intervention coordinator offered 30 minute consultation meetings with teachers to help complete 9-grids. A roving sub was hired once a month to provide coverage for teachers so they could attend these consultation meetings. The RtI team felt it was important teachers received enough time to complete 9-grids, as the process was new and this was an important part of strengthening high quality instruction in the classroom.


Tier 2 Structure and Interventions

Data-Based Decision Making

Several sources of data were used to determine which students were performing below grade-level and should receive Tier 2 interventions: universal screening results of the DRA, 9-grid data, and California Standards Test (CST) scores from 2011-2012 school year. Students were considered to receive Tier 2 intervention if they scored below grade-level on benchmark levels on the DRA administered in August of 2012. Further, the RtI team also looked at the progress of students with 9-grids. If students were not responding to high-quality instruction and meeting short-term goals, as documented in the 9-grid forms, the RtI team considered these students for Tier 2 intervention. Last, students who scored in the basic, below basic, and far below basic range on the CST test in English Language Arts (ELA) in 2011-2012 were considered for RtI Tier 2 interventions. According to the California Department of Education (2012), California uses five different performance levels to describe student achievement on the CST assessments: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The advanced level denotes superior performance on the CST assessment. The proficient level denotes a student is performing at grade-level. The basic level denotes limited performance, such as a partial understanding of the content-area. The below basic and far below basic levels denote a student is performing considerably below grade-level and have little understanding of content standards. In sum, when identifying students for Tier 2 intervention, this school used data from informal assessments, such as the DRA and 9-grid data, as well as state-wide assessment results from the CST.
Tier 2 Interventions: After-School program

Students were placed in interventions based on multiple sources of data reflecting their reading needs. Approximately 67 students in grades 2nd-5th received Tier 2 reading intervention in the after-school program. When determining reading interventions to use with students, the standard-protocol approach was used. Students with similar areas of need were matched to various “standard” scripted reading programs. To determine which reading program students should receive, various sources of data were used. First, the author and after-school staff administered curriculum based measurement (CBM) probes to all students in the after-school program to measure their basic reading skills. They used the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments. DIBELS assessments were created by the authors Ruth Kaminski and Roland Good and underwent extensive research at the University of Oregon. DIBELS are now widely used for universal screening and progress monitoring of literacy skills for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. They consist of short one-minute fluency measures assessing skills related to phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and oral reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary (Good & Kaminski, 2009).

Creators of DIBELS developed a chart to specify benchmark goals for students in each grade-level to determine which students scored in three different ranges: low risk, some risk, or at risk (see appendix for an example of these benchmark goals). The after-school program used DIBELS benchmark probes to find each student’s “instructional” level. This is the level where students should be progress monitored and are considered to be in the “some risk” range. In addition to DIBEL scores, DRA and CORE scores
from the beginning of the year were considered when forming after-school classes. Thus, students with similar DIBELS instructional levels, DRA levels, and CORE scores were grouped into the same reading intervention.

In the after-school program, several reading curriculums were used. Students were given the placement tests provided by each reading curriculum to determine which program students should receive. The following describes the reading programs used in the after-school program.

*SIPPS Extension.* A research-based program called the Systematic Instruction in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) Extension was used for students needing instruction in basic phonic and decoding skills. SIPPS Extension is published by the Developmental Studies Center and was developed by John Shefelbine and co-authored by Katherine Newman. Each lesson in this program begins with a short phonemic awareness activity, either segmenting or blending simple one syllable words. Then, the program explicitly teaches the sounds for consonant blends, vowel patterns, and ending inflections. Students are taught to blend and spell words by sounding them out. Each lesson also teaches high-frequency sight words. The end of lessons includes a short story or passage to read aloud and answer comprehension questions. This program was used for students who needed to learn the sounds for letter patterns, such as consonant blends, digraphs, short vowels, long vowels, vowel pairs, and inflectional endings. These students still needed support blending simple one syllable words and were still in the beginning stages of reading. Generally, students reading below a DRA level 12 were considered for this program.
Read Well. Read Well is a program intended for students in kindergarten through second grade to develop skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. It was developed by Sopris West Educational Services and authored by Marilyn Sprick. While this program teaches phonics and blending like SIPPS Extension, its primary instructional focus is on reading fluency and comprehension. This program was more appropriate for students who could blend words in isolation with high accuracy but had greater difficulty reading sentences aloud with fluency. Generally, students reading at a DRA level 12 to 20 were considered for this program, as these students have an understanding of phonics and blending skills but need support with fluency and comprehension.

REWARDS Intermediate. A research-based and validated program called Reading Excellence Word Attack and Rate Development Strategies (REWARDS) was used for students needing instruction in reading multi-syllabic words. REWARDS Intermediate was published in 2006 and developed by Sopris West Educational Services and authored by Vicy Vachon, Mary Gleason, and Anita Archer. This program is intended primarily for students in fourth grade or above. This is a scripted program where teachers follow a structured lesson plan. Students are taught how to identify and read prefixes and suffixes and write words with these affixes. The instructional focus of this program is on decoding multi-syllabic words and does not address reading comprehension needs. This program was used for students who showed mastery of decoding one syllable words but needed strategies for decoding multi-syllabic words. Generally, this program was used
for students in 4\textsuperscript{th} or 5\textsuperscript{th} grade who were reading at a DRA level of 20 or above but struggled with decoding multi-syllabic words.

\textit{Read 180.} Read 180 is a reading intervention program intended for students in fourth grade or above reading two or more years below grade-level. This program is published by Scholastic and the authors include Ted Hasselbring, Laura Goin, Kate Kinsella, and Kevin Feldman. Each lesson in Read 180 begins with a whole-class reading lesson. Then, students divide into three different small groups. One group engages in small-group instruction with the teacher, another group uses instructional software on the computer to complete reading comprehension activities, and the last group completes independent reading of text at their level. This instructional program focuses primarily on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. This program was used for students in 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} grade who showed mastery of decoding one syllable and multi-syllable words but had difficulty with comprehension. Generally, students reading above a DRA level 28 were considered for this program. This program was used primarily because all materials for this program were purchased and it had been implemented in prior years.

The author and after-school staff administered placement tests provided in each reading curriculum to see which intervention students should receive. Generally, students were placed in groups of 5-10 students and received targeted reading intervention for approximately 20-45 minutes, four times a week. Every Friday, after-school teachers progress monitored students using DIBELS probes at students’ instructional levels. After completing the one minute DIBELS probes, the teacher
showed students how many correct words they read per minute. Then they marked the number of correct words per minute on a graph on the front of the student’s scoring booklet. This allowed students to see if they grew each week. This data was used to track student progress in oral reading fluency (ORF). The intervention coordinator tracked this data in a spreadsheet. She also set individual reading fluency goals for students, based on the Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) rates of expected growth chart developed by Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Walz, & Germann (1993). Table 2 summarizes the expected growth of reading rates, as it identifies a realistic and ambitious weekly goal for students in different grades.

Table 2. Reading Rates of Expected Growth, per week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Realistic Weekly Goal</th>
<th>Ambitious Weekly Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct Words Per Minute (cwpm)</td>
<td>Correct Words Per Minute (cwpm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author and intervention coordinator used the reading rates of expected growth from Table 2 to determine ambitious goals for students in the after-school program. They chose to set ambitious goals, rather than realistic goals, because these students were receiving significant intervention and they wanted to set high expectations for student growth. Student goals were set for about 10 weeks. To calculate student goals, the number of weeks of intervention was multiplied by the ambitious weekly goal, as identified in Table 1. Then, this number was added to a student’s baseline oral reading
fluency score. This final number represented the goal for the number correct words per minute a student would read at the end of the 10 week intervention.

After calculating student goals, the author and intervention coordinated created graphs for each student to track progress monitoring data. These graphs provided a visual representation of students’ scores on weekly progress monitoring probes in relation to progress towards their goal. Figure 1 is an example of a progress monitoring graph to measure a student’s DIBELS oral reading fluency scores each week. Each point on the graph represents the number of correct words read per minute on the weekly DIBELS progress monitoring probe. The dot at the end of the dashed line represents the student’s goal for correct words read per minute at the end of the intervention. The dashed line shows the number of correct words the student needs to read each week to meet the end goal.

Figure 1. Graph of Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CWPM</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CWPM = Correct Words Per Minute
The progress monitoring data as shown in Figure 1 was saved on the RtI shared drive so all staff had access to it. This data was used to determine if students were making ambitious growth each week. If students made adequate and/or ambitious growth, the RtI team determined the next appropriate reading intervention to use. For example, if students completed the SIPPS program and showed adequate reading growth most weeks, they were then moved to the Read Well program. If students were not making adequate progress, based on progress monitoring data, the RtI team discussed possible reasons why and brainstormed possible solutions. For example, in some situations, it was decided more training should be provided to after-school teachers to ensure they were implementing programs with fidelity. At other times, the RtI selected a different reading program, instructional group, or after-school teacher for students. The solution was based on the individual student. The goal for after-school Tier 2 intervention was to create flexible instructional groups where students could move in and out of interventions, based on progress monitoring data.

**Tier 2 Interventions: Pull-Out Groups**

In addition to the Tier 2 interventions provided during the after-school program, school staff also provided Tier 2 interventions during the school day. Tier 2 pull-out intervention primarily focused on students who did not receive intervention during after-school program but were performing below-grade level in reading. All intervention groups utilized a pull-out model where small groups of students (with similar academic needs) worked with an intervention teacher outside of their general education classroom. Intervention teachers coordinated their pull-out groups to occur the same time as
students’ core reading instruction time period during the day (i.e. a 90 minute block of
time that consisted of guided reading groups and reading centers). This way, students
were not missing core instruction in other subjects, such as math or writing.

First-Grade Tier 2 Interventions. Tier 2 reading interventions were provided to
20 first grade students from October 2012 until March 2013. Students with the lowest
DRA scores were placed in these groups. Students ranged from a DRA level 3 to a 5,
which is considered to be a late kindergarten reading level. These intervention groups
were taught by the school’s reading coach, who is a credentialed teacher and a member of
the school-site leadership team. The intervention groups consisted of 3-5 students, met
four times a week, for about 30 minutes each session. Intervention sessions were similar
to the guided reading lessons students received in their general education classroom.
This meant students received two small-group reading instruction sessions each day—one
with their general education teacher and one with the reading coach. The instructional
focus of these groups was: a) developing stronger phonics skill b) expanding ability to
read and write high frequency sight words c) teaching students how to use multiple
reading strategies and d) applying reading skills to their writing. At every session,
students practiced phonics skills and sight words. Two times a week, students learned
reading strategies and were taught how to use these strategies when reading a new story
at their instructional level. The other two times a week, students completed
comprehension and writing activities related to the books they read, such as writing a
summary or describing their favorite part of the story.
The goal for students in these intervention groups was to accelerate their learning and catch up to grade-level DRA levels. To track student progress in these groups, the reading coach used running records. Running records is a method to track the number of words students read and how many they read accurately. Generally, a student will read a total of 100 words. The teacher will put a check mark for each word read correctly. For errors, the teacher will write the word and the way the student misread it. The goal is for students to read with 90% accuracy or above, according to running records. If students consistently read stories with 95% accuracy or above, they were moved up one instructional level.

*Second Grade Tier 2 Interventions.* From October 2012 until March 2013, Tier 2 reading interventions were provided to a total of 18 second grade students. For the first 8 weeks, from the middle of October until the end of December, Tier 2 reading intervention was provided for 10 second grade students. These students were placed in this intervention because they were below grade-level according to DRA reading scores. Their DRA scores ranged from a 10 to 15, which is considered to be a middle to late first grade reading level. These intervention groups were taught by the school’s writing, who is a credentialed teacher and a member of the school-site leadership team. These intervention groups consisted of 4-5 students, met four times a week, for about 30 minutes each session.

Similar to the first grade groups described above, intervention sessions also supplemented the guided reading students received in general education. The instructional focus of these groups were a) learning phonics rules for more complex
phonics patterns b) strengthening comprehension skills and c) practicing written response to literature. At every lesson, students practiced word work activities where they applied phonics rules to decode words. Twice a week, students practiced reading strategies to decode stories at their instructional level. The other two times a week, students engaged in comprehension activities and wrote responses to literature, such as writing a summary of the story or making a connection to the text.

The goal for second grade intervention groups was also to accelerate student progress and help them catch up to grade-level reading expectations. For progress monitoring data, the reading coach used running records. This Tier 2 reading intervention ended the last week in December.

From the middle of January 2013 until March of 2013, the same writing coach provided another round of Tier 2 reading intervention for 13 second grade students. Five of these students also received the prior Tier 2 intervention from October until December, so this was the second intervention group they were placed in. DRA reading level and winter benchmark assessment data were used to determine which students received this intervention. At this school, students take a grade-level benchmark assessment in the fall, winter, and spring of each year. The English Language Arts (ELA) benchmark assesses students’ knowledge related to grade-level ELA content standards. In the fall, students are expected to score around 35% on benchmark assessments. In the winter, students are expected to score around 65%. In the spring, they are expected to score around 80%. Students were placed in this Tier 2 intervention if their DRA scores showed they were
reading at grade-level (i.e. DRA level 20), but their winter benchmark assessment scores were below-grade level (i.e. below 65%).

The goal of this intervention group was to give these students the extra support needed to reach grade-level expectations on ELA benchmarks. These intervention groups were composed of 4-5 students, met four times a week for 30 minutes each session. The reading coach used the same structure of instruction as describe earlier. However, instead of focusing on developing phonic skills, she focused on teaching specific ELA standards. For example, she did short mini-lessons teaching students standards related to reading, writing, and written and oral English language conventions. One ELA standard was focused on each week. The ELA standard chosen each week was the same standards their general education teachers were focusing on the next week. Thus, the purpose was to provide students with pre-teaching to enable students to preview the material before learning it in their general education class. To track student progress on mastery of ELA standards, short multiple choice assessments were used at the end of each week. In addition, running records were used to measure students’ progress on DRA reading levels.

*Fourth and Fifth Grade Tier 2 Interventions.* From November 2012 until March 2013, Tier 2 reading interventions were provided to 14 students in fourth and fifth grade. Third graders were not included in pull-out Tier 2 intervention during the school day because they received appropriate intervention during the after-school program. The pull-out Tier 2 intervention groups focused on students who were performing below grade-level and did not attend after-school program.
For six weeks from the beginning of November until the end of December, Tier 2 intervention was provided to 8 fourth and fifth grade students. These students were placed in this intervention because they were reading below grade level and had DRA scores ranging from 28 to 38, which is considered to be an early to late third grade level. These intervention groups were taught by the school’s intervention coordinator, who is a credentialed teacher. Intervention groups consisted of 4-5 students, met four times a week, for about 30 minutes each session.

The instructional focus of this Tier 2 intervention group was to develop stronger reading comprehension skills. A curriculum developed by Scholastic was used called the Reading Strategies Toolkit for Non-Fiction. During each session, students practiced previewing text to activate prior knowledge, answering literal comprehension questions, using context clues to understand vocabulary, and writing summaries of non-fiction text. To progress monitor students in this group, short comprehension quizzes were given at the end of each week. In addition, DRA reading levels were tracked and monitored.

For another six weeks, from the middle of January 2013 until the beginning of March 2013, the intervention coordinator offered another Tier 2 intervention for 6 students in fourth and fifth grade. Students were picked for this intervention primarily based on their scores on winter benchmark assessments. These students scored below the grade-level expectation of 60% accuracy on the ELA winter benchmark. Intervention groups were composed of 3 students in each group, met four times a week, for about 30 minutes each session.
The instructional goal of these intervention groups was to develop mastery of key ELA content standards related to reading, writing, and written and oral English language conventions. Each lesson consisted of a short mini-lesson introducing and practicing a specific ELA standard. The ELA standards chosen each week coincided with the standards being taught in students’ general education classes. To track student progress, short multiple choice quizzes were given at the end of each week to measure student performance on the ELA standard.

**Problem-Solving Team (PST) Meetings**

For students receiving Tier 2 interventions and still not making adequate progress, as documented by progress monitoring data or 9-grids, a Problem Solving Team (PST) meeting was requested and scheduled. Several members of the RtI team attended these meetings, such as the principal, education specialist, intervention coordinator, and school psychologist. In addition, the general education teacher and the student’s parents also attended. The first goal of PST meetings is to encourage parental involvement by keeping parents informed about the interventions provided for their child and the results of interventions. At the PST meetings, parents were involved in brainstorming additional supports to provide their child at school and at home. Parents were treated as active participants in the RtI team and helped in the decision making progress and setting academic or behavioral goals for their child. The second goal of PST meetings is to brainstorm new interventions to implement for 6-8 weeks to see if these interventions result in higher academic achievement.
PST meetings generally occurred once a month. A substitute teacher was hired for PST meetings to enable general education teachers to attend the meetings. At an initial PST meeting, background information was collected, including attendance, health, and family history. In addition, academic data was shared and summarized, such as scores on benchmark assessments, DRA levels, CST scores, and scores on other informal assessments. Then, the RtI team and general education teacher summarized the current academic concerns, interventions and/or instructional strategies being implemented to address academic concerns, and results of the interventions. Based on academic data and the results of the current interventions, the team then developed measurable academic goals. Results to these goals would be reviewed at a follow-up PST meeting 6-8 weeks later. Finally, the RtI team created an “Action Plan” identifying specific tasks that needed to be completed before the follow-up meeting. The point person responsible for each task was designated. When developing the action plan, parental input was encouraged and received. All information shared at the PST meeting was documented using the PST meeting notes template, as described earlier in the methods section and located in Appendix A-5.

After the initial PST meeting, all team members were responsible for executing action plan items they were assigned to for the next 6-8 weeks. Then, a follow-up PST meeting was scheduled. At this follow-up meeting, the same format was used. However, more focus is placed on the intervention and results to interventions. If students met goals outlined in the initial PST meeting, this was considered adequate progress. New goals were drafted and the team decided if another follow-up meeting should be
scheduled in 6-8 weeks. If a student was now performing at grade-level, a follow-up meeting is not necessary. If the student was still performing below grade-level, a third follow-up meeting was scheduled. In contrast, if a student did not meet goals outlined in their initial PST meeting, this was considered inadequate progress. The team would draft new goals and interventions and schedule a follow-up meeting. If at the follow-up meeting, the student has still not made adequate growth, special education assessment was generally recommended.

**Tier 3 Structure and Interventions**

Students were considered to be in Tier 3 when special education assessment began or if they were already identified with a disability and had an individualized education plan (IEP). Students in Tier 3 received the most intensive reading interventions. Unlike Tier 2 interventions, which primarily used the standard-protocol approach, Tier 3 interventions used the problem-solving approach. Individual goals were drafted for each student, various reading programs, curriculums, and instructional strategies were considered, and ultimately, the reading intervention that was provided was carefully selected to meet the individual needs of students. In addition, accommodations and/or modifications were provided in students’ general education classroom to support students in accessing grade-level material.

As the education specialist, the author was responsible for ensuring students in Tier 3 received appropriate interventions. All students in Tier 3 received instruction with the author during the school day. During day-time reading intervention, the author placed students into instructional groups based on their reading skills. She wrote and
developed reading lessons for intervention groups consisting of 2-6 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. These lessons were developed specifically to target individual areas of need and/or IEP goals. Reading intervention groups generally met four times a week for 30-45 minutes each session. Students were given individualized progress monitoring probes to measure if students were meeting IEP benchmark goals or PST goals.

In addition to day-time reading intervention with the author, most students in Tier 3 also received additional reading intervention in the after-school program. The intervention coordinator was the after-school teacher for students most students in Tier 3. She was chosen for this role because she is a credentialed teacher and has additional training and expertise in working with students with special needs. She primarily used scripted reading programs to address students’ reading needs, such as SIPPS, Fluency Foundations, Read Well, Read 180, and REWARDS. She met with small groups of 5-10 students, four times a week, for about 30 minutes each day. In addition to this targeted reading intervention during after-school program, students in Tier 3 also received support with completing their grade-level homework. Thus, most students in Tier 3 received intensive services during the day as well as during the after-school program.

**Description of RtI Resource Binder**

All of the materials described in the Methods section were compiled into a RtI Resource Binder. The purpose of the Resource Binder was to keep all important RtI documents, forms, and materials in one accessible spot. The school principal and lead teachers for the kindergarten/first grade team, second/third grade team, and fourth/fifth
grade team all received a RtI Resource Binder, which they kept in their individuals classrooms. In addition, all of these materials were saved and posted on the school’s shared drive so all school staff could access the Resource Binder electronically.

The RtI Resource Binder included six sections, each with its own tab and divider. The first section was titled “What is RtI?” This section included materials that provided a short description of the purpose of RtI, the three tiered model, and the role RtI team members played in the process. A flowchart illustrating the process of RtI was also included to explain the steps teachers need to follow when referring a student to RtI. All of these materials were explained at the professional development described earlier in this chapter. So, all staff members should have a general understanding of these documents.

The second section was titled “Universal Screening.” This section included the materials required to complete universal screening of students in the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Two different forms of universal screening were included in this section—Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) benchmark assessments. This year, the school chose to use DRA assessments as the primary universal screening assessment. However, DIBELS benchmark assessments could also be used. The instructions for DRA administration were included in this section so users understood how to administer the DRA. Teachers also received initial and ongoing training of DRA administration from the school-site reading coach. The Guided Reading Benchmark Level chart was placed after the DRA administration instruction. This chart shows the DRA level students should be reading based on the grade of the student and the month of the year. This chart is used to
determine if students are reading at grade-level at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

The DIBELS administration guide was included after the DRA materials. This guide explains the administration and scoring procedures for the DIBELS benchmark assessments which are recommended to be given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. In addition, the DIBELS benchmark goals, which identify the target scores students should meet to be considered at low-risk, some-risk, or at-risk.

Finally, the CORE Phonics Survey was included in this section. This assessment was used to measure skills related to phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, and vocabulary. This is to be administered to students who did not meet grade-level expectations on universal screening. The CORE Phonic Survey provides additional data on the specific areas of reading the student is struggling in. All student and teacher materials needed for administration are included.

The third section of the RtI Resource Binder was titled “Progress Monitoring.” The first document in this section was the administration guide for the DIBELS progress monitoring probes. Then, a chart showing how to set ambitious and realistic goals, using DIBELS data is provided. An example of a student’s DIBELS data is shown to illustrate how to calculate an ambitious goal and then create a graph to track student progress. DIBELS progress monitoring probes were generally used for students in the after-school program.

The second progress monitoring tool included in this section was materials for administering running records. Instructions for running records, provided by the school-
site reading coach were given. In addition, a blank running record form and a sample running record form were included. Running records were used generally for first grade students receiving pull-out instruction with the school-site reading coach.

The fourth section of the RtI Binder was titled “Tier 1 Materials.” This section provided materials for ensuring high-quality instruction in Tier 1. First, there was a fidelity check-list to be used when the principal observed guided reading lessons in general education classroom. This check-list is meant to see if teachers are implementing core reading instruction with fidelity. Second, the 9-grid forms for academic concerns were included. All teachers received training on completing these forms. These forms were used when teachers had academic concerns about a student and helped teachers identify ways to differentiate their instruction.

The fifth section was titled “Tier 2 Materials.” In this section, the first document is an example of a permission form used to gain parental consent for their child’s participation in an RtI intervention group. Verbal or written permission should be obtained before initiating an RtI intervention for a student. Next, a list of available intervention programs can be found. The following reading programs are listed and described in this section: SIPPS Extension, Read Well, Read 180, REWARDS, and the Reading Strategies Toolkit for Non-Fiction. The primary purpose of each program is explained. In addition, the placement tests for each reading program are included. These placement tests can be used to determine if a reading program is appropriate for students, and if so, what level they should begin at in the program.
The last section is titled “PST Meetings.” PST meetings are held when students are not responding to RtI interventions and a more intensive team approach is needed to identify additional academic supports. The last section includes the template for PST meeting notes. The first is a template for an initial PST meeting while the other is a template for a follow-up PST meeting. A sample copy of PST notes has been included as a model of the type of information that should be included. These notes should be typed and saved on the shared-drive. The hard copies in this binder were to provide a visual representation of the notes but electronic copies were used during actual PST meetings.

The RtI Resource Binder did not include a section on Tier 3 materials because this is considered to be initiation or placement in special education. Once this occurs, different procedures are taken since special education law applies. When students enter Tier 3, the education specialist coordinates with the teacher to explain the process.

The overall purpose of the RtI Resource Binder was to ensure that all staff members are aware of the materials available, can access appropriate materials as needed, and establish a cohesive approach and perspective to RtI implementation. In addition, because there has been historically high turnover in special education and intervention staff at this school, providing a RtI Resource Binder will assist in training new RtI staff. All of the RtI materials which were created by the author to improve the organization, documentation, and efficiency of RtI procedures are included in Appendix A. Many of the items included in the RtI Resource Binder contained copyrighted materials because they were from commercial curriculum programs or assessments, so these are not included in the appendix of this paper.
Chapter 4

EVALUATION OF RTI MODEL

The model for RtI described in the methods section was implemented since October 2012. This model will continue to be implemented the duration of the school year. However, results gained for this paper were collected in March 2013. The section will be organized by summarizing outcomes from Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 of the RtI model at the school. Then, the author will share conclusions gained from reviewing the outcomes of the RtI program. Finally, recommendations will be made to address areas which can be improved in this school’s RtI model.

**Tier 1 Outcomes**

All teachers began using the 9-grid forms, documents, and materials included in the RtI Resource Binder created by this project. In addition, all teachers began using the shared drive to access RtI files and upload their 9-grid documents. The shared drive significantly improved the 9-grid process. Last year, 9-grids were handwritten and the general education teacher was the only one with a copy. There was no method to document which students had 9-grids and many 9-grid forms were lost. Several teachers from last year no longer teach at this school, so there is no way of knowing the exact number of 9-grids that were completed last school year. In addition, procedures were not in place to allow teachers time to follow-up on the results of 9-grids. Therefore, 9-grids were of little utility since they were created but likely forgotten about by teachers. Improvements to the 9-grid process this year significantly improved the effectiveness of this part of RtI.
This year, several teachers utilized the updated 9-grid forms to create academic plans for students in their classes. Teachers were provided one hour each month to develop 9-grids together as grade-level teams. The author and intervention coordinator continued to offer 30 minute consultation meetings once a month to support teachers in identifying ways to differentiate instruction and complete 9-grid forms. Teachers signed up for these either before or after school or on days when a roving sub was hired. Table 3 summarizes how many 9-grids were completed in each grade level from December 2012 until March 2013.

Table 3. Number of 9-grids Completed by grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of 9-grids Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 9-grids completed, all 22 had follow-up meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of 9-grid interventions. Follow-up meetings were scheduled about 6-8 weeks after the 9-grid interventions were initiated. This gave the team adequate time to implement 9-grid interventions and see if students made growth during this time.

At the 9-grid follow-up meetings this year, it was determined that of the 22 students who received 9-grids, 8 of these students did not meet 9-grid goals. Therefore, they were referred to PST meetings and entered Tier 2 of RtI. The other 14 students who had 9-grids did show progress toward 9-grid goals and continued to stay in Tier 1 of RtI.
This is evidence showing that most students responded well to 9-grid accommodations and high quality instruction. An example of a completed 9-grid form from this year is included in Appendix A-4.

**Tier 2 Outcomes**

*Description of Students Receiving Tier 2 Interventions*

Tier 2 interventions were provided for students during the after-school program or during pull-out, small group instruction during the school day. From October 2012 until March 2013, the RtI team provided services for 110 students in first through fifth grade. This represented about 29% of the school population. The literature suggests up to 15% of students have academic needs requiring Tier 2 intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007), so this school provided services for a bigger population, almost double, than generally recommended. Because of this finding, the RtI team should consider which of these students can receive appropriate services in the general education classroom and which ones have more significant needs that do require supplemental Tier 2 intervention.

Tier 2 interventions were provided for 19 first grade students, 41 second grade students, 24 third grade students, 16 fourth grade students, and 10 fifth grade students. This data indicates second grade received the most intervention services while fifth grade received the least. Further, kindergarten students did not receive Tier 2 interventions this year. It was also noted that a high percentage of students receiving Tier 2 interventions were English Language Learners (ELL). An ELL student is considered to be limited English Proficient, as English is not their first language (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The majority of students receiving Tier 2 interventions in third, fourth, and fifth
grade were ELL students. The following table shows the number of students in each grade receiving Tier 2 intervention as well as the percentage of ELL students in each grade level.

Table 4. Students Receiving Tier 2 Interventions, by grade-level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students who were English Language learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Problem Solving Team (PST) Process

The PST process played an important role in the implementation of RtI. As described above, PST meetings were held if students did not meet 9-grid goals even after several interventions were implemented. PST meetings were a critical way for team members to identify additional RtI supports to put in place. Another goal achieved by these meetings was fostering parental support and involvement. At PST meetings, the RtI team updated parents about their child’s academic progress such as sharing results of interventions and current academic data. Parents were encouraged to be active members of the PST team, as they were part of the decision making process and gave input when setting academic goals and choosing reading interventions. During PST meetings, parents were encouraged to share their own experiences and perspectives of their children, express concerns, ask questions, and learn different strategies to use at home with their children. Various resources or strategies for teaching reading were provided to
parents to establish a home-school connection. For example, RtI team members often suggested parents to use educational websites, sight word flashcards, and read nightly with their children at home. Parents were generally receptive to ideas suggested by the RtI team and agreed to providing the extra support to their children at home. At follow-up PST meetings, parents shared how these resources or strategies worked at home. Table 5 summarizes the number of PST meetings held for students in each grade from August 2012 to March 2013.

Table 5. Number of Problem Solving Team Meetings per Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of PST Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All PST meetings were documented by detailed meeting notes which were saved on the shared drive. The principal and author utilized the updated PST meeting notes template for all PST meetings held this year. Thus, all PST meeting notes were typed, saved, and accessible on the shared drive. This greatly improved the organization and efficiency of PST meetings, as compared to previous years when handwritten notes were often lost or illegible. An example of completed PST notes for an initial and follow-up meeting are located in Appendix A-6.

The PST process was an important part of RtI because decisions from PST meetings helped determine which RtI interventions students should receive as well as
identify students recommended for special education assessment. In this way, PST meetings influenced the movement of students between the three Tiers of RtI. Decisions from these meetings identified if a) students reached grade-level reading expectations and should move back to Tier 1 b) students were making adequate progress and should remain in Tier 2 or c) students were making inadequate progress and should move to Tier 3.

After-School Program Interventions

The after-school program used DIBELS progress monitoring probes to track students’ growth in oral reading fluency (ORF). Ambitious goals and realistic goals were set for each student, as identified by the Rates of Expected Growth chart explained in the methods section. Table 6 summarizes the percentage of students who met ambitious or realistic oral reading fluency goals set for December 2012 and March 2013.

Table 6. Percent of Students meeting Oral Reading Fluency Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% of Students Meeting Ambitious Goals</th>
<th>% of Students Meeting Realistic Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade, n=27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade, n=24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Grade n=9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade n=7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 6, results from the after-school intervention were mixed. The majority of students did not meet either their ambitious or realistic ORF goals for December and March. While most students did show positive gains in their ORF scores week to week, most of them did not make what was considered realistic or ambitious growth. The data shows that a greater percentage of third, fourth, and fifth grade students met ambitious or realistic goals in March 2013 than in December 2012. A greater percentage of second grade students met realistic goals in March 2013 than in December 2012. The improved results in March 2013 could be attributed to several factors. First, it may be that the after-school teachers were implementing interventions with more fidelity after December because of increased training and feedback from the after-school director and author. Second, several students were switched to different groups after December based on the data, so it may be that students were more appropriately placed in instructional groups. Third, these results may signal that students in the after-school program responded better to an intervention which was provided for a longer duration (i.e. a total of 18 weeks instead of 9 weeks).

**Small-Group, Pull-Out RtI Interventions**

Results from RtI reading interventions provided during the school-day in a pull-out structure are summarized as follows.

**First-Grade Tier 2 Interventions.** Progress for first grade students in pull-out reading interventions was measured by DRA scores. Performance on reading benchmark assessments was not used to determine student growth because students do not take these assessments until second grade. Before receiving the reading intervention, students were
reading about half a grade behind grade-level expectations. All 18 students were reading at a late kindergarten reading level. After receiving intervention from November 2012 until March 2013, student growth in reading performance ranged from 3 DRA levels to 7 DRA levels. The grade-level expectation for March was to read at a DRA level 12. Out of the 18 students, 4 students met this goal and were exited from reading intervention. 2 students nearly approached grade-level, reading at a DRA level 11. 8 students were reading at a DRA level 9 and 4 students were reading at a DRA level 7. It was determined that the students reading a DRA level 7 were not making adequate progress since they grew only 3 DRA levels in four months. 3 of these students were referred for PST meetings. The fourth student was not referred to a PST meeting because she was new to the school and had received the intervention for only 2 months.

Second-Grade Tier 2 Interventions. Two separate 8-week interventions were provided for second-grade students. The first began in the middle of October 2012 and ended in December 2012. 14 second-grade students received this intervention. Progress for students in these groups was measured by DRA scores and reading benchmark assessment data collected at the beginning and middle of the year. Table 7 summarizes the results of students receiving this intervention by comparing the DRA levels and Reading benchmark scores for students in August and December (i.e. pre and post intervention). The second-grade level expectation for DRA level in August was a level 16 and in December it was a level 20. Students are expected to score around 35% on the Reading Benchmark in August, since this assessment measures proficiency in grade-level
standards that have not yet been taught. To be considered proficient in reading on the Reading Benchmark in December, students need a score of 60% or above.

Table 7. Reading Achievement for 2\textsuperscript{nd} graders, first 8-week Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>DRA level (August 2012)</th>
<th>DRA level (December 2012)</th>
<th>Reading Benchmark scores (August 2012)</th>
<th>Reading Benchmark scores (December 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>Level 10</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>Level 18</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Level 10</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>Level 12</td>
<td>Level 18</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>Level 12</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>Level 12</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>Level 16</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>Level 10</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student I</td>
<td>Level 10</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>Level 18</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>Level 12</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>Level 12</td>
<td>Level 16</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>Level 12</td>
<td>Level 14</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pre-intervention data collected in August show that students were reading from 2 to 8 DRA levels below grade-level. 8 students met the grade-level expectation on the Reading Benchmark given in August, scoring 35% or higher. 6 students did not meet grade-level expectations on the Reading benchmark, scoring a range of 2%-31% below grade-level.

Analysis of the pre-intervention data in August when compared to post-intervention data in December showed that all but one student increased in DRA levels. The range for student growth was 2 to 6 DRA levels for 17 of the students. 1 student
showed regression and fell 4 DRA levels. However, overall, DRA data does provide evidence for student growth in reading skills.

Analysis of reading benchmark assessment scores from the beginning and middle of the year indicates that 9 students showed an increase in benchmark scores. Growth on the reading benchmark assessment from August to December for these 9 students ranged from 5% to 36% increase in accuracy. However, 4 students showed a decrease in reading benchmark assessment scores, ranging from a decrease of 3% to 14% in accuracy. 1 student was missing benchmark data from August so it unknown whether this student showed an increase or decrease. Of the 4 students who did not show growth on reading benchmark scores, 2 students had documented 9-grids and PST meetings. For the reading benchmark assessments, the grade-level expectation is for students to score 60% or above in December. Only 1 student met this grade-level expectation. 2 other students were close to reaching the grade-level expectation, scoring 54% on the reading benchmark assessment.

This data shows mixed results for students receiving the first 8-week intervention. While most students did show growth on DRA reading levels and Reading Benchmark scores, few achieved grade-level expectations. Results generally indicated that students maintained their growth but did not accelerate their learning. These results may indicate that these students require more intensive Tier 2 interventions for example by extending the duration of intervention sessions, the length of the intervention, the size of instructional groups, or modifying instructional strategies.
The second 8-week RtI reading intervention for second grade students began in the middle of January 2013 and ended in the beginning of March 2013. 13 second-grade students received this intervention. 5 of these students also received the first 8-week intervention. Progress for students in these groups was measured by DRA scores and reading benchmark assessments. In addition, data from the Reading Pre-California Standards Assessment (Pre-CST) was also used to measure students’ reading proficiency. The reading Pre-CST was given the first week in March 2013 and is used to determine if students are on-track for meeting reading proficiency requirements, as measured by the CST assessments given later in the year. Table 8 summarizes the results of students receiving the second 8-week intervention. The second-grade level expectation for DRA level in January was a level 20 and in March it was a level 24. To be considered proficient in reading on Reading Benchmark in December, students need a score of 60% or above. To be considered proficient in reading on the Reading Pre-CST, students need a score of 63% or higher.

Table 8. Reading Achievement for 2nd graders, second 8-week Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>DRA Level (January 2013)</th>
<th>DRA Level (March 2013)</th>
<th>Reading Benchmark Scores (December 2012)</th>
<th>Pre CST Assessment Scores (March 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>Level 26</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>Level 28</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>Level 26</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>Level 28</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>Level 28</td>
<td>Level 30</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>Level 20</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>Level 30</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student I</td>
<td>Level 18</td>
<td>Level 24</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>% 1</td>
<td>% 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pre-intervention data in December and January indicate that 11 students were reading at grade-level and 2 were reading slightly below grade level in January, as shown by DRA scores. Because these students should be reading at proficiency, their Reading Benchmark scores in December 2012 should also meet proficiency requirements (i.e. a score of 60% or higher). However, none of these students met the proficiency requirements. All of these students were close to meeting proficiency, as they scored a range of 1% to 16% below the proficiency requirement. These students were chosen to receive intervention since they were close to reaching grade-level proficiency in reading and would like respond well to RtI support.

Analysis of post-intervention data in March revealed positive gains in DRA levels and Pre-CST assessment scores. All but one student showed growth in DRA levels and all students met grade-level DRA expectations for March. This means all students were reading with proficiency, as measured by the DRA. In addition, positive gains were also found on the Pre-CST scores. 11 students demonstrated proficiency on the Reading Pre-CST assessment, scoring 63% or above. Only 2 students scored below this mark. Overall, students in this 8-week intervention showed positive growth since none of the students in this group were demonstrating proficiency on Reading Benchmarks before the intervention but all met proficiency requirements on the Reading Pre-CST after the intervention. It may be that more students in the second 8-week intervention met grade-
level expectations than the first 8-week intervention because these students’ pre-
intervention data indicated they were closer to grade-level before intervention. Because
these students were approaching grade-level in reading, the extra support of Tier 2
intervention may have enabled students to accelerate their learning to close the gap.

*Fourth and Fifth Grade Tier 2 Interventions.* Two separate six-week RtI
interventions were provided for 4th and 5th grade students. The first began in the middle
of November 2012 and ended at the end of December 2012. 8 students received this
intervention. Because students in these groups were reading at a DRA level 28 or above,
this means they move up levels more slowly. Thus, DRA reading levels were not used to
determine progress in these groups since this intervention lasted only 6 weeks and it was
unlikely that students would increase DRA levels significantly in this period of time.
However DRA reading levels were used to place students in instructional groups.
Progress for students in these groups was measured by comparing reading benchmark
assessment data collected at the beginning of the year in August to reading benchmark
assessment data collected at the middle of the year in December. Table 9 summarizes the
results of students receiving this intervention by comparing Reading benchmark scores
for students in August and December (i.e. pre and post intervention). Students in 4th and
5th grade are expected to score around 30% on the Reading Benchmark in August. To be
considered proficient in reading on the Reading Benchmark in December, students need a
score of 60% or above.
Table 9. Reading Performance for 4th/5th graders, first 6-week Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Reading Benchmark Scores (August 2012)</th>
<th>Reading Benchmark Scores (December 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-intervention data from Reading Benchmark scores in August 2012 show that 5 students met the grade-level expectation of scoring 30% or above. Because these assessments are multiple choice, it is possible for students to score 30% or above by guessing. So, these scores are not as heavily analyzed as scores from the winter reading benchmark. Post-intervention data from Reading Benchmark scores in December 2012 show that only 2 students met the grade-level expectation of scoring 60% or above. However, 7 students did show positive growth on their Reading Benchmark scores from the beginning to the middle of the year. Student growth ranged from a 3% to 22% increase in scores. 1 student maintained the same score, but did score in the proficient range. Overall, it appears students in this intervention did show positive growth.

The second 6-week intervention began in the middle of January 2013 and ended the last week of February 2013. Six students received this intervention. These students were reading at a lower reading level than the students in the previous 6-week intervention. This means that the students in this intervention experienced greater
difficulty with decoding and reading comprehension skills. Progress for students in these groups was measured by comparing Reading Benchmark assessment data collected at the middle of the year in December to Reading Pre-CST assessment data collected in March 2013. Table 10 summarizes the results of students receiving this intervention by comparing Reading benchmark scores for students in August and to Reading Pre-CST scores in December (i.e. pre and post intervention). Students in 4th and 5th grade are expected to score around 60% on the Reading Benchmark in December. To be considered proficient in reading on the Reading Pre-CST in March, students need a score of 65% or above.

Table 10. Reading Performance for 4th/5th graders in second 6-week Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Reading Benchmark Scores (December 2012)</th>
<th>Reading Pre-CST scores (March 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-intervention data on the Reading Benchmark scores from December show that all students were significantly below grade-level in their reading performance. The grade-level expectation was to reach 60% accuracy on the Reading Benchmark. Post-intervention data from the Reading Pre-CST assessment in March indicate that all but one student did show improvement in their scores. However the growth was minimal, ranging from 2% to 8% increase in scores. All students continue to be far below the
grade-level proficiency mark, which was a score of 65% or above. This data shows students made only minimal growth after receiving this intervention. The author is unable to determine the cause for the results of this intervention. However, it is possible that students made less growth in this intervention than students in the first six week intervention because they were more significantly below grade-level before receiving the intervention. This finding suggests the importance of providing intervention to students before they are significantly below grade level, as this may result in more positive outcomes.

**Tier 3 Outcomes**

Students were considered to be in Tier 3 once special education assessment was initiated or if students had already been identified with a disability and had a pre-existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The following explains the results of special education referrals and assessment as well as describes the overall caseload of students in Tier 3.

*Referrals for Special Education Assessment*

This school has historically had a low number of special education referrals because many staff members have misunderstood the RtI procedures required to occur before recommending special education assessment. In addition, there has been high turnover of special education teachers and school psychologists at this school, which has caused inconsistency between RtI and special education procedures. Many students who should have received RtI supports from an early age were not appropriately serviced by the RtI process in previous years.
This year, the RtI team made great effort to train staff in the RtI process so appropriate special education assessment referrals were made. For example, general education teachers and RtI team members participated in professional development training presented in grade-level teams at the beginning of the year. At this professional development training, the following was reviewed: the overall purpose of RtI, the role general educators play in RtI, how to provide evidence of high quality instruction in Tier 1, and the procedures for referring a student to RtI and completing a 9-grid. Further, the author and intervention coordinator met monthly with general education teachers to support them in completing 9-grid forms to identify areas of academic concern, develop a plan for differentiating instruction for this student, and setting short-term goals to measure student progress. In addition, the school-site leadership team received training on the RtI process from the author so they could provide guidance to their grade-level teams. All of these efforts were meant to educate teachers so they better understood the RtI process.

After receiving training in RtI, referrals for special education assessment occurred only after the following steps were taken for a student: 1) a 9-grid form was completed, implemented, and documented 2) the RtI team held at least two PST meetings to address team concerns 3) academic data was analyzed and the team concluded the student continued to perform far below grade-level even after several RtI interventions were tried. Following this process, 10 students were referred to special education assessment. 4 of these students qualified for special education services, as they were all identified with a specific learning disability (SLD) following special education assessment. 5 of
these students are currently in the special education assessment process and it has not yet been determined if these students will qualify for special education services. 1 student did not receive special education assessment after the RtI team recommended this because parents did not feel comfortable with the proposed assessment. Referrals for special education assessment improved since last year, when students were referred without prior documentation of RtI services provided to the student. This year, all students referred to special education assessment had received documented RtI interventions.

*Description of Students in Tier 3*

While the Tier model can vary from school to school, the research consistently suggests that the fewest students should be in Tier 3, as this requires the most intensive and individualized academic supports. A total of 20 students were considered to be in Tier 3 in March 2013. This represents about 5% of the student population at this school, which is consistent with research which suggests about 5% of students will need Tier 3 supports and intervention (Berkeley et al., 2009). This suggests that an appropriate number of students are being served in Tier 3. These students were in kindergarten through 5th grade. 15 of these students have already been identified with a disability while 5 of these students are currently in the special education assessment process. Table 11 summarizes the students in Tier 3 based on their disability identification.
Table 11. Disability Identifications for Students in Tier 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Identification</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment (OHI)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language Impairment (SLI)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In March 2013, tier 3 included 1 student in kindergarten, 1 student in first grade, 3 students in second grade, 6 students in third grade, 5 students in fourth grade, and 4 students in fifth grade. This data indicates third and fourth grade had the most students in Tier 3. Similar to students in Tier 2, a high percentage of students in Tier 3 were English Language Learners (ELL). The following table shows the number of students in each grade receiving Tier 3 interventions as well as the percentage of ELL students in each grade level.

Table 12. Students in Tier 3 in March 2013, by grade-level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of students who are English Language Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st grade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students with IEPs in Tier 3 had individualized reading goals for each year. These goals were developed by the author and general education teachers based on current academic data of each student. These goals were proposed at annual IEP
meetings and were approved by the IEP team, which included the student’s parents.

Progress towards these goals was measured three times a year in November, March, and June. Methods of progress monitoring varied for each student, as each student had individualized reading goals.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Implementing RtI requires a full team effort to coordinate, organize, and execute the many components of an effective RtI program. After reviewing the preliminary results of RtI in this school, several areas of strength were found. First, developing updated RtI forms and materials for this project were useful in RtI implementation. Specifically, the updated 9-grid forms and PST meeting notes templates were used with consistency throughout the year. Several teachers reported how the 9-grid forms were easy to use and helped them develop a clear plan for their students. Further, the principal, school psychologist, and several teachers told the author how they noticed PST meeting notes were much more organized and thorough than last year. This helped the entire RtI team since this documentation is critical when making decisions related to appropriate interventions for students.

Second, the creation of an RtI shared computer drive helped increase the accessibility and organization of RtI materials and documents. All teachers and RtI team members utilized the RtI shared drive to complete 9-grid forms, review PST notes, or check and update progress monitoring data. All staff members reported they liked saving all RtI forms on the shared drive, as this helped keep materials organized in one location and allowed staff members easy access to materials as needed.

Third, a greater number of teachers completed 9-grid forms this year and determined next steps for their students at follow-up meetings. The 9-grid process
ensured that teachers documented their efforts at providing high quality instruction in general education for their students. Last year, several 9-grids were completed for students but very few follow-up meetings were held to determine next steps for students. Also, most teachers lost their 9-grid paperwork. This year, all completed 9-grids were saved in the shared drive so they did not get lost. A follow-up meeting was held for each student with a 9-grid as well. In this way, it appeared Tier 1 interventions were strengthened this year.

Fourth, an area of strength for Tier 2 implementation included the careful use of data when determining instructional groups. The after-school program and all intervention teachers used several sources of pre-intervention data to help determine appropriate instructional groups and interventions, such as multiple reading assessment scores and California Standards Test (CST) scores. In addition, all RtI intervention groups improved in keeping more frequent and accurate progress monitoring data, either in the form of DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency data or running records. This progress monitoring data was entered on a spreadsheet on the shared drive, allowing staff members to more clearly track the progress of students. Last year, progress monitoring data was not collected consistently and there was not a clear method for displaying progress monitoring scores. However, this year progress monitoring data was collected with more fidelity and was used to track weekly progress of students.

Finally, Tier 3 was improved by strengthening the PST process preceding referral to special education assessment. For example, more efforts were made this year to document 9-grids, PST meetings, and academic data. Therefore, when referring students
for special education assessment, the RtI team felt it was appropriate since several interventions had been previously tried. In addition, the number of students in Tier 3 was about 5% of the student population, which is consistent with general recommendations for the number of students who should require Tier 3 intervention (Berkeley et al., 2009).

This school demonstrated several strengths in their implementation of their RtI system. However, the author also concluded there were several areas to improve upon as well, especially related to the limited resources available for English language learners, interventions available at the school site, and the absences of clear decision making rules to determine when students should move between tiers. These will be described in the recommendations section with specific suggestions for improvements in the future.

**Recommendations**

*Recommendations for English Language Learners*

A review of the RtI model implemented at this school highlighted the large number of English Language learners (ELL) receiving RtI interventions. This school has a high percentage of ELL students, however it was noted that limited resources were available to specifically address the needs of ELL students. This is an area of concern, as federal legislation and research promotes the importance of providing additional supports for ELL students. For example, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 put more accountability on schools to meet the diverse needs of students, as it places specific emphasis on limited English proficient (LEP) students as a sub-group to target (NCLB; P.L. 107-15). No Child Left Behind of 2001 mandates schools to provide yearly report cards summarizing students’ academic achievement and requires schools to demonstrate
adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward state proficiency goals for limited English proficient students. It is important for schools to meet their adequate yearly progress goals for English language learners, or else corrective action from the state can occur. Therefore, schools should utilize research validated instructional strategies for meeting the needs of English language learners, as recommended by No Child Left Behind of 2001 (Duran, 2012). Thus, the author recommends the school’s RtI team identifies evidence-based instructional interventions specifically for English language learners and begin implementing these next year. More specifically, it is recommended that a research-validated intervention program for building vocabulary is considered because the school does not currently have any Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions focusing primarily on vocabulary. This is a significant area of need for the ELL students at the school site. Further research by the school is needed to identify an effective vocabulary program for ELL students receiving RtI interventions.

Further, Title I federal legislation has also placed emphasis on improving the academic achievement of students from low-income background, including limited English proficient students (Duran, 2012). Title I provides federal funds to schools with high percentages (50 percent or more) of students from low-income backgrounds. The Title I federal funds can be allocated for resources to improve the academic achievement of students. In this way, schools can use Title I funds to target the learning needs of ELL students. The author recommends the principal of the school in this project analyzes how Title I funds are currently being used and consider different ways of allocating funds to provide more academic supports for ELL students. For example, Title I funds can be
used to purchase research-validated curriculums for teaching English language learners, to provide instructional staff focusing on interventions for ELL students, or providing professional development trainings for school staff in implementing instructional strategies for ELL students. The author has noticed general education teachers are given information identifying English language learners in their class and their students’ levels of English language proficiency. For example, all English language learners at the school complete the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), which identifies English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This information is very important, as it can help teachers identify the appropriate instructional strategies and accommodations to provide, based on students’ levels of English language proficiency. However, the author’s observations and conversations with general education teachers leads the author to believe that the CELDT data is not being used by many teachers to inform their teaching of ELL students. Teachers should receive training to identify strategies found to be effective for students in the beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, or advance stages of English language proficiency.

In addition, federal legislation addresses steps schools must take when assessing limited English Proficient students for disabilities and qualification for special education services. Provisions of IDEA 2004 require all students assessed for special education receive a comprehensive assessment conducted by a multi-disciplinary team (IDEA; P. L. 108-446). Measures used for assessment need to be nondiscriminatory. Further, assessments should be given in English as well as students’ native or primary language. These steps need to be taken to ensure that students are not identified with a disability
based on a language difference or limited English proficiency. The author has noted that all English language students referred to special education assessment received a comprehensive assessment by a multi-disciplinary team. Steps were taken to ensure students received a valid assessment, such as collecting a home language survey, language samples in English and students’ native language, and using multiple measures of academic achievement. Then, using the data described above to make their decision, if a team determined a student’s primary or more dominant language was their native language, formal assessment was provided in English and the student’s native language. The author feels the special education team complied with mandates by IDEA 2004 when assessing ELL students.

However, the author recommends more steps are taken prior to special education assessment to collect data related to English language development for students receiving interventions in Tier 1 and Tier 2 of RtI. For example, Duran (2013) suggests several resources when teaching English language learners. First, a home language survey should be completed by parents so the RtI team has more information about the primary language spoken at home and the amount of exposure the student is receiving in English and their native language. Second, teachers or members of the RtI team can use the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) to identify students’ oral language skills in oral comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar using a rubric template. The SOLOM helps give more information about students’ English language development, which can be used to identify appropriate interventions for students. Third, the Woodcock-Munoz Language Screening assessment is another tool
that can be used to identify student need related to oral language and reading skills. Considering recommendations from Duran (2013), the author suggests the RtI team purposefully uses student data related to English language development, such as CELDT scores, SOLOM scores, and language samples to determine the most effective ways of addressing students’ academic needs. This data needs to be addressed during Problem Solving Team (PST) meetings. Overall, this project has highlighted the need for the RtI team to specifically analyze, identify, and address the specific learning and language needs of English language students, as these students are a significant population of the students receiving RtI interventions.

**Recommendations for Tier 1**

General education teachers improved in providing high-quality instruction this year, as documented by the completion of many 9-grid forms this year. However, the teachers needed a lot of support from the author and RtI team in the process of completing a 9-grid and differentiating instruction for their students. Therefore, it is recommended that the RtI team provides ongoing training to educate general education teachers about their role and responsibilities in Tier 1. The RtI team should meet with each grade-level at the beginning of the year to remind them of RtI procedures and support them when identifying students for 9-grid forms. In addition, at least an hour each month should be provided to teachers to complete the 9-grid forms and follow-up on previous 9-grids. This procedure was piloted this year and it appeared helpful to teachers.
It is also recommended that the RtI team develop professional development trainings to support teachers in utilizing research-based strategies for English language learners, as this school has a significant number of ELL students. The majority of students receiving RtI services this year were also ELL students, highlighting the need to address diverse language needs in the general education classroom. While many teachers are already implementing strategies to differentiate instruction for ELL students, it would be helpful to provide more in-depth training to expand teachers’ knowledge and skills. This recommendation aligns with research which suggests ongoing professional development and coaching opportunities are needed to train teachers to provide high-quality instruction in Tier 1 (Stecker et al., 2008; Hill et al., 2012).

For example, the literature recommends using Total Physical Response (TPR) to support students in the beginning stages of English language development (Asher, 1977; Wolf & Jones, 1982; Duran, 2013). This is a method developed by James Asher. TPR requires teachers to physically model and provide visuals for oral directions, vocabulary, or other academic concepts. This strategy aligns with how children learn a first language. TPR is meant to foster student motivation by providing clear directions and multi-sensory instruction. For students in the intermediate or advanced stages of English language development, the literature suggests using Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAI) as a form or sheltered instruction (Cline & Necochea, 2003; Duran, 2013). This strategy was developed by Stephen Krashen and is meant for delivering grade-level content instruction to English language learners. Sheltered instruction focuses on providing students with comprehensible input, such as visuals, manipulatives,
charts, models, props, or gestures, to teach grade-level content. Sheltered instruction is meant for students to access core curriculum by using a student centered approach, promoting active learning, building background, and activating prior knowledge. The author recommends providing the whole staff professional development trainings focusing on TPR and sheltered instruction. The goal of the professional development would be enabling teachers to utilize research based strategies for ELL students in their classroom, providing high-quality instruction for all.

Recommendations for Tier 2

First, the author recommends the school consider ways to provide early Tier 2 intervention to students in kindergarten. Research has shown that providing early intervention in kindergarten has the potential to decrease the number of students needing intervention in later grades (Simmons et al., 2008). In addition, data from this school indicated that students receiving intervention in early elementary grades showed more positive growth in academic achievement. More specifically, from the data collected in March 2013, it appeared that students in first and second grade generally showed more growth than students in fourth and fifth grade after receiving pull-out, small group Tier 2 intervention. Also, results indicated that most students in first and second grade receiving pull-out intervention showed notable growth in their reading performance, as measured by DRA levels and/or reading benchmark scores. This data suggests that students receiving interventions earlier achieved greater growth. This hypothesis would be consistent with the literature; research studies have found that interventions which are provided earlier generally show greater results (Foorman et al., 2003; Wanzek & Vaughn,
2010). In addition, studies have found reading interventions provided to kindergarten students accelerated the progress of students (Simmons et al., 2011). In fact, a study by Simmons and colleagues (2008) found that after receiving intensive reading intervention, kindergarten students, who were identified at-risk of reading failure in the beginning of the year, achieved grade-level proficiency by the end of the year. Further, most maintained reading proficiency at the end of third grade as well. Studies such as these cite the long-term positive impact which can result when reading interventions are provided early. The school described in this project currently does not offer Tier 2 reading interventions to kindergarten students in the after-school program or during the school day in pull-out reading groups. Thus, the author recommends this school consider ways of reallocating RtI staff and resources to provide early intervention to students in kindergarten next year.

It is also recommended that the school reallocate RtI staff and resources to provide Tier 2 services more equally for each grade-level. It was found that many more second grade students received Tier 2 intervention than any other grade. In fact, the number of second grade students receiving Tier 2 intervention was more than two times greater than most other grades. This shows that a significant amount of school resources were allocated for second grade, which may have a negative impact on the other grades. The author recommends the RtI team evaluate a more equitable way of allocating intervention resources to students in all grade levels rather than focusing primarily on one grade.
Efforts can also be taken to improve the quality of Tier 2 interventions provided in after-school program. Analysis of progress monitoring data for students receiving reading intervention in the after-school program showed that most students (more than 50% of students) did not meet their ambitious oral reading fluency goals. While more students met their realistic reading goals, most were unable to accelerate their growth as initially anticipated. While the author is unable to determine the cause for these results, several factors could have contributed. First, only one of the after-school teachers is a credentialed teacher while the rest are not. Most of the after-school teachers do not have formal teacher training and it may be that the after-school teachers were not implementing the interventions with fidelity because of a lack of instructional skills. In addition, the after-school teachers reported classroom behavior management was difficult because each class had about 18 students but only one teacher. Because interventions were delivered in small groups of around four to six students, teachers were responsible for teaching their small-group lesson as well as manage the behavior of the rest of the class. This can be very difficult for a teacher who has limited training in teaching and behavior management.

In response to these challenges, the author recommends the RtI team, including the after-school director, consider ways to improve the results of after-school reading interventions. For example, it is suggested that after-school teachers receive more ongoing training to improve the fidelity of after-school intervention instruction. Research supports that the effectiveness of interventions can be attributed to the level of training and experience of teachers (Vaughn et al., 2003). Currently, the after-school director
does not provide regular training on reading intervention programs and does not conduct regular observations of after-school teachers, so this may be an area to address next year. For example, the after-school director could do regular “walkthroughs” to identify strengths of after-school teachers as well as ways to improve implementation strategies. These types of walkthroughs can improve the quality of instruction (Searle, 2010). In addition, the RtI team may want to look into purchasing other research validated RtI reading programs which have been found effective in the literature. Currently, the reading programs used in after-school program were selected primarily because of convenience since they were already available at the school-site. However, it may be beneficial to look into purchasing other after-school curriculum that more closely aligns with the current research and the needs of students at this school. Generally, reading programs which provide systematic and explicit instruction are most effective for struggling readers (Carnine et al., 2010). Finally, another way to improve the quality of instruction in the after-school program would be altering variables related to intervention intensity. For example, currently the after-school program classes have about 18 students. It is difficult for after-school teachers to meet with all of their small-groups of four to six students in the limited amount of time available. It may be beneficial to look into ways of reducing the number of students in each class to improve the quality of instruction, as research generally supports that interventions with fewer students and with longer duration have improved results. (Schwarz, Schmitt, & Lose, 2012; Torgesen et al., 2011). The author has spoken to the after-school director about this possibility. The after-school director said she would like to reduce class sizes next year to enable after-
school teachers to better meet the needs of students. After analyzing the data and getting feedback from the after-school teachers, the after-school director has concluded that class size reduction may be beneficial.

**Recommendations for Tier 3**

Overall, the RtI team implemented most of the features common to RtI, as recommended by Sailor (2009), including universal screening, a three-tiered model, research-validated interventions, and regular progress monitoring. However, this school has not developed clear decision rules for placing students in different tiers. This is a critical area since, without these decision rules, it is difficult to know when to move a student from Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3. A lack of clear decisions rules related to Tier 3 made it difficult for the entire RtI team to agree when a student should be referred for special education services. Thus, it is recommended that the RtI team meets before the beginning of next year to identify general decision rules for identifying when a student moves tiers, specifically when a student moves from Tier 2 to Tier 3. The author found this decision the most difficult to determine since the RtI team did not identify what was considered “adequate” or “inadequate” progress. This is an issue that many schools continue to struggle with, as the literature indicates that setting decision rules in RtI continues to be a difficult issue to resolve (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012) and Tier 3 continues to be the least defined and consistent tier of RtI across schools and states (Berkeley et al., 2009). Decision making rules is an area of RtI that would benefit from more research as it appears to be unresolved issue in many schools.
To develop clearer decision rules for entering or exiting Tier 3 at the school site, the author suggests the RtI team first identifies the tools used to progress monitor students in each reading intervention (i.e. DIBELS probes or running records indicating DRA levels). Then, the team needs to discuss what is considered to be “adequate” growth for a six to eight week intervention. The RtI team should consult current research indicating realistic, expected growth rates for students performance in reading measures. Then, they should together create a chart indicating expected growth rates and “decision” rules for movement between Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3.

**Recommendations for the RtI Resource Binder**

In response to the high number of English language learners receiving RtI services at this school, the author would like to recommend adding a section titled “RtI for English Language Learners” to the RtI Resource Binder next year. As noted earlier in the recommendations section, this school used limited instructional strategies and assessments for students who were English language learners. Therefore, the following materials should be added to the binder: a summary of federal legislation related to the education of English language learners (i.e. IDEA 2004, No Child Left Behind of 2001, and Title I), an example of a home language survey, a copy of a Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) teacher observation rubric, and the Woodcock-Munoz Language Screening test. In addition, materials listing effective instructional strategies and accommodations for students demonstrating different levels of English language proficiency (i.e. beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, and advanced) would be very useful for teachers. This would help them differentiate their instruction based on
students’ English language needs. Further, if the RtI team provides teachers training on strategies to use for English language learners, any of these material provided at the training should also be included in the binder.

Finally, the usefulness and effectiveness of the RtI Resource binder is yet to be determined, as the school needs more time to utilize the materials. Materials for the RtI Resource Binder were compiled throughout the school year, as this school began implementing different parts of RtI. Thus, the final version of the binder was not completed until March 2013. Therefore, the RtI team should evaluate the usefulness of this resource at the end of next year, as the RtI team and school staff continues to use this resource. In addition, it is recommended that the RtI team continue to add resources to this binder as they identify additional materials, which would benefit the RtI model. It would be beneficial for the RtI team to review the materials in the RtI Resource Binder at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to determine if additional materials should be added and revise existing materials as needed.
APPENDIX A

Response to Intervention (RtI) Resource Binder Materials
APPENDIX A-1

Description of Roles and Responsibilities for Team Members
### RTI Team Members
#### Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Principal**                 | - Provides leadership and school vision for RtI system  
- Main point person for overseeing the implementation of RtI  
- Facilitates Problem Solving Team (PST) meetings  
- Makes decisions for allocation of resources for RtI |
| **Intervention Coordinator**   | - Coordinates different Tiers of intervention  
- Helps coordinate 9-grids and PST meetings  
- Supports general education teachers in the RtI process  
- Provides ideas of way to differentiate academic reading instruction  
- Provides short-term, small group intervention for students identified in Tier 2 or Tier 3  
- Collects progress monitoring data for evaluating effectiveness of interventions |
| **Education Specialist**      | - Provides RTI intervention to students in Tier 3 and acts as case manager for all students with an Individualized Academic Program (IEP)  
- Assists with providing small-group intervention, progress monitoring RTI students, consulting with teachers to differentiate instruction and implement 9-grids, supporting after-school teachers, coordinating PST meetings, and providing RtI professional development to staff  
- Responsible for implementing IEPs, providing specialized academic instruction to help students meet IEP goals, and assist with differentiation (accommodations and modifications) in the classroom |
| **Reading and Writing Coaches** | - Supports general education teachers in the RtI process  
- Provides ideas of way to differentiate academic reading instruction  
- Provides small group intervention for students identified in Tier 2 or Tier 3  
- Collects progress monitoring data for evaluating effectiveness of interventions |
**After-School Director**
- Oversees after-school program students and staff
- Responsible for providing appropriate, targeted after-school intervention for students performing below grade-level in 2nd through 5th grade
- Supports after-school teachers in implementing interventions with fidelity and collecting progress monitoring data

**Speech Therapist**
- Case manager for students who qualify for special education for a speech and language impairment
- Develops and implements IEPs, provides speech/language services, and support students in reaching speech and language goals
- Also provides RtI speech services for students identified with speech/language concerns

**School Psychologist**
- Main responsibility is to complete assessments to determine if students qualify for special education
- In the RTI Process the school psychologist:
  - Analyzes and interprets data
  - Helps determine appropriate interventions
  - Collaborates with teachers to problem solve and brainstorm accommodations or modifications in the classroom
  - Helps determine the appropriate tier for each student
- Also supports with academic and behavior concerns

**School Counselor**
- Supports students with emotional, social, and behavioral needs.
- Provides individual and group counseling
- Offers counseling groups which focus on: recess play skills, developing social skills, anger management, managing grief, and other social/emotional concerns
APPENDIX A-2

Flowchart of Response to Intervention Process
PST Process for Academic, Behavioral, and Language Concerns:

Gen Ed Teacher (GET) identifies student.
- GET completes 1st page of “Initial 9-grid Meeting Form.”
- Bring Data Portal student profile, work samples, and COI data to team meeting.

GET consults with Grade Level Team (GLT) & Lead
- Complete 9 Grid and identifies in-class accommodations
- Follow-Up with Consultation Meeting (with RTI team member).
  Solidify student goals and method of tracking progress on goals.
  Save completed 9-grid on Shared Drive.
- Implement accommodations for 4-5 weeks.

Successful?

GET meets with GLT, Lead, and Specialists (as needed):
- Academic Concerns: RTI Coordinator or Ed Specialist
- Behavior: School Counselor or School Psych
- Language/Speech: Speech Therapist

Review data & revise 9 Grid. Add additional interventions and accommodations. Implement for 4-6 weeks.

Unsuccessful?

GET contacts RTI Coordinator to schedule PST meeting.
- GET sends all 9-grid materials
- PST scheduled w/in 4 weeks.

PST meeting held with GET, Principal, parent & appropriate support staff.

Develop and implement a plan of action for 4-6 weeks.

Successful?

PST follow-up meeting scheduled in 4-6 weeks from PST to review progress; continue using interventions.

Unsuccessful?

Follow-up PST meeting scheduled in 4-6 weeks.
- Review progress
- Identify next steps including Tier III interventions

Implement for 4-6 weeks.
APPENDIX A-3

Initial 9-grid Form
# INITIAL 9 GRID MEETING — ACADEMIC

Please complete BEFORE meeting with your team. Also, print out Student Profile from Data Portal to share at Team Meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Initial Meeting:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the student’s successes/strengths:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe your specific Academic concerns. Determine your top 2 or 3 specific academic concerns.

1. 

2. 

3. 

Describe Services Student Receives, or has received in the past (Outside of General Ed Classroom):

*services in school, but outside general education, like RSP, Speech, Counseling, Intervention, etc.*

**Other important information?** *(ie. Social/emotional concerns, level of family support or involvement, if new to Aspire, any previous academic concerns, retention, or school attendance issues?)*
**PLEASE COMPLETE WITH YOUR LEAD + TEAM.**

Possible Accommodations (Star areas which you believe will help your student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapt number of items/number of activities student is expected to learn prior to mastery assessment.</td>
<td>Adapt time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce quantity of hw, # of problems/questions, # of terms</td>
<td>Individualize timeline for completing a task/assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase practice time prior to mastery assessment (ex: include more practice worksheets and activities)</td>
<td>Pace learning (increase/decrease) for student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess at each level rather than comprehensively at the conclusion of the standard (i.e. give him a few quizzes per so many pages read, instead of for the whole chapter, or breaking down the text into chunks)</td>
<td>Allow additional time for testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify: )</td>
<td>Allows scheduled breaks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEVEL OF SUPPORT**

Increase the amount of personal assistance to keep student on task or to reinforce or prompt use of specific skills.

- Peer buddies or Peer Tutors
- Use of Visual Schedule
- Redirect cues/silent signals
- Structure of environment
- Math "hook" or vocabulary cue cards
- Proximity
- Checks for understanding/Regular Personal Check-ins
  (Specify: )
- Small Group Reinforcement of teaching
- Personalized token incentive system
- Other (Specify: )

**INPUT (alters presentation)**

Adapt the way instruction is delivered to learner.

- Use of colored paper instead of white, color overlays, highlighters, rulers or paper/folder slits to help focus reading, sample end product/notes/assignment, copy of notes, flowchart, bulleted lists, tables, written directions, gestural cues) Please specify which you are using: __________
- Enlarged text or more white space on page
- Use of sentence frames, close passages
- Pre-teach concepts and cues (ex: preteach vocabulary)
- Oral delivery of text & tests
- Demonstrations (i.e. role play/skit in history, model or demo in math/science, read aloud in Humanities)
- Hands-on, Kinesthetic Activities
- Other (Specify: )

**OUTPUT (alters production)**

Adapt how the learner can respond to instruction.

- Verbal response instead of written
- Use of a scribe for written work
- Use of typing rather than writing
- Demonstrate rather than describe
- Other (Specify: )

**DIFFICULTY**

Adapt skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.

- Calculator or Multiplication Chart
- Simplify task directions
- Change rules to accommodate learner needs
- Reduce steps to assignment
- Other (Specify: )

**PARTICIPATION**

Adapt the extent to which learner is actively involved in task.

- Increase student involvement in activity
- Choral response
- Group response
- Peer response
- Allow student to earn classroom jobs and leadership roles
- Ask student to help during demonstrations or activities
- No individual response until after practicing the skill
- Other (Specify: )

Any other interventions or accommodations that seem to help this student achieve?
**Date of Initial Meeting: ____________  Date of Follow-up Meeting: ____________**

**COMPLETE WITH YOUR LEAD OR SPECIALIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>9-Grid Interventions to Implement...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What interventions can you and the team commit to for the next 6-8 weeks?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic/Behavioral Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What are 1-2 realistic academic goals for this student to achieve in 6-8 weeks?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will Goals be Tracked?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Who, How, and When</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What data/work samples will you use to track student progress before the follow-up meeting?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 9-Grid FOLLOW UP FORM

*(complete after implementing 9-grid for 6-8 weeks)*

**Date:** __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic/Behavioral Goals</th>
<th>Results at Follow-Up Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Copy and paste the academic goals created for this student.</em></td>
<td><em>Did the student meet his/her goals? Please include data as evidence.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection Questions:**

1) What interventions and/or strategies worked well for this student?

2) What did not work well?

3) What is the next step? (highlight one)

- **It was success!** --- I will continue using 9-grid interventions.
- **I want some more ideas** --- I would like to add and document additional 9-grid interventions (please ask Stacie or Jen for support if needed)
- **The student didn’t show progress towards goals** --- I want to request a PST meeting.
APPENDIX A-4

Sample of a Completed 9-Grid Form
**INITIAL 9 GRID MEETING — ACADEMIC**

Please complete **BEFORE** meeting with your team.  
Also, print out Student Profile from Data Portal to share at Team Meeting.

**Date of Initial Meeting:** Dec. 4, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
<th>Kinder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Describe the student’s successes/strengths:**
- He knows 7 lowercase letters now (an improvement from 0 at beginning of the year).
- He can write his first and last name (inconsistently).
- Can count to 14.
- He is a good worker. He tries to do his best.
- Gets along well with students.
- He enjoys participating in class.

**Describe your specific Academic concerns. Determine your top 2 or 3 specific academic concerns.**

1. His knowledge of letters and sounds – Currently knows only 7 lowercase letter sounds
2. Retention of High frequency words – Currently only knows 2 out of the 17 words introduced.
3. Visual recognition/retention of letters and numbers – He appears to confuse letters and does not attend to visual differences between letters and numbers

**Describe Services Student Receives, or has received in the past (Outside of General Ed Classroom):**

*services in school, but outside general education, like RSP, Speech, Counseling, Intervention, etc.*

- RSP support 4x a week for 30 minutes – working on letter sounds, phonemic awareness, and sight words.
- Teacher A works with him one-on-one for 15 minutes – focusing on letter sounds and high frequency words – One letter a week and then add to
what he already knows.

- Made flashcards to use in class and at home.
- Has individualized HW focusing on phonemics awareness

**Other important information?** (ie. Social/emotional concerns, level of family support or involvement, if new to Aspire, any previous academic concerns, retention, or school attendance issues?)

He is EL learner – Dad only speaks Spanish (beginning intermediate on the CELDT). He is the youngest in the family and dad has difficulty holding him accountable. Attendance is great, has not missed a day of instruction. Went to a month of preschool.
PLEASE COMPLETE WITH YOUR LEAD + TEAM.

Possible Accommodations (Star areas which you believe will help your student)

**QUANTITY**
- Reduce quantity of, # of problems/questions, # of terms
- Increase practice time prior to mastery assessment
- Assess at each level rather than comprehensively at the conclusion of the standard (i.e. give him a few quizzes per so many pages read, instead of for the whole chapter, or breaking down the test into chunks)
- Other (Specify: Repeated practice of key concepts – repeating the same word throughout the day)

**TIME**
- Adapt time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.
  - Individualize timeline for completing a task/assignment
  - Pace learning (increase/decrease) for student
  - Allow additional time for testing
  - Allow schedule breaks
  - Other (Specify: _______________________

**LEVEL OF SUPPORT**
- Increase the amount of personal assistance to keep student on task or to reinforce or prompt use of specific skills.
  - Peer buddies or Peer Tutors
  - Use of Visual Schedule
  - Redirection cues/silent signals
  - Structure of environment
  - Math "toolkit" or vocabulary cue cards
  - Proximity
  - Checks for understanding/Regular Personal Checking (Specify: giving him extra prompts to help him succeed)
  - Group Reinforcement of teaching – 1x a day for 15 min
  - Personalized Token Incentive System
  - Other (Specify: _______________________

**DIFFICULTY**
- Adapt skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.
  - Calculator or Multiplication Chart
  - Simplify task directions
  - Change rules to accommodate learner needs
  - Reduce steps to assignment
  - Other (Please specify: _______________________

**OUTPUT (alters production)**
- Adapt how the learner can respond to instruction.
  - Verbal response instead of written
  - Use of a scribe for written work
  - Use of typing rather than writing
  - Demonstrate rather than describe
  - Other (Specify: _______________________

**INPUT (alters presentation)**
- Adapt the way instruction is delivered to learner.
  - Visual aids (i.e. pictures, color coding, graphic organizer, use of colored paper instead of white, color overlay, highlighters, rulers or paper/folder slit to help focus reading, sample end product/note/assignment, copy of notes, flowchart, bulleted lists, tables, written directions, gestural cues) Please specify which you are using:
  - Enlarged text or more white space on page
  - Use of sentence frames, close passages
  - Pre-teach concepts and cues (ex: preteach vocabulary)
  - Oral delivery of text & tests
  - Demonstrations (i.e. role play/vsk in history, model or demo in math/science, read aloud in humanities)
  - Hands-on, kinesthetic Activities
  - Other (Specify: _______________________

Any other interventions or accommodations that seem to help this student achieve?
*Will practice key words/colors/skills throughout the day by placing a sticker or prompt on Student A’s clothes to encourage students and staff to ask him about it
*Already doing kinesthetic activities with letters and high frequency words to help with visual recognition – Add Student repeating back letter names of shape of letters when writing
**Date of Initial Meeting: 12/4/12      Date of Follow-up Meeting: 2/12/13**

**COMPLETE WITH YOUR LEAD OR SPECIALIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 9-Grid Interventions to Implement…
*What interventions can you and the team commit to for the next 6-8 weeks?*

1. Using sorting activities: Sort numbers, letters, pictures, colors, shapes, etc. using sorting mats (with peer or adult checking his work).

2. Using enlarged letter cards (one letter per 8.5x11 flashcard): For letters he knows, Student A can tell what shapes each letter has (circles, lines, etc.). An instructional aide can work with Student A during guided reading time.

3. Using laminated letter cards: Teacher A writes letters on white board and Student A has to use finger to erase to force him to look at letters. Look into getting color-changing markers.

4. Differentiated centers (poetry, math, listening, writing, computers). Student A can do computer and listening center independently.

   - For math: Redo the lower number “drops in a bucket” (2, 3, 4) number sorting cards with color cues and Velcro/sticky number cards.
   - For writing: Reducing the high frequency word work (the 3 words he knows plus a focus word each week); he can do the letter tracing.

5. Teacher A will remind mom to focus on a few letters (not the whole alphabet) at a time when working with Student A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic/Behavioral Goals</th>
<th>How will Goals be Tracked?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **What are 1-2 realistic academic goals for this student to achieve in 6-8 weeks?** | **Who, How, and When**
|                           | **What data/work samples will you use to track student progress before the follow-up meeting?** |
| 1. Student A will know the names of 12 letters (1 per week). | 1. Letters/sounds tracking sheet. |
| 2. Student A will know 8 high frequency words. | 2. High-frequency word list. |
| 3. Student A will sort letters and numbers by shape. | 3. Observation of reading center work. |
9-Grid FOLLOW UP FORM
(complete after implementing 9-grid for 6-8 weeks)

Date: 2/12/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic/Behavioral Goals</th>
<th>Results at Follow-Up Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copy and paste the academic goals created for this student.</td>
<td>Did the student meet his/her goals? Please include data as evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Student A will know the names of 12 letters (1 per week).</td>
<td>1. Student A currently knows 22 sounds! But he only knows the name of 1 letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student A will know 8 high frequency words.</td>
<td>2. He knows 10 (still struggles with I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student A will sort letters and numbers by shape.</td>
<td>3. He is able to distinguish letters vs numbers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflection Questions:

1) What interventions and/or strategies worked well for this student?
   - The motions for sounds definitely helped. He begins to discriminate the initial sounds of words and can write it with guidance and support.
   - Instructional aide was able to work with him daily
   - Multiple repetition of sounds during the day

2) What did not work well?
   Differentiating centers didn’t work too well. He often didn’t know which were for him or the papers would get lost.

3) What is the next step? (highlight one)
   - It was success! --- I will continue using 9-grid interventions.
   - I want some more ideas --- I would like to add and document additional 9-grid interventions.
     - He continues to struggle with numbers- only writes 1-3 IDs 1-6 inconsistently. He isn’t self monitoring the words or sounds he does know. He still doesn’t know the name of the letters
   - The student didn’t show progress towards goals --- I want to request a PST meeting.
APPENDIX A-5

Problem Solving Team (PST) Note Templates
Problem Solving Team Meeting  
Initial Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
<th>PST # 1:</th>
<th>D.O.B.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Previous Schools:</td>
<td>Attendance Information:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Absent:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Strengths:
- Gen Ed Teacher input:
- Other Team Member input:
- Parent input:

Reason for PST Meeting:

### Academic Benchmark Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall (expected level 35%)</th>
<th>Winter (expected level 60%)</th>
<th>Spring (expected level 85+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-CST (expected performance on STAR test)
- Reading:
- Writing:
- Math:

DRA Scores:

**CORE Phonics Survey:**
- Alphabet Skills and Letter Sounds (%)
- Reading and Decoding (%)
- Vocabulary (out of)
CELDT Scores (if the student is an English language learner)
Overall:
Listening:
Speaking:
Reading:
Writing:

Description of Current Academic Skills

Reading:

Writing:

Math:

Student Background Information

Health Information:
- Does the student have any medical conditions?
- Has the student had any serious medical conditions or injuries in the past?

Academic History:
- Did the student attend preschool?
- Did the student attend other schools?

Family History:
- Is there any family history of learning difficulties?

Other Information:
- Any other information that may have had an impact on student learning?
- Has the student experienced any traumatic experiences or events?
## CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## GOALS FOR NEXT PST MEETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>How and Who will track?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>BY WHOM AND WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Steps:

_____ Exit PST Process  _____ Refer to SPED  _____ Follow Up Meeting

Printed Names and Signatures:

___________________________________  ___________________________________
___________________________________  ___________________________________
___________________________________  ___________________________________
Problem Solving Team Meeting
Follow-Up Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade:</th>
<th>PST # 1:</th>
<th>D.O.B.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present at Meeting:</th>
<th>Previous Schools:</th>
<th>Attendance Information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Absent:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Student Strengths:
- Gen Ed Teacher input:
- Other Team Member input:
- Parent input:

Reason for PST Meeting:

Academic Benchmark Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall (expected level 35%)</th>
<th>Winter (expected level 60%)</th>
<th>Spring (expected level 85+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-CST (expected performance on STAR test)
Reading:
Writing:
Math:

DRA Scores:

CORE Phonics Survey:
- Alphabet Skills and Letter Sounds (%)
- Reading and Decoding (%)
- Vocabulary (out of)
**CELDT Scores (if the student is an English language learner)**

Overall:
Listening:
Speaking:
Reading:
Writing:

**Description of Current Academic Skills**

Reading:
Writing:
Math:

**Student Background Information**

**Health Information:**
- Does the student have any medical conditions?
- Has the student had any serious medical conditions or injuries in the past?

**Academic History:**
- Did the student attend preschool?
- Did the student attend other schools?

**Family History:**
- Is there any family history of learning difficulties?

**Other Information:**
- Any other information that may have had an impact on student learning?
- Has the student experienced any traumatic experiences or events?
### CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RESULTS ON PREVIOUS PST GOALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OUTCOME OF PREVIOUS ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GOALS FOR NEXT PST MEETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>How and Who will track?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**ACTION PLAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>BY WHOM AND WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Next Steps:**

- _____ Exit PST Process
- _____ Refer to SPED
- _____ Follow Up Meeting

**Printed Names and Signatures:**

_________________________  ____________________________

_________________________  ____________________________

_________________________  ____________________________
APPENDIX A-6

Sample of Completed Problem Solving Team (PST) Notes
*SAMPLE*

Problem Solving Team Meeting
Initial Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student: Student A</th>
<th>Date: 2/21/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade: 2nd</td>
<td>PST # 1: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Present at Meeting:
- Mom
- Stepdad
- Gen Ed Teacher
- Intervention Coordinator
- Ed Specialist
- Reading Coach
- Principal

Previous Schools:
- ABC Elementary (for kindergarten through-part of 2nd grade)

Attendance Information:
- Days Absent: 2 days this year

Student Strengths:
- Gen Ed Teacher input: She works well with other students and has a positive attitude.
- Other Team Member input: She really wants to learn and do well.
- Parent input: She is excited when she knows she has done well. She is starting to think about what she wants to be when she grows up. At home, she talks a lot and is very honest. She likes to take care of her baby brother.

Reason for PST Meeting: Discuss as a team how to best support Student A and address academic concerns in reading and math. To update parents about interventions the school would like to provide Student A.

### Academic Benchmark Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall (expected level 35%)</th>
<th>Winter (expected level 60%)</th>
<th>Spring (expected level 85+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-CST (expected performance on STAR test) – n/a
Reading:
Writing:
Math:

DRA Scores: Fall: 2; Current: 2 (Instructionally at a 3)

CORE Phonics Survey:
- 24/26 Letter names (uppercase)
- 23/26 letter names (lowercase)
- 19/21 Consonant sounds
- 5/5 Long vowel sounds
- 5/5 Short vowel sounds
- 10/15 Short vowels in CVC words
- 4/15 Consonant blends with short vowels

CELDT Scores (if the student is an English language learner) – n/a
Overall:
Listening:
Speaking:
Reading:
Writing:

Description of Current Academic Skills

Reading: Mom has the greatest concern with reading. She gets embarrassed of reading aloud. Decoding and comprehension are both difficult for Student A. After listening to a story, she is unable to answer basic literal questions.

Writing: It’s hard to read Student A’s writing because of her spelling and handwriting. She doesn’t leave enough space in between words so it’s hard to read.

Math: She knows some basic math facts – she knows about 19/30 facts (doubles and +1, +0 rules) She needs to develop her number sense (i.e. ones, tens, hundreds place). She also needs to learn about money and the value of coins. Her stepdad has noticed that Student A has a hard time learning about money. Counting tally marks can also be difficult for Student A.
### Student Background Information

**Health Information:**
- Does the student have any medical conditions? no
- Has the student had any serious medical conditions or injuries in the past? no

**Academic History:**
- Did the student attend preschool? Yes she did. She did not seem to have a hard time in preschool though.
- Did the student attend other schools? Yes, she attended another elementary school before coming here. She struggled in 1st grade and was almost retained. But she made enough improvement in 1st grade to not be retained. Student A has always had a difficult time with reading.

**Family History:**
- Is there any family history of learning difficulties? Mom had a hard time in school in reading, writing, and math

**Other Information:**
- Any other information that may have had an impact on student learning? Student A should wear glasses. She has a hard time controlling one of her eyes.
- Has the student experienced any traumatic experiences or events? no

### CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading – Decoding</td>
<td>After-school program SIPPS program</td>
<td>Student A’s spelling has gotten better. She’s been spelling with 80% accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided Reading support in after-school</td>
<td>She is starting to blend words but has difficulty manipulating sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided Reading with Reading Coach 4x a week</td>
<td>Student A reads very slowly the first time she reads a book. But she reads with more fluency on the second read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She just started working with the reading coach--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Math

Work with a peer buddy during center time to support her -- to practice her numbers

She responds well to the peer buddy and seems to enjoy it

---

**GOALS FOR NEXT PST MEETING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>How and Who will track?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A will read and write 20 high frequency sight words with 80% accuracy.</td>
<td>Reading coach during guided reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A will blend and decode CVC and CCVC words with short vowels with 80% accuracy.</td>
<td>After-school teacher using SIPPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A will write and identify numbers to 30 with 90% accuracy.</td>
<td>General Education Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**ACTION PLAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>BY WHOM AND WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A will practice high frequency words each night using flashcards</td>
<td>• Student A and Parents, nightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move Student A to the front of the room so she is closer to her teacher to help her pay attention.</td>
<td>• General Education Teacher, this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading coach will meet with Student A 4x a week (one-on-one)</td>
<td>• Reading Coach, this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A will continue going to after-school program and getting SIPPS + HW help</td>
<td>• After-school teacher, daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Sight word + spelling practice 4x a week for about 15 minutes.</td>
<td>• Education specialist, next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send 100s chart home to help parents practice numbers with them</td>
<td>• General Education teacher, this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send home additional books at Student A’s instructional level to read nightly</td>
<td>• After-School teacher, next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra work packets at her level sent home so parents have activities to use at home for extra practice</td>
<td>• General education teacher, next week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sight word flashcards sent home

- Reading coach, next week

Next Steps:

______ Exit PST Process      _____ Refer to SPED      ____x__ Follow Up Meeting

Printed Names and Signatures:

___________________________________  ___________________________________

___________________________________  ___________________________________

___________________________________  ___________________________________
**SAMPLE**

Problem Solving Team Meeting
Follow-Up Meeting

Student: Student A  
Grade: 2nd  
PST # 1: 2  
Date: 4/18/13  
D.O.B.: 5/13/05

Present at Meeting:
- Mom
- Stepdad
- Gen Ed Teacher
- Intervention Coordinator
- Ed Specialist
- Reading Coach
- Principal

Previous Schools:
- ABC Elementary (for kindergarten through-part of 2nd grade)

Attendance Information:
- Days Absent: 2 days this year

Student Strengths:
- Gen Ed Teacher input: She works well with other students and has a positive attitude.
- Other Team Member input: She really wants to learn and do well.
- Parent input: She is excited when she knows she has done well. She is starting to think about what she wants to be when she grows up. At home, she talks a lot and is very honest. She likes to take care of her baby brother.

Reason for PST Meeting: Discuss as a team how to best support Student A and address academic concerns in reading and math. To update parents about interventions the school would like to provide Student A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Benchmark Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall (expected level 35%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Pre-CST (expected performance on STAR test) – n/a**

Reading: 25%
Writing: 41%
Math: 50%

**DRA Scores**: Fall: 2; Last PST meeting: level 3 (instructional) ; Current: Level 8 (instructional)

**CORE Phonics Survey: (from 2/21/13)**
- 24/26 Letter names (uppercase)
- 23/26 letter names (lowercase)
- 19/21 Consonant sounds
- 5/5 Long vowel sounds
- 5/5 Short vowel sounds
- 10/15 Short vowels in CVC words
- 4/15 Consonant blends with short vowels

**CELDT Scores (if the student is an English language learner) – n/a**

Overall:
Listening:
Speaking:
Reading:
Writing:

### Description of Current Academic Skills

**Overall**: Student A will participate when she feels confident with answers. She won’t ask for help usually. Her General Education teacher and parents noted that Student A has organization issues. Her teacher also noted that Student A has had other students’ pencil pouches in her desk.

**Reading**: The reading coach has been working one-on-one with Student A for guided reading about 30 minutes a day. She is working with Student A on seeing chunks in words so she can sound them out, instead of relying on her memory. She is starting to look for two-letter chunks, such as vowel patterns. She can read and write 23 high frequency words (kindergarten level words). Student A was not monitoring herself when reading before. Now she is excited when she is able to correct herself. She is growing and showing progress. The after-school program teacher works on a phonics program called SIPPS with Student A in after-school program. She has grown more confident and she will even point out mistakes other students make.

**Writing**: Her general education teacher can understand her writing better since the
At the beginning of the year, she has shown a lot of improvement in her writing.

**Math:** She is working on her basic math facts. She can write her numbers to 49 correctly.

---

**Student Background Information (from 2/21/13)**

**Health Information:**
- Does the student have any medical conditions? No
- Has the student had any serious medical conditions or injuries in the past? No

**Academic History:**
- Did the student attend preschool? Yes, she did. She did not seem to have a hard time in preschool though.
- Did the student attend other schools? Yes, she attended another elementary school before coming here. She struggled in 1st grade and was almost retained. But she made enough improvement in 1st grade to not be retained. Student A has always had a difficult time with reading.

**Family History:**
- Is there any family history of learning difficulties? Mom had a hard time in school in reading, writing, and math

**Other Information:**
- Any other information that may have had an impact on student learning? Student A should wear glasses. She has a hard time controlling one of her eyes.
- Has the student experienced any traumatic experiences or events? No

---

**CURRENT INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading – Decoding</td>
<td>After-school program</td>
<td>Student A’s spelling has gotten better. She’s been spelling with 80% accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SIPPS program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided Reading support in after-school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided Reading with Reading Coach 4x a week</td>
<td>She can blend words with more confidence and is starting to read words with vowel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extra Sight word, Spelling, and phonics practice with Ed Specialist

Student A has moved to a DRA level 8.

Math

Work with a peer buddy during center time to support her -- to practice her numbers

Student A has shown growth in her ability to identify and write numbers.

RESULTS ON PREVIOUS PST GOALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A will read and write 20 high frequency sight words with 80% accuracy.</td>
<td>Student A can read and write 23 sight words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A will blend and decode CVC and CCVC words with short vowels with 80% accuracy.</td>
<td>Student A can read CVC and CCVC words with short vowels with 85% accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A will write and identify numbers to 30 with 90% accuracy.</td>
<td>Student A can write numbers to 49 with 100% accuracy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OUTCOME OF PREVIOUS ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Student A will practice high frequency words each night using flashcards | • She can read and write 23 sight words.  
• She will practice her sight words with her parents at home as well.  
• She can read sight words really fast now. |
| Move Student A to the front of the room so she is closer to her teacher to help her pay attention. | • Student A sits closer to her teacher now. This has been helpful to check-in with Student A and to re-direct her. |
| Reading coach will meet with Student A 4x a week (one-on-one) | • She has moved from a level 3 to a level 8 since our last meeting (she has gone up |
about half a grade level since our last meeting

Student A will continue going to after-school program and getting SIPPS + HW help

- She is learning chunks and is starting to correct herself and other students when making mistakes.
- She has a lot more confidence and more social in after-school

Extra Sight word + spelling practice 4x a week for about 15 minutes.

- She can read and write 23 sight words.

Send 100s chart home to help parents practice numbers with them

- Parents feel that Student A still needs more support in place value and understanding numbers

Send home additional books at Student A’s instructional level to read nightly

- She receives 2 books every night.

Extra work packets at her level sent home so parents have activities to use at home for extra practice

- Student A’s stepdad would like some extra work for math to help her practice more at home

Sight word flashcards sent home

- She can read and write 23 sight words.

### GOALS FOR NEXT PST MEETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>How and Who will track?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Math Goal: Using number patterns, Student A can independently read and write numbers to 200 with 100% accuracy. | Parents will work with Student A on math at home.  
Student A’s teacher can track this goal by completing 100s/200s chart. She will try to check-in 2x a week. |
| Math Goal: Student A will solve +0, +1, doubles, and +10 basic facts with 80% accuracy.  
*Sort flashcards so she is practicing these facts every day.* | Parents will work on flashcards nightly.  
General Education teacher will track during “roll and write” math games. |
| Reading Goal: Student A will read words and self-correct errors using strategies (i.e. checking the picture, sounding words out) | After-School teacher will track this goal during SIPPS |
with digraphs, blends, and vowel chunks (long vowels) with 80% accuracy.

Sight Word Goal: Student A can increase sight word recognition by 12 more words (total of 35 words).

Her guided reading teacher will track this.

ACTION PLAN for PST 2 (4/18/13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>BY WHOM AND WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take Student A to the eye doctor to see if she needs glasses.</td>
<td>• Parents, by next meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure that Student A’s reading homework is signed every night.</td>
<td>• Parents, nightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send home basic facts addition flashcards</td>
<td>• After School Teacher will provide addition flashcards for parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send home educational websites that Student A can play at home to practice skills --- including Think-Fast login info.</td>
<td>• General Education Teacher will send this list home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send home log-in information for RAZ kids (which works on reading) --- so she can access this at home and especially over the summer.</td>
<td>• After-School teacher will send this info home. Parents will allow Student A to use this at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can look into educational apps to use on Student A’s tablet.</td>
<td>• Dad will look into apps. • Ed specialist will also look into getting a list of apps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Coach will check-in with another intervention teacher to see if Student A can join one of her reading groups so she has the opportunity to work with other students.</td>
<td>• Reading Coach will do this by next week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Steps:

______ Exit PST Process ______ Refer to SPED ______x__ Follow Up Meeting

Printed Names and Signatures:

_________________________________________  ___________________________________

_________________________________________ ___________________________________

_________________________________________ ___________________________________
APPENDIX A-7

Reading Intervention Parent Permission Form
To the Parents of _______________________.

We want to let you know about a great opportunity for additional academic support for your child this year. After looking at your child’s academic benchmark data, we feel your child would benefit from extra instructional support in reading. So, we would like to offer Response to Intervention (RtI) services for your child. RtI services are meant to accelerate student learning by providing additional academic support during the school day.

We would like to offer your child extra academic intervention to help him/her with reading. The learning group will meet for _____ minutes, _____ times a week. This reading group will be taught by ____________________. We will work with your child’s teacher to find the best time to work with child during the day.

Please sign and return this form to let us know if you want your child to participate in this learning group. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you!

__________________________________________
Staff member’s name, Title
School name
Phone, email

Please sign and return to your child’s teacher by ____________________________.

☐ Yes, I would like my child to participate in the RtI Reading group!
☐ No, I do not want my child to participate in the RtI Reading group.

Signature _________________________________ Date ____________________
Nombre de la escuela

dirección

ciudad

Fecha _______________________

Para los padres de ___________________________,

Queremos hacerle saber acerca de una gran oportunidad para el apoyo académico adicional para su hijo este año. Después de ver los datos de referencia académicos de su hijo, sentimos que su hijo se beneficiaría de apoyo a la instrucción adicional en lectura. Por lo tanto, nos gustaría ofrecer respuesta a los servicios de Intervención (RTI) para su hijo. Servicios de ITR tienen el propósito de acelerar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes mediante el apoyo académico adicional durante el día escolar.

Nos gustaría ofrecer a su hijo una intervención académica adicional para ayudarlo / a con la lectura. El grupo de aprendizaje se reunirá por minuto ____, ______ veces a la semana. Este grupo de lectura será impartido por _____________________. Vamos a trabajar con el maestro de su hijo para encontrar el mejor momento para trabajar con los niños durante el día.

Por favor firme y devuelva este formulario para hacernos saber si usted desea que su hijo participe en este grupo de aprendizaje. No dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo si tiene alguna pregunta o preocupación.

¡Gracias!

El nombre del funcionario, título
nombre de la escuela
teléfono, email

Favor de firmar y regresar a la maestra de su hijo, _____________________.

☐ Sí, me gustaría que mi hijo participe en el grupo de lectura RtI!
☐ No, yo no quiero que mi hijo participe en el grupo de lectura RtI.

Firma ___________________________________ Fecha ______________________
APPENDIX B

Response to Intervention Professional Development Materials
APPENDIX B-1

PowerPoint Presentation for General Education Teachers
Overview of RTI + PST + IEP Process
Objectives

- Teachers will be able to:
  - Identify the main steps in the RTI process
  - Locate and use RTI resources on the shared drive
  - Begin working on a 9-grid(s) with their team
RTI in a Nutshell

What is RTI?
- RTI is an instructional framework meant to address the academic and behavioral needs of students.

What is the Purpose of RTI?
- Provide high quality instruction to all students
- Identify students needing additional academic support
- Provide research-based supplemental interventions
- Allow practitioners an additional way of identifying students who may qualify for special education
Our Roles

- Education Specialist
- Speech Therapist
- School Psychologist
- Intervention Coordinator
- School Counselor
- Site Reading / Writing Coaches
All those Acronyms!?! 

- **Rti = Response to Intervention**
  - A three-tiered framework and/or process of responding to student needs by using a variety of accommodations, scaffolds, and research-based interventions to meet the individualized academic and behavioral needs of students.

- **9-Grid =** A form to complete which identifies specific ways to differentiate your instruction to best support students that are struggling.

- **PST = Problem Solving Team**
  - A PST meeting is held with the PST team after teachers have completed a 9-grid, have implemented 9-grid interventions, and are not seeing improvement in performance.
  - The PST team includes: GE teacher, parents, principal, Ed. Specialist, Intervention coordinator, School Psychologist

- **IEP = Individualized Academic Plan**
  - After going through the PST process, special education assessment may be suggested.
  - If a student qualifies for special education services, s/he will have an IEP to address individual student needs.
RtI: Three Tiered Model

Tier I

Core Program/Accom/Mod in the GE Class
80%

Tier II

Supplemental / Targeted Intervention
10 - 15%

Tier III

Intensive Intervention
(Not necessarily SpEd)
5% or less

Behavior

Academics
Slide 7.

Agenda

• Review flowchart of RTI process
  — Show how to print Student Profile & Save to shared drive
  — Show Calendar dates
• Show resources on shared drive
• Begin 9-grid for new student
• Sign-Up for Consultation Meetings
APPENDIX B-2

General Information Sheets on Response to Intervention
What is RTI?
RTI is an instructional framework meant to address the academic and behavioral needs of students.

What is the Purpose of RTI?
According to the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI), the purpose of RTI is to:

- Provide high quality instruction to all students.
- Identify students needing additional academic support.
- Provide research-based supplemental interventions.
- Allow practitioners an additional way of identifying students who may qualify for special education.

What are the essential components of RTI?
1. Universal screening of all students (to identify students needing additional support)
2. A Three Tier system - Each tier offers increasing levels of intensity to match individual student needs to appropriate interventions.
3. Research-based interventions – To address academic and behavioral needs
4. Progress Monitoring – To track student progress
5. Decision rules for when to move students to different tiers
Description of RtI Tiers

Tier I – Primary Prevention  (80-85% of students)
- Tier 1 is provided in the Gen Ed classroom as high-quality instruction.
- Around 80% of students should respond to Gen Ed instruction when it is high quality.
- Simple accommodations and strategies to differentiate instruction can significantly benefit students in Tier I (use 9-grid to identify these strategies).

Tier 2 – Secondary Prevention  (10-15% of students)
- Goal of Tier 2 is to provide research-based interventions and accelerate the learning of students at-risk of learning or behavior difficulties.
- Generally, students should receive Tier II interventions for 6-15 weeks before moving to more intense interventions.
- It’s critical to track data to determine if students have made adequate progress and can move back to Tier I or if they made minimal progress and need to move to Tier III.

Tier 3 – Tertiary Prevention  (1-5% of students)
- Includes the most intensive and individualized interventions. Includes students in SPED or those who may need SPED assessment.
- Students should only receive Tier III interventions if data shows Tier I and Tier II interventions were unsuccessful.
APPENDIX B-3

Flowchart of Response to Intervention Process
PST PROCESS FOR ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL, AND LANGUAGE CONCERNS:

Gen Ed Teacher (GET) identifies student.
- GET completes 1st page of “Initial 9-grid Meeting Form.”
- Bring Data Portal student profile, work samples, and COI data to team meeting.

GET consults with Grade Level Team (GLT) & Lead
- Complete 9 Grid and identifies in-class accommodations
- Follow-Up with Consultation Meeting (with RTI team member).
  Solidify student goals and method of tracking progress on goals.
  Save completed 9-grid on Shared Drive.
- Implement accommodations for 4-5 weeks.

Successful?

Remember: It’s critical to implement accommodations immediately and with fidelity!

Continue using 9 grid accommodations.

GET meets with GLT, Lead, and Specialists (as needed):
- Academic Concerns: RTI Coordinator or Ed Specialist
- Behavior: School Counselor or School Psych
- Language/Speech: Speech Therapist

Review data & revise 9 Grid. Add additional interventions and accommodations. Implement for 4-6 weeks.

Successful?

GET contacts RTI Coordinator to schedule PST meeting.
- GET sends all 9-grid materials
- PST scheduled w/in 4 weeks.

PST meeting held with GET, Principal, parent & appropriate support staff.
Develop and implement a plan of action for 4-6 weeks.

Successful?

PST follow-up meeting scheduled in 4-6 weeks from PST to review progress; continue using interventions.

Unsuccessful?

Follow-up PST meeting scheduled in 4-6 weeks.
- Review progress
- Identify next steps including Tier III Interventions

Implement for 4-6 weeks.
APPENDIX B-4

Check-list of Response to Intervention Meeting Materials
RTI 9-grid / PST Meeting Checklist

RTI = Response to intervention
PST = Problem Solving Team

What to bring to an RTI 9-grid or PST meetings:

### 9-grid Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Meeting</th>
<th>Follow-Up Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student Profile from Data portal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work samples to share</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1st page of “Initial 9-Grid Form” found on shared drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If behavior, any behavior contracts, rewards, etc. you have tried</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any other information you think the team needs to know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completed 9-grid + Action plan (both should have been completed after initial meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current data if different from initial (tally sheets, sticker charts, behavior or academic data charts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any type of progress monitoring you used to track goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current work samples (academic concerns)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other notes you have taken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PST Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Meeting</th>
<th>Follow-Up Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 9-grid if completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work samples to share</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forms completed from the PST process folder (if any)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If behavior, any behavior contracts, rewards, etc. you have tried</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any other information you think the team needs to know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current data if different from initial (tally sheets, sticker charts, behavior or academic data charts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information gathered from goals set from the last meeting (may vary depending on contract or outcome of meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current work samples (academic concerns)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other notes you have taken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please remember, this is just a few things you may bring to the meeting. It may change according to each student/teacher and the outcome of each meeting. At the end of each meeting there will be a next step with the notes attached to your outlook invite.**
APPENDIX B-5

Response to Intervention Calendar Meeting Dates
RtI Calendar Dates

9-Grid Data Talks
When: Once per month. At these data talks, you will focus on priority students and brainstorm 9-grid ideas with your team. You should walk away with more ideas for differentiating instruction and additional interventions you can use with your students.

9-Grid Data Talk Dates:
- Dec. 4th
- Jan. 15th
- Feb. 12th
- Mar. 5th
- Apr. 9th
- May 16th

9-Grid Consultation Meetings:
After completing a 9-grid at a Data Talk, you will also need to sign up for a 25 minute consultation meeting with a member from the RtI team. These Consultation Meetings are scheduled on IEP/PST days (one Thursday of each month). At these meetings, you will review your 9-grid and set-up an “action plan.” In your action plan, you will set goals, identify interventions to use, and pick a way to progress monitor goals.

9-Grid Consultation + PST Meeting Dates:
- Dec. 13th
- Jan. 17th
- Feb. 21st
- Mar. 21st
- Apr. 18th
- May 16th

PST Meetings
PST Meetings are held once a month on Thursday. They are held on the same day as most IEP meetings. Substitutes will be provided for teachers as needed. (For PST dates, see the 9-grid consultation schedule above. PST and consultation meetings will be on the same day)
References


Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. (2004). Public Law 108-446
(20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

disabilities identification: Consideration and initial conclusions. *Journal of
Learning Disabilities, 38*(6), 569-572.

intervention: How to do it.* Lawrence, KS: National Research Center on Learning
Disabilities.

Lederer, J. M. (2000). Reciprocal teaching of social studies in inclusive elementary

Lembke, E. S., McMaster, K. L., & Stecker, P. M. (2010). The prevention science of
reading research within a response-to-intervention model. *Psychology in the
Schools, 47*(1), 22-35.

Lemons, C. J., Key, A. P, Fuchs, D., Yoder, P. J., Fuchs, L. S., Compton, D. L., … &
Bouton, B. (2010). Predicting reading growth with event-related potentials:
Thinking differently about indexing “responsiveness.” *Learning and Individual
Differences, 20*, 158-166.

Lovett, M. W., Lacerenza, L., Borden, S. L., Frijters, J. C., Steinbach, K. A., & DePalma,
M. (2000). Components of effective remediation for developmental reading
disabilities: Combining phonological and strategy-based instruction to improve
outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*(2), 263-283.


