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Project study: An action plan for implementing Response to Intervention

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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2010

ABSTRACT

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Education
Teacher Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 allows schools to utilize response to intervention (RtI) as early intervention to prevent at-risk students from becoming labeled as learning disabled. Using action research methodology and school change theory, the purpose of this project study was to determine the RtI implementation needs of a rural elementary school (LE). The guiding research question was to identify the components of an RtI framework currently being utilized during the pre-referral process at LE. This study employed a qualitative method triangulation design to analyze data from key stakeholders including questionnaires; individual interviews from six reading teachers, one reading interventionist, and one special education teacher; and campus documents analysis. Analysis included data transformation of frequency statistics from surveys and coded data from open-ended questionnaire responses, individual interviews, and document analysis. These data were triangulated revealing the current level of practice in collaboration, data-based decision making, parent involvement, professional development, and implementation monitoring. Findings indicated utilization of several RtI components inconsistently across grade levels and subjects. As a result, an RtI action plan was developed including a description of RtI background, identification of current levels of practice, implementation steps including timetable, and an RtI glossary. This resource has the potential to aid other districts by providing an implementation plan that could be adapted to their campus needs. This study promotes positive social change by identifying an effective implementation process for a unified service delivery model at LE resulting in improving the education of all students.

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DEDICATION

This doctoral study is dedicated to my husband, Glenn Hamilton; my sons, Denver and Dayton Hamilton; and my parents, the late Donald Wells and Pearlee Wells. My husband and sons have walked along side of me during this long journey. My parents instilled in me the importance of education and a love for learning preparing me for my journey. Without their love and support, my goal would not have been reached.

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My doctoral committee provided direction as I took each step of my journey. I am grateful to Dr. Anju Jolly who has provided me with valuable guidance and instruction while encouraging me to stay on course. I appreciate Dr. Casey Reason for his insights and feedback. I am thankful for the assistance provided by the staff of Mentoring Minds, Inc. in providing valuable resources utilized during the completion of my doctoral study.

Personal reflection of the journey reveals the support and encouragement given by my entire family. I appreciate your understanding and love for me especially when my time was limited due to coursework and research. I am grateful to the many meals, hours of childcare, and words of encouragement provided by my mother and in-laws. Words cannot express my love and appreciation for my husband and sons. Your sacrifice of time and your endless support allowed me to reach my goal even when I thought it was impossible.

During the completion of my doctoral study journey a mentor and friend went to be with the Lord. Her professional example and love for assisting all children to reach their potential have inspired me to complete my journey so that I can continue to make a positive impact on students' lives.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM

The quality of instruction that low performing students receive in the general education setting is the focus of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (Lujan, Love, & Collins, 2008). These laws require the implementation of research-based instruction and quality interventions matched to student needs. In addition, IDEIA gives school districts the option of using evidence-based and scientifically research-based interventions to avoid having to categorize students in special education services as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). While using this prevention model, an Response to Intervention (RtI) framework does not remove the discrepancy model of learning disability, which is based on a difference between a student's intellectual ability and current levels of achievement (Lujan et al.). Also, IDEIA excludes any specific regulations regarding utilizing an RtI framework, allowing state and local education agencies to determine their own regulations (*Federal Register,* 2006). This has resulted in confusion regarding RtI's definition and implementation by both practitioners and researchers (Hollenbeck, 2007).

Response to intervention (RtI) is a process that can be applied at any grade level and involves "implementing high-quality, scientifically validated instructional practices based on learner needs, monitoring student progress, and adjusting instruction based on the student's response" (Bender & Shores, 2007, p.7). If a student's response is dramatically below those of his or her peers, the student may be identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) (Bender & Shores). Subsequently, Response to Intervention is a practice that focuses on instruction in the regular education setting,

ensuring that poor educational practices are not the cause of a struggling student's difficulties or disability (Shores & Chester, 2009). RtI affects schools differently than previous SLD special education eligibility procedures, due to its emphasis on a strong core curriculum and instruction occurring before individual student interventions (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006).

RtI is not a program, but a system of meeting students' needs that requires an evolution of existing organizational and educational practices (Tilly, 2006). It is important to understand and accommodate contextual factors for each school district and community (Chard et al., 2008). Currently, many schools have divided systems to assist students in general education, Title 1, English learner, and special education programs, which may result in a conflict of services due to lack of coordination between educators (Buffman, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). Regular educators, interventionists, and special educators have responsibilities in RtI implementation that will require collaboration in order to improve student achievement (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Canges, & Murphy, 2007). If educators infuse RtI into traditional school cultures or view it as a special education initiative, "they will neither become more successful in their efforts to help students learn nor eliminate the unhealthy and unnecessary distinction between general education and special education and the staff who serve them" (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008, p. 271).

Definition of the Problem

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) has shifted the RtI framework from theory to practice, resulting in states and local education agencies determining the implementation process for the RtI framework they

choose to utilize. “Because RTI was put forth more as an idea than as a plan in the special education law, administrators were left to create their own models of it” (Fuchs & L. Fuchs, 2008, p. 73). States and school districts are at different phases of RtI implementation. RtI implementation requires an effort of change that takes at least two to three years before results, such as more students performing at grade level, fewer students needing intervention, and fewer referrals for special needs evaluations, are noticed. Instructional leaders and educators will need time to learn new practices, utilize them effectively in their classroom instruction, and observe student improvement (Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts, n. d.). During the process of implementation, “districts need to evaluate policies and procedures to see how they fit into the RTI structure” (Shores & Chester, 2009, p. 171).

Local Problem

RtI has been included in recent legislation without much guidance toward implementation. IDEIA Section 300.307(b) mandated that states “must permit the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention; and may permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability” (Texas Education Agency, 2010, p. 5). In addition, IDEIA Section 300.307(b) stated that public agencies must use the state’s criteria when identifying children with specific learning disabilities. “Thus, the State’s criteria must permit the use of RTI and may require its use, in addition to other assessment tools and strategies, for determining whether the child has a specific learning disability” (Texas Education Agency, p. 5). Texas Education Agency’s guidance

document, *Response to Intervention Guidance* (2008), allows local control of RtI implementation based on best practices.

In this project study, I analyzed the data collected from a survey, eight individual interviews, and campus documents to determine if an elementary school in rural northeast Texas (LE) utilizes a formal RtI framework. Based on the project study findings, LE utilizes several components of a RtI framework during the prereferral process, including universal screenings, research-based instructional and intervention practices, a problem-solving team, and data-based decision making. These components are not consistent and lack continuity across grade levels and subjects. Regular educators, interventionists, and special educators have responsibilities in RtI implementation that require collaboration in order to improve student achievement (Richards, Pavri, Golez, Canges, & Murphy, 2007). Jimmerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden (2007) stated that "School districts may benefit from implementing RtI procedures on a small scale with high quality while building local capacity for implementation on a wider scale" (p. 6). Focusing on instructional practices in reading would allow LE to effectively implement an RtI framework and to build infrastructure for other content areas.

Rationale

Response to Intervention was included in IDEIA without a specific description of the framework or guidelines for implementation. States and local education agencies have developed their own procedures for RtI implementation. Fuchs and L. Fuchs (2008) stated:

> While in principle RTI identifies which students have disabilities early in their education, decreases the number of students referred to special education programs, and reduces the overidentification of minority students to special education, it is an ambitious and complex process. (p. 73)

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Currently, the campus utilizes a Campus Intervention Team (CIT) during the prereferral process. The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states its purpose as the "Campus Intervention Team will identify students who need additional services that meet their learning needs in areas such as: Gifted and Talented, Special Education, Migrant, Bilingual/ESL, Title I" (LE, 2009, p. 17). The current CIT process is:

> 1. Teacher identifies student with academic or behavioral problems.
>
> 2. Teacher discusses strategies informally with colleagues, administration, counselor, and/or support teachers. The teacher conferences with the parents of the child, and researches past records for previous support services, health problems, vision and hearing, etc.
>
> If the student is not making progress, and additional assistance is needed:
>
> 3. Teacher requests assistance of Campus Intervention Team (CIT) members. The teacher requests a CIT referral packet from the school counselor. The teacher completes the referral form and one of the observation forms. The referring teacher then distributes an observation form to others who teach the child.. The entire packet is then returned to the school counselor. You will be notified of the meeting time.
>
> 4. A meeting is scheduled with the referring teacher, the student's parents and relevant CIT members. The Campus Intervention Team consists of a classroom administrator and/or counselor.
>
> 5. The team meets and has a brainstorming/problem-solving session. Ideas and strategies are shared and agreed upon as appropriate to use. The team may at any point feel that it is appropriate for a team member to observe this student. If so, the observer will share any ideas or suggestions resulting from observation. Documentation of the team meeting is given to the teacher and follow-up meetings will occur.

> 6. The teacher may request additional assistance from the team at any time (LE, 2007, pg. 2-3).

Even though LE utilizes several components of a problem-solving RtI model during the prereferral process, there is no formal framework in place. LE does use universal screenings, research-based instructional and intervention practices, a problem-solving team, and data-based decision making in place on the campus, however they are not implemented consistently. Appendix A contains the LE's Campus Improvement Plan (2009) documenting the existence of the problem. It states that LE will "investigate and begin implementation of the three-tiered (RTI) process to provide academic support for struggling students" (LE, 2009, p.18) A unified service delivery model is not in place. Each special program, Dyslexia, Gifted & Talented, English as a Second Language, and Title I, operates solitarily. RtI is a whole-school instructional framework that all faculty and staff members are responsible for implementing. Teachers provide a vital role in supporting RtI activities by providing the majority of the instruction and having the opportunity to monitor student progress. It is important to obtain teacher input at each stage of RtI implementation:

> The activities that comprise RtI typically occur in the general education setting as schools use a variety of strategies to assist struggling students. General and special education staff coordinate and collaborate to develop a process for RtI implementation, and such collaboration may lead to a shift in roles played by teachers from both areas. General education teachers may need training in many practices currently used primarily by special education teachers. (TEA, 2008, p. 4)

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Even though Response to Intervention has been written in the federal law, much confusion exists regarding its definition and implementation by educators. Much of the

current research concentrates on intervention studies investigating the effectiveness and process of instructional interventions and field studies describing the use of different models of RtI in actual use. Intervention studies have provided experimental evidence of the effectiveness of evidence-based reading interventions in the primary grades. The studies have provided little information on the implementation process of the interventions (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Torgesen et al., 2001). The field studies have documented that the percentage of minority students identified as having a SLD has been lowered through the use of RtI and that the way support services are utilized has changed. However, the field studies provided little information on which interventions are used and the process by which the interventions are implemented.(Martson, Muyskens, Lau, & Canter, 2003; McNamara & Hollinger, 2003).

Due to the lack of specific regulations regarding utilizing an RtI framework, states and local school districts are at different stages of RtI implementation. Berkley, Bender, Peaster, and Sanders (2009) explored the level of implementation of RtI by analyzing each of the fifty states' department of education websites. The authors found that 15 states have adopted models, nine states are implementing them on a large scale, six are implementing them on a small scale, 22 states are in a developmental phase, 10 states are providing guidance to schools and districts, and three state are either not implementing RtI or the information regarding implementation is unclear. In addition, many school districts are implementing RtI on their own and other independent initiatives are taking place. Several states had already implemented an RtI process before federal regulations were passed. Other states are at varying stages of readiness, including large scale and small scale implementation. Many states have not begun a new framework but have

expanded prereferral models, multitiered modes, Reading First programs, or positive behavior supports (Berkley et al.).

There is insufficient research on how to implement and sustain a RtI framework (Denton, Vaughn, & Fletcher, 2003; Fuchs & L. Fuchs, 2006; Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2006). Schnieder & McDonald (2006) stated:

> Scale-up research is translational research. It is conducted with the explicit objective of informing practice-which means not only documenting the importance of implementing interventions with integrity, but documenting the benefits of balancing fidelity of implementation with adaptation to dynamic local context. (p. 11)

Due to limited empirical evidence regarding systems change for RtI implementation, Glover and DiPerna (2007) recommended conducting local evaluations of building practices and regular reflection of RtI implementation plans. The process of RtI implementation simultaneously improves leadership skills and instructional practices (Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008).

Definition of Terms

Discrepancy Model: The method of identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability based on a severe discrepancy between scores on a norm-referenced intelligence test and a norm-referenced achievement test in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or mathematical reasoning (Lujan et al., 2008).

Prereferral Process: Process implemented to provide interventions to a struggling student prior to referring for a special education evaluation. This process usually does not include frequent progress monitoring or examination of the quality of general education instruction received by the student (Cartiella, 2006).

Problem Solving Model: Response to Intervention model that includes a behavioral definition of the problem, collection of baseline data, hypothesized reason for the problem, explicit goal setting, development of an intervention plan, evidence of fidelity of treatment implementation, data indicating student responsiveness to treatment, and comparison of student performance to baseline. If the student is unresponsive, the team may make a referral for an eligibility evaluation. The multidisciplinary team usually includes the principal, school psychologist, classroom teacher, and the special education teacher (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

Response to Intervention: This is a method of academic intervention design to provide early assistance to children who are performing poorly. RtI is a process of "(1) providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs, and (2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to (3) make important educational decisions" (Batsche et al., 2006, p. 5).

Standard Treatment Protocol Model: Response to Intervention model focusing on using the same empirically validated treatment for all students with similar difficulties in a given area such as reading. This approach aids in screening out students who may have difficulties due to inadequate prior instruction (Fuchs, et al., 2003). The process and content are designed so that students receive intensive supplemental instruction with increased time and smaller group size. The student is considered disability-free and returns to the classroom if response to treatment is successful (Graner, Faggella-Luby, & Fritschmann, 2005).

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS): The Texas state assessment of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills that is administered beginning at third grade (TEA, 2004).

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): Texas mandated curriculum designed specifically to help students progress in reading by emphasizing the knowledge and skills most critical for student learning (TEA, 2004).

Tier 1: The level of RtI model that includes the core instructional curriculum and interventions that take place in the regular classroom (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Tier 2: The level of RtI model that includes core instruction in the general classroom and supplemental instruction by an interventionist. It requires more intensive intervention and progress monitoring (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Tier 3: The level of RtI model that includes core instruction and intensive resources including special education services (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Significance

This project study can assist in implementing a formal RtI process, including the foundation level of Tier 1 for reading at LE. It can develop a guaranteed and viable reading curriculum, which includes shared vocabulary and instructional strategies. This project study identified steps in RtI implementation. This study helped to identify knowledge and skills that experienced teachers, both regular and special education, require through additional training during RtI implementation. By focusing on standards, instructional quality in the classroom may be increased. Currently, approximately 8% to 9% of the students enrolled at LE receive special education services (TEA, 2009).

Implementing an RtI framework has the potential of reducing the number of referrals for special needs evaluation due to utilizing interventions early and systematically.

Guiding/Research Question

Due to the nature of this project focusing on developing a new process in answer to a question or problem, the goal was not to analyze the efficacy of RtI but to develop a plan to utilize an RtI process. The goal was to determine the RtI needs of LE and develop an RtI guidance document and action plan for implementation in accordance with federal and state legislation. The guiding questions include:

1. What is the present status of LE in implementing an RtI framework?
2. What further steps should be taken to implement a RtI framework for reading?

Review of the Literature

Response to Intervention is a regular education process that has surfaced in special education legislation. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act aligns the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with the goals and purpose of NCLB. U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (2006) stated *"*No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act have put the needs of students with disabilities front and center. We now have a laser-like focus on helping these kids" (U.S. Department of Education, p. 1). It also changed the assessment and identification of Specific Learning Disability eligibility. In addition to using a discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement referred to as the discrepancy model to place students in special education services, the IDEIA allows students to be classified with a Specific Learning Disability based on how well they respond to interventions that have been documented (Bender & Shores, 2007).

In conducting the literature review, I searched the EBSCO databases of the Walden University library, Questia online library, Texas A&M University-Texarkana library, East Texas Baptist University library and Google using the following terms: response to intervention, pyramid of interventions, responsiveness to intervention, learning disabilities, system change, qualitative research, action research, teacher leadership, professional learning communities, and professional development. An online search of the following websites including National Center on Response to Intervention, National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, Texas Building RTI Capacity, Texas Education Agency, Florida Center for Reading Research, National School Psychologist Association, Intervention Central, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Scientific Research-Based Instruction, Research Institute on Progress Monitoring, RTI Action Network, The Access Center-Improving Outcomes for All Students, Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts, What Works Clearinghouse, and U.S. Department of Education. The following review of literature presents the events leading to RtI, as well as the elements, background, framework, and implementation of RtI.

Events Leading to Response to Intervention

A major piece of legislation that affected how schools instruct all students was No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). The changes in standards for schools legislated by NCLB include accountability for every student's progress, instruction provided by highly qualified teachers, instructional programs based on scientifically based research, and a system that is fully aligned with state regulations (Mellard & Johnson, 2008). An RtI framework focuses on several NCLB components. One component is prevention and

intervention. RtI includes screening and progress monitoring in order to identify students experiencing academic difficulty and provide them with specific interventions to increase their learning. Another NCLB component addressed in an RtI framework is scientifically based practice used at each tier. Mellard and Johnson (2008) stated:

> Using an RTI framework across educational disciplines as well as grade levels is consistent with the focus on scientifically based research: it promotes the values that schools have an obligation to ensure that all students participate in strong instructional programs that support student achievement. (p. 17)

An RtI framework addresses the accountability component of NCLB through progress monitoring of each student's progress toward meeting grade-level standards. Progress monitoring allows schools to identify students who may have difficulty achieving grade-level standards and to provide targeted interventions (Mellard & Johnson).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendment of 1997 identifies the eligibility requirements for receiving special needs services. It includes 13 separate disability categories in three major types of disorders, including sensory disabilities, physical and neurological disabilities, and developmental disabilities (President's Commission on Excellence in Education [PCESE], 2002). Vision and hearing tests are the basis of identification of children with sensory disabilities, while the medical history of children provided by parents and physicians are the basis of identification of physical and neurological disabilities. These low incidence disabilities represent 10% of all children served in IDEA (PCESE). Developmental disorders are referred to as high incidence disabilities because they account for 90% of all students served under IDEA. This type of disability relies on teacher referral and psychometric tests for identification that are often not linked to instruction (PCESE).

In order to address needs in special education, President Bush ordered the creation of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education on October 2, 2001. After numerous hearings and meetings, the PCESE published their findings on July 1, 2002 in *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and their Families*. The President's Commission reported that 80% of students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities are there simply because they have not learned how to read. It also reported that of the six million children in special education, almost half are identified as having a SLD. Since 1976, this group has grown more than 300%. (PCESE, 2002)

The PCSE made several important findings related to special needs services. Finding 2 of PCSE stated that "the current system uses an antiquated model that waits for a child to fail, instead of a model based on prevention and intervention" (PCSE, 2002, p. 7). Students with disabilities do not receive early intervention. The PCESE indicates that special education should be for students who have not responded to strong and appropriate instruction and methods provided in general education. Finding 6 indicated that many of the current methods for identifying children with disabilities lack validity. The use of these methods results in thousands of children being misidentified every year, while others are not identified early enough or at all. Another important finding, Finding 8, indicated that the current system does not always implement evidence-based practices once established (PCESE).

The discrepancy-based model of identification of a Specific Learning Disability being utilized at this time has been closely examined. This model identifies a student as having a SLD based on a discrepancy between intelligence and achievement scores (Hollenbeck, 2007). Frank Gresham (2001) identified several limitations in using a

discrepancy model. Before remedial/special education supports can be given, a student must experience chronic school failure. This model also fails to consider outside factors such as poor or inconsistent instruction. When a severe discrepancy between test scores occurs, information regarding the causes of why a student is doing poorly academically continues not to be identified. There is a lack of uniformity in identifying children for special education services due to different states using different formulas in identifying a severe discrepancy (Gresham, 2001).

On December 3, 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act was signed by President George W. Bush. This law addresses many of the findings of the PCESE. It also aligns the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act with the goals and purpose of No Child Left Behind. IDEIA requires that "educational personnel are highly qualified, specifying that research-based interventions are used, enhancing student progress through the use of early intervening services, and preventing overidentification and disproportionate representation of minority students in special education" (Mellard & Johnson, 2008, p. 19). IDEIA focuses on improving the educational outcomes for students with disabilities. It includes students with disabilities in accountability and assessment systems and providing access to the general education curriculum (Mellard & Johnson).

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA changed the assessment and identification of Specific Learning Disability eligibility. In addition to using a discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement referred to as the discrepancy model, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act stated that "a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based

intervention …", which is the Response to Intervention (RTI) model (P.L. 108-446, §614[b][6][B]). An RtI framework addresses the IDEIA components of early intervention, use of evidence-based practices, and data collection including universal screening and progress monitoring (Mellard & Johnson, 2008).

The United States Department of Education provided regulations regarding RtI. One criterion stated that the documentation must include the instructional strategies and student-centered data collection. Another criterion requires that the child's parents must be notified about the state's policies regarding the amount and type of student-centered data that would be collected. The parent must be notified about what general education services would be provided and the strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning. The parent must be notified about their right to request an evaluation. The federal regulations allow state and local education agencies to determine which model they choose to implement (*Federal Register*, 2006).

Background of Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention is not a new concept. The earliest occurrence reported was in 1982, when Heller, Holtzman, and Messick conducted a National Research Council study suggesting that the validity of a special education classification should be based on the instructional quality received by the student in the general education classroom and the expected student outcomes of the special education classification (Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2003). Response to Intervention practices are based upon the behavioral consultation model developed by Bergen and the data-based program developed by Deno. The behavioral consultation model concentrates on behavior or academic skills using a specific problem-solving process (Batsche et al., 2006). It

consists of four phases, including problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. The major focus of this model is to define the problem in specific, operational terms, including identifying environmental conditions (Gresham, et al., 2005). Based on student performance data, the RtI team identifies the problem, creates targets, and implements and evaluates individual interventions. This data-based program modification model focuses on academic skills problems using precise, direct measures. These measures are sensitive to growth and are used to change instruction (Batsche et al., 2006).

One of the first RtI models, developed by L. Fuchs, utilized curriculum-based measurements of students' responsiveness or unresponsiveness to general education intervention. She concluded that a student may be considered for a referral for special education if he or she is showing a discrepancy between current levels of academic performance when compared to same-age peers in the same classroom (Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2003).

Later, an RtI method that has been widely accepted for determining whether a student has a Specific Learning Disability, the dual discrepancy model, was developed (Fuchs, L., 2003). A discrepancy in initial skills or performance occurs when it is documented that the student is performing significantly below that of his or her typical peers. The second discrepancy occurs after the implementation of one or more research-based interventions developed specifically for when the student fails to close the gap with classmates, indicating a discrepancy in rate of learning relative to peers (Fuchs, L.).

Kovaleski & Prasse (2004) identified several benefits of using a dual discrepancy model. One benefit is that intervention in early grades prevents the development of

significant academic deficiencies. Also, instructional practices in general education will improve. The assessment process will increase fairness and reduce overrepresentation of certain minority groups. Activities to address academic deficiencies will be more closely matched with the assessment process, allowing a development of a closer relationship between assessment measures and effective instruction procedures.

There are several potential benefits of Response to Intervention, including the collaboration of general education, special education, English Language Learner staff, related services, administration, and parents. Another benefit is early identification of struggling students (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005; Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2003). A reduction in referrals and decrease of over identification of minorities are additional benefits of RtI (Martson et al., 2003; Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2003).

Elements of Response to Intervention.

Response to Intervention can be utilized as an alternative method for documenting the eligibility for a SLD. It is a combination of assessment and instruction that is student centered. It involves several core features. Core components of an RtI framework include use of a multitiered model, including high quality classroom instruction in the general education setting. Another core component is data-based decision making including universal screening and progress monitoring of academics and behavior. The use of evidence-based interventions, fidelity of implementation, and development and sustainability of system-level capacity are also core features of a RtI framework (Mellard, 2004; Glover & DiPerna, 2007).

One core component of a RtI framework is the use of multitiers. Response to Intervention models consist of multiple tiers of interventions that increase in intensity.

Different models vary in the length of the number of minutes per session, the number of sessions, and the duration or the number of weeks (O'Connor, 2000). There have been several multitiered models including three tier and four tier (Fuchs, L. Fuchs, & Compton, 2004; Martson et al., 2003; Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2003).

Most RtI models consist of three tiers that are applied on a school-wide basis that differ according to the instruction required to meet learner needs. Tier 1 occurs in the general education classroom where the majority of students receive generally effective, scientifically-based instruction implemented by the general education teacher. As defined by No Child Left Behind (2001), scientifically-based instruction is based on "research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs" (37; A). Johnson et al. (2006) stated that Tier 1 is "the first 'gate' in a system designed to better accommodate the diverse learning needs of all students" (p. 3.5). Tier 1 typically serves 80 to 90% of the student body (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). Tier 1 is characterized by whole class instruction. It monitors mastery of content and continued growth through routine progress monitoring including cut points identified on screening measures. Generally, school wide screenings or universal assessments occur at least three times per year. Progress monitoring is used to identify at risk students and to inform school and class-wide instruction and curriculum decisions. Time varies for progress monitoring usually occurring once every three weeks or as frequently as weekly, twice weekly, or even daily. "Students remain in Tier 1 for the school year unless found eligible for specially designed instruction that cannot be provided in the general classroom" (Johnson et al., p.3.4). Tier 1 instruction is based on school schedules and curriculum guidelines.

Instruction is provided by general educators who are highly-qualified as defined by NCLB (Johnson et al.).

Tier 2 and beyond level includes general instruction plus specialized intervention. "Tier 2 and beyond intervention is for those students for whom Tier 1 instruction is insufficient, who are falling behind on benchmark skills, and who require additional instruction to achieve grade-level expectations" (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 3.14). Tier 2 typically serves 5 to 10% of the student body (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). Instruction is provided in a small group consisting of two to four students. Tier 2 monitors mastery of requirements of content through routine progress monitoring including cut points identified on screening measures. Progress monitoring typically occurs weekly to three times per week or as frequently as weekly, twice weekly, or even daily. Three to four intervention sessions per week with sessions lasting 30 to 60 minutes are provided for nine to 12 weeks and can be repeated if necessary. Instruction is provided by trained and supervised personnel that is not the general educator (Johnson et al.).

Tier 3 provides intensive interventions that may include special education services. Tier 3 typically serves fewer than 5 % of the student body (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). Instruction is provided to individual students or small groups. During Tier 3, Tier 1 and Tier 2 are supplemented by special education strategies and procedures. Progress monitoring is continuous and based on the mastery of individual education program goal setting. Intervention frequency and duration depends upon student need. Instruction is provided by special education teachers or other specialists. "Exit criteria are specified and monitored making placement flexible" (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 3.30).

Research related to multitiered models has shown initial evidence for growth in student performance, increased comprehension of tasks, reduction in special education referrals, and reduction in disproportionate representation of minorities in special education (Martson et al., 2003; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003; Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Future research needs consist of the use of different assessment tools including the decision-making criteria for specific multitier models, use of interventions at specific tiers, and the effects on each tier when intervention components, individualization, and intensity are varied (Glover & DiPerna). Glover and DiPerna (2007) suggested, "Educators should proceed with caution and conduct local evaluations on the utility of aspects of multitier service delivery for addressing student needs" (p. 536).

Another core component of an RtI framework is student assessment and decision making. Assessment results for universal screenings and progress monitoring should be the basis of critical educational decisions. Data should be analyzed to determine why students are having difficulties and to utilize interventions that target weaker areas (Lujan et al., 2008). Strong support in research exists for using Curriculum Based Measurements (CBM) for student differentiation, at risk levels assessment, student progress monitoring, and intervention effectiveness evaluations (Deno, 1985; Deno, Fuchs, L, Marston, & Shinn, 2001; Fuchs, Fuchs, L., & Compton, 2004; Speece, Case, & Molloy, 2003; Shapiro, Keller, Lutz, Santoro, & Hintze, 2006). Possible future research needs include investigating ways to improve accuracy and usefulness of direct skill, rating scales, and observational assessment methods (Glover & Abners, 2007). Educators should be careful in selecting assessment tools and ensure that they are appropriate for the population being

tested and provide valid results for the decisions that are being made (Glover & DiPerna, 2007).

Use of evidence-based instruction and interventions is another component of an RtI framework. Both NCLB and IDEIA require the use of scientifically-based researched instructional programs (Mellard & Johnson, 2008). Even though limited mostly to the area of reading, current research supports the efficacy of academic interventions in both a standard protocol framework and a problem solving framework (Vaughn et al., 2003; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007). Future research should explore additional academic areas other than reading and how intervention outcomes may differ when utilized in a standard protocol approach or an individualized approach (Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Existing RtI models can be useful resources in determining the intervention sequence and intensity when implementing an RtI framework (Berkley et al., 2009).

Another component of an RtI framework is fidelity of implementation, which addresses the delivery of instruction in the way it was designed to be utilized and the integrity of screening and progress monitoring procedures (Lujan et al., 2008.). Correlational and analogue studies have identified three factors that affect implementation of interventions by educators. These factors include acceptability, training, and support (Sterling-Turner et al., 2001; Noell et al., 2005; Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Empirical research regarding these factors is needed in order to identify methods or protocols that aid in monitoring implementation integrity (Wilkinson, 2006; Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Glover & DiPerna (2007) suggested, “Educators should regularly and systematically apply contextually specific approaches to monitor and evaluate integrity throughout the implementation process” (p. 537).

The final component of an RtI framework is developing and sustaining implementation at the systems level, or "scaling up" (Ervin, Shaughency, Goodman, McGlichey, & Matthews, 2006). Even though much of the literature has been theoretical in nature, key implementation factors that have been identified related to implementation include strong leadership, infrastructure improvements, resources, and professional development (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Sugaie & Horner, 2006). Further research is needed to examine the fidelity of implementation of different systems level implementation models including their different components and phases (Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Educators should monitor their implementation practices on their campus and within their districts (Lujan et al., 2008).

Frameworks of Response to Intervention

Two distinct RtI frameworks have emerged from research. These models differ in the number of levels in the process, who delivers the intervention, or if the process is a part of the formal evaluation for SLD eligibility or if it is the SLD eligibility process (Fuchs et al., 2003). The problem-solving approach is based on two premises. One premise of the problem solving approach is that interventions are not based on a specific student characteristic, such as disability label or socioeconomic status. Another premise states that a given intervention will not be effective for all students of a particular group (Fuchs et al., 2003). An area of concern related to the problem-solving model is implementation of the intervention with integrity. There is not a standardized procedure for evaluating the fidelity of implementation of the intervention plan (Gresham, VanDerHeyden, & Witt, 2005).

Collaborative Problem Solving is one type of problem solving approach. This approach includes a behavioral definition of the problem, collection of baseline data, hypothesized reason for the problem, explicit goal setting, development of an intervention plan, evidence of fidelity of treatment implementation, data indicating student responsiveness to treatment, and comparison of student performance to baseline. If the student is unresponsive, the team may make a referral for an eligibility evaluation. Multidisciplinary teams that at least include the principal, school psychologist, special education teacher, and classroom teacher conduct these activities. Examples of collaborative problem solving are Pennsylvania's Instructional Support Team and Ohio's Intervention Based Assessment (Fuchs et al., 2003).

Martson et al. (2003) examined the problem solving model used in the Minneapolis Public Schools. The authors analyzed program evaluation data since 1994 in the areas of child count, achievement, referral, eligibility, and disproportion. The results indicated better identification of general education students needing help, increased use of research-based interventions, and improved academic and behavioral performance of culturally diverse students. The authors also discussed the limitations of problem-solving research due to the subjectivity of the process and inconsistencies in implemented models in different settings. Successful implementation of the problem-solving model will require comprehensive and ongoing data-based decision making training, follow-up consultation, and use of data to create interventions for students.

Another RtI model is the Standard Protocol model. It focuses on the use of the same empirically validated treatment for all children with similar difficulties in a given area, such as reading. This approach aids in screening out students who may have

difficulties due to inadequate prior instruction (Fuchs et al., 2003). The process and content are designed so that students receive intensive supplemental instruction with increased time and smaller group size. The student is considered disability-free and returns to the classroom if response to treatment is successful (Graner et al., 2005).

Several advantages of the Standard Protocol model include that everyone knows what intervention to implement, training in implementing interventions is easier, and fidelity of intervention can be assessed. One difficulty of using the standard protocol model is that it has been used mostly by researchers in the area of reading, but not by educators (Fuchs et al., 2003). Many articles focus on the research of a Standard Treatment Protocol approach. (Fuchs et al., 2003; Vaughn et al.,2003; Vellutino et al., 1996). As related to learning disabilities, the studies have focused on reading in Kindergarten through third grade. These studies indicate that research based reading interventions can be effectively implemented in the primary grades. One study examined different reading programs, small group sizes, and lengths of instruction in four different Texas schools. The results of this study indicated in early reading all four schools maintained satisfactory performance (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Another study concluded that when used in intensive one-to-one instruction, two different reading programs had basically the same outcomes (Torgesen, et al., 2001). Research is just now beginning to address how RtI relates to other areas such as math, written expression, and additional areas in which a student can meet eligibility requirements for SLD. (Klinger & Edwards, 2006; Rueda, & Windmueller, 2006).

Implementation of Response to Intervention

Denton, Vaughn, and Fletcher (2003) analyzed factors related to large-scale implementation of research-validated interventions, which is a necessary component of any RtI model. After reviewing multiple consensus reports identifying effective early reading instruction, the authors found that, to increase the reading development of all students, practices must address having an effective and knowledgeable teacher, integrating key instructional components of reading, differentiating instruction for struggling readers, and using explicit instruction. Suggestions for intervention implementation include improved links between researchers and teachers, supported educational research and development, and accessibility of teachers to clear documentation of research-based practices. One obstacle to implementing research-based practices in schools is a lack of information about effective instructional practices and implementation procedures. Another obstacle is the belief of educators that research-based practices will not work for their students due to lack of conformity to research reports or that the research-based practices are not better than their current practices. The authors suggested effective professional development to prepare teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities should include collaboration between researchers, teachers, and administrators, comprehensive preparation programs, and ongoing professional development for practicing teachers.

Full scale implementation of RtI occurs when a school uses data-based problem solving data to make decisions regarding intervention, learning disability eligibility, and entitlement decision. RtI is based on a continuum of services available to all students who exhibit difficulties in the school (Daly, Glover, & McCurdy, 2006). Full-scale RtI

implementation occurs in a developmental progression that occurs over several years. Each element of progression has a cycle of initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. Initiation of an element is a process that includes the decision to adopt or proceed with a change. The implementation phase describes the first attempts of putting an IDEIA into practice which can occur over two to three years of use. An element is institutionalized when it is an ongoing part of the system (Fullan, 2007).

The foundation of implementing RtI is data-based problem solving. The next step is to create a method for identifying at-risk students and implement a universal screening system. The third element involves coordinated intervention delivery including identifying available interventions, how they will be provided, and who will provide them. The final element is eligibility determination, which occurs after the previous elements have been consistently implemented for all students over a period of time (Daly et al., 2006).

There are several potential barriers to implementing an effective RtI process. One potential barrier is not building awareness in schools before moving toward implementation. Educators should understand the benefits of RtI, relationship to mandates, and relationship to other practices already occurring in the campus such as teams and use of data. Another potential barrier is when services are fragmented and do not occur on a continuum. Collaboration between educators will benefit all students. Lack of adequate infrastructure is also a potential barrier to RtI implementation. A school's organizational readiness includes school-wide understanding of RtI elements, a functioning team, integration of services, and support for practices of RtI including resources and professional development (Daly et al., 2006).

Fuchs and Deshler (2007) identified several factors that effective implementation of RtI is dependent upon. These factors include:

1. Sustained professional development programs that provide teachers with the wide variety of skills needed to effectively implement RTI as well as addressing ongoing staff turnover.

2. Support of administrators by setting high expectations for the implementation of RTI, providing resources, and enforcing procedures of implementation fidelity.

3. Commitment to hire teachers that have prerequisite skills to implement RTI in their classrooms.

4. Willingness of staff to have redefined roles that support effective implementation.

5. Provision of time for staff to understand and accommodate RTI into their instructional practices including addressing their questions and concerns.

6. Decision to adopt RTI procedures include the input of staff at the school level or if the decision was made exclusively by administration. (p. 131).

Response to Intervention requires a joint effort between general and special education. This collaboration may mean that job descriptions may change. Schools need to be aware of concepts about organizational and personal change in order for RtI implementation to be successful (Galvin, 2007). Burns and Ysseldyke (2005) reported leadership components necessary for change that were identified at a conference of researchers from six universities and two major professional organizations that focused on leadership and instructional research conducted by the University of Minnesota's Center for Responsible School Change in Literacy. These researchers identified four supports for organizational change. One component is vision and commitment that is shared among members of a school community. Another component is buy-in and

leadership by the staff. In order to promote change, data at the student, teacher, and school level must be changed. Also, a collaborative school community is needed for organizational change to be successful. Support of individual change includes professional learning that is ongoing, focused, challenging, and job-embedded. It also includes change in learning that focuses on reflection and change in thinking and teaching (Knotek, 2005). These components for change as a result of implementing RtI will need to be explored through quality professional development.

Implications

The purpose of this project study was to identify existing elements of RtI currently being utilized at LE during the prereferral process identified during the data collection and analysis process. After IRB approval and obtaining participants' consent, the participants completed the RtI Effectiveness Survey and I conducted individual interviews. Based on the data analysis, an action plan for formal RtI implementation was developed. The action plan included a timeline for RtI implementation. The RtI action plan will be presented to participants and administration at LE in a professional development seminar based on project study approval.

Summary

Even though there is much research regarding intervention studies that investigate the effectiveness and process of instructional interventions and field studies of actual RtI models in use, there is little research regarding the implementation of RtI. "Qualitative research address research problems requiring an exploration in which little is know about the problem" to provide a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon (Creswell,

2008, p. 53). Collaboration with practitioners in the process of RtI research is very important. Hollenbeck (2007) stated:

> Rather than downplaying the district, school, and individual factors that affect both sustainability of practice and decision-making, researchers are urged to embrace these challenges and consider ways to further knowledge of the RTI construct while exploring supports for local school district, building principles, and individual teachers in the complexities of implementing systemic change. (p. 144)

The goal of this project study was to identify components of an RtI framework currently being utilized during the prereferral process at LE. Based on data analysis an RtI action plan for implementation was developed in accordance with federal and state guidelines for an RtI process at LE. Tilly and Kurns (2008) suggest starting the implementation of RtI with a smaller pilot program by focusing on a grade level or a specific subject. Due to the majority of the RtI research conducted in reading, this project study focused on the content area of reading. The guiding questions include:

1. What is the present status of LE in implementing an RtI framework?
2. What further steps should be taken to implement an RtI framework for reading?

Galvin (2007) stated strategies for supporting teachers within a new model of general education accountability and research-based practice should be explored. “The role of considering practitioners as collaborators in the process of RTI research cannot be overemphasized” (Galvin, 2007, p. 144). This project study identified steps for RtI implementation at LE. Section 2 provides a description of the methodology of the project study, including a description of the site, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis process.

SECTION 2: THE METHODOLOGY

Mills (2003) stated that action research is "systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers" or other stakeholders in an educational setting to gather information about their school's operation, instructional practices, and student learning (p. 5). The goals of action research include gaining insight, encouraging reflective practice, promoting positive change in the school environment, including educational practices in general, and improving student learning (Mills).

Action research connects principles and theories, practice, and professional development. "Action research involves an ethical commitment to improving society (to make it more just), improving ourselves (that we may become more conscious members of a democratic society), and ultimately improving our lives together (building community)" (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2009, p. 28). Similar to an RtI framework, action research utilizes an organized cycle of problem identification based on careful observation, reflection on the elements of the problem, development of a plan to address the problem, implementation of the change, and assessment of the plan's effectiveness, based on careful observation (Hatch, 2002). Qualitative data collection research methods used in action research involve asking broad questions allowing participants to share their views without constraints placed by the researcher. Multiple types of information are useful in exploring the complexity of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2008).

Quantitative research problems tend to focus on describing trends or explaining relationships among variables, while qualitative research problems tend to explore problems regarding which there is little known or to seek a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon. However, action research addresses and solves practical and local

problems (Creswell, 2008). Hollenbeck (2007) stated, "The IDEA (2004) suggests applications of RTI without stipulating specifics of the construct, giving researchers and practitioners the freedom to develop unique RTI implementations" (p. 137). The current research regarding Response to Intervention focuses on intervention studies that investigate the effectiveness and process of instructional interventions and field studies of the use of different models of RTI approaches. Little research exists that describes effective RtI implementation processes. RtI implementation research should focus on transferring theory into practice by understanding building level factors of a specific school before starting implementation of wide scale reform (Hollenbeck, 2007). My intent was to develop a framework for implementing the initial stage of RtI through questionnaire responses, interviews, member checks, and document collection. Utilizing individual interviews and a questionnaire including open-response items indicates to the participant that "their efforts are valuable and worth attention, support, and assistance" (Hord & Sommers, 2008, p. 117)

The Site

The project study was conducted at a public elementary school (LE) located in rural, northeast Texas. This campus has approximately 366 students in Early Childhood through Fifth grades. The staff includes 33 teachers consisting of 23 Pre-K through fifth grade core teachers, two Title I intervention teachers, four enrichment teachers, and four special education teachers. The population of the school includes approximately 54.5% Caucasian, 23% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 1% other. The school consists of approximately 55% economically disadvantaged students based on eligibility for the free or reduced lunch program (TEA, 2007). Approximately 8% to 9% of the student

population receives special education services (TEA, 2009). The campus has approximately 8 to 10 initial referrals for Special Education evaluations each year. Approximately four to five of these referrals are for learning disability evaluation. Approximately 80% result in special education placement.

The campus does have a Title I program that includes two reading interventionists for Grades 3 through 5. Grades K and 1 have class sizes of approximately 18 to 20 students. Grades 3 through 5 have class sizes of approximately 15 to 18 students. The campus has scored consistently above 90% in all areas tested on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test for the past two years. The school principal was contacted and provided permission for entry to the site.

Research Sample

When implementing RtI, school districts benefit from putting into practice RtI procedures on a small scale with high quality at the same time building local capacity for wide scale implementation (Jimmerson et al., 2007). Therefore, the research sample was determined through purposeful sampling consisting of eight teachers who were members of a vertical reading team. The sample included eight participants, one language arts teacher from Grades K through 5, one reading interventionist, and one special education teacher. Third through fifth grades are departmentalized with a total of four language arts teachers. Kindergarten through second grade is not departmentalized with a total of 10 teachers who teach language arts. The participants were representative of each grade level from general education as well as special education and Title 1, providing perspectives from different grade levels and student populations served. The survey and individual interviews provided in-depth information from each participant. The

participants answered a survey containing open-ended questions that allowed the participants to provide input regarding their answers. Individual interviews provided participants the opportunity to share their experiences and views. I contacted the school and obtained permission to conduct the study. I attended a vertical team meeting and discussed the purpose and procedures of the study. After inviting the eight team members to participate in the study, I gave them consent forms including voluntary participation and confidentiality assurances. Each team member opted to participate in the study and provided consent.

Informed Consent and Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2008) stated that ethical guidelines should be a primary consideration throughout the research process. Ethical issues concerning the conducting of the project study were reviewed. I gained permission to use the RtI Effectiveness Survey from the author. I contacted the site and gained permission to conduct the study. The participants are over 18 and were asked to sign an informed consent form which included information regarding purpose of study, procedures, voluntary nature of study, risks and benefits of being in the study, compensation, confidentiality, and contact information of researcher and doctoral committee chair. Participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without affecting relationships. I was not aware of any potential risk for participation in the study. The benefits for study participation included professional development for the teacher, working in a collaborative structure to identify available interventions for struggling students, and improvement in instructional quality. The participants did not receive compensation for participating in the study. Confidentiality of records for the study will be kept private. I did not include identifiable information of the

participants in any report that was published. The research records are kept in a locked file with access only by me. In addition, I signed a confidentiality agreement. I reported the data fully and honestly. In order to develop a researcher participant relationship, I discussed the consent form and answered questions regarding project study.

Researcher's Role

After I disseminated the questionnaire, the participants completed the questionnaire and placed it in an envelope which I collected from one of the participants. While conducting the individual interviews, I recorded the interview using a digital tape recorder. I am an elementary core teacher employed at the school district for twenty years. I have been employed as a special education teacher, a high school counselor, an Educational Diagnostician, and a third grade language arts teacher. I teach on the same campus as the participants. I was not a member of the vertical reading team and did not have any supervisory or evaluative role for teachers at the elementary school. The role of the researcher was explained to the participants. It was made clear to the participants all information to be collected, the purpose of the action research study, and their participation was voluntary. I would not treat the participants differently if they decided not to be involved. Also, the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time or not disclose information that they felt were too personal. All participants remained anonymous and data collected are confidential. The participants were offered a copy of the completed study.

The relationship between the researcher and participant determines the amount and authenticity of the data collected (Hatch, 2002). A researcher/participant working relationship was established by informing the participant of the goals of the study,

voluntary participation, expectations of activities, and length of involvement. Methods for providing feedback to participants regarding data collected, systematic way for participants' to ask questions or express concerns, strategies for collaboration related to action plan development, and member checking were developed to establish trust and full disclosure between participants and me.

The goal of this project study was to determine the needs of LE in implementing an RtI framework in accordance with federal and state guidelines. Although I intended to identify problems related to an RtI framework implementation and provide solutions, I did not have any expectations regarding the findings of the data collection. I maintained a journal to "self-assess researcher bias" during the project study (Hatch, 2002, pg. 88). I also completed the questionnaire before analyzing data to identify possible bias.

Data Collection Procedures

This action research design is based on the constructivist assumption that "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2003, pg. 9). The goal of qualitative inquiry is to explore in-depth a central phenomenon and not to generalize to a population (Creswell, 2008). The characteristics of qualitative research include attempting to understand the meaning people have created about their experiences, utilizing the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis, involving an inductive process, and providing rich description of the phenomenon (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

Before conducting data collection, I obtained IRB approval, a letter of cooperation from the principal, and signed consent forms from the participants. The first phase of data collection was a questionnaire administered to the participants.

Questionnaires include written questions requiring the participant to respond about facts, attitudes, or values (Holly et al., 2009). This survey is an optimal choice because it provides insight into the environment of the school (Mills, 2003). Each participant completed the RtI Effectiveness Survey individually (Lujan et al., 2008, p. 105-110). The authors stated that the RtI Effectiveness Survey can be administered initially to determine an overview of an RtI framework. "The purpose of this assessment tool is to document the data, analyze the results, and use the feedback to improve the effectiveness of the RtI process" (Lujan et al., 2008, p. 53). The RtI Effectiveness Survey has a comment section allowing participants an opportunity to provide additional information to the close-ended questions and can be used to determine stages of implementation and effectiveness of the RtI process. The researcher utilized the questionnaire to determine what elements of RtI are currently being utilized during the prereferral process and develop the implementation plan.

The second phase of data collection included individual interviews of the participants. This choice was made because the purpose of conducting interviews is "to find out what happened, why, and what it means more broadly" (Rubin & I. Rubin, 2005, p. 6). The interviews occurred after participants complete the RtI Effectiveness Survey. The interview process utilized an interview protocol developed by the researcher (Appendix C). The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions addressing the research questions. Open-ended questions allow participants to share their experiences without any constraints from the researcher or past research findings (Creswell, 2008). The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Hatch (2002) stated "If data are only researcher's impressions of what happened, then it turns out be a study

of researcher impressions of the social action observed, not a study of the action itself" (p. 78-79).

The third phase of the data collection process analyzed documents. Creswell (2008) stated "Documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study, and they can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and letters" (p. 230). I analyzed results from the previous year state assessment, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test for reading grades 3 through 5 to help determine effectiveness of the general core curriculum. I examined the passing rate of the reading TAKS test for the total student population and for different subpopulations. I also examined the Campus Improvement Plan in order to identify elements related to RtI including a problem-solving team, research-based interventions, and professional development. The Campus Improvement Plan contains the mission statement and goals of the campus related to instruction, interventions, and accountability (Appendix A). Reviewing the current Campus Intervention Team procedures provided data regarding the prereferral process (Appendix B). Conducting a survey, individual interviews, document analysis were appropriate qualitative data collection methods for the goals of the project study to develop a RtI guidance document and action plan.

Action research connects principles and theories, practice, and professional development. "Action research involves an ethical commitment to improving society (to make it more just), improving ourselves (that we may become more conscious members of a democratic society), and ultimately improving our lives together (building community)" (Holly et al., 2009, p. 28). Similar to an RtI framework, action research

utilizes an organized cycle of problem identification based on careful observation, reflection on the elements of the problem, development of a plan to address the problem, implementation of the change, and assessment of the plan's effectiveness based on careful observation (Hatch, 2002).

Instruments Used for Data Collections

The questionnaire, RtI Effectiveness Survey, was completed individually by each participant. "The purpose of this assessment tool is to document the data, analyze the results, and use the feedback to improve the effectiveness of the RtI process" (Lujan et al., 2008, p. 53). Data collected regarding RtI team performance, implementation of RtI, classroom instruction, delivery of intervention, and the intervention plan evaluate elements of an effective RtI framework. Participants responded by choosing "No", "Somewhat", or "Yes" to questions regarding RtI team functioning, universal screening, use of data, core instruction, delivery of interventions, professional development, and parent involvement. The survey also included an optional comment section allowing participants to provide information to document strengths and areas of concerns of the RtI implementation process. The results allowed the researcher to determine the elements of RtI that exist and develop an action plan for further implementation (Lujan et al., 2008, p. 105-110). The RtI Effectiveness Survey is located in Appendix D

After collection of completed surveys, eight individual interviews lasting 15 to 20 minutes were conducted. The interviews were taped by me using a digital tape recorder. The taped interviews were transferred to my computer for transcription. I transcribed the interviews and returned the transcript to the participant for member check. An interview protocol for the individual interviews was utilized to record information

during the interview. It also included space to record interviewer's comments and reflective notes. Documents for review included current and previous year *TAKS* scores in Reading for Grades 3 through 5, Campus Improvement Plan, and current Campus Intervention Team procedures. These documents were gathered from the campus administrator.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Creswell (2003) stated "The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data" (p. 190). He suggested five steps of data analysis. The first step is to organize and prepare the data by transcribing interviews and sorting and arranging data into different types. The second step is to read through all the data to gain a general idea of the information and reflect on its overall meaning. A coding process will aid detailed analysis, the third step. This will help the researcher to generate categories or themes. The next step is to use the coding process to produce a detailed description of the categories. The fifth step is to decide how to represent the description and themes. The last step is to interpret the data (Creswell, 2003).

The data was analyzed using an inductive process. Hatch (2002) stated "Inductive data analysis is a search for patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made" (p. 161). Other data analysis methods were not appropriate for the study. Typological analysis divides the data based on predetermined categories "generated from theory, common sense, and/or research objectives" (Hatch, 2002, p. 152). It is useful for interview data, for narrowly focused research questions, and for artifact data. Political analysis is conducted within the framework of the political nature of the real word and the researcher values. It is not

appropriate for the postpositivist or constructivist paradigms. Polyvocal analysis is used by poststructuralist to analyze data in the framework of a variety of perspectives and the findings are narrative (Hatch).

After collecting the RtI Effectiveness Survey from the participants, I analyzed the responses to the close-ended questions and prepared a frequency distribution for each item. Next, I transcribed the open-ended comments responses into one document. After conducting the individual interviews, I transcribed the interviews. I followed the data analysis phases described in Rubin and I. Rubin (2005). The authors state:

> Analysis in the responsive interviewing model proceeds in two phases. In the first, you prepare transcripts; find, refine, and elaborate concepts, themes, and events; and then code the interviews to be able to retrieve what the interviewees have said about the identified concepts, themes, and events (p. 201).

I used member checks to ensure accuracy of the interviews. Documents collected including previous year TAKS scores in reading for Grades 3 through 5, the Campus Improvement Plan, and the Campus Intervention Team procedures were analyzed for elements of an RtI framework.

Mills (2003) stated data analysis occurs when the researcher summarizes the data that has been collected "in a dependable, accurate, reliable, and correct manner" (p. 104). Coding consists of mechanically reducing the data and analytically categorizing the data simultaneously (Merriam & Associates, 2002). During the inductive analysis process, I started with detailed data and ends with general codes or themes (Creswell, 2008). I began with open coding. During the open coding process, I read the data slowly to condense it into preliminary analytic categories. I looked for "critical terms, central people, key events, or themes" and noted them with a preliminary label (Neuman, 2006,

p. 461). I developed categories based on semantic relationships (Hatch, 2002). The labels used for coding the interview were created based on the format developed by Janesick (2004).

During the next step, I conducted axial coding which occurs when the researcher links the codes into themes (Creswell, 2008). The last stage of coding was selective coding when the researcher selects data that provides evidence for the categories that are developed (Neuman, 2006). Identification of potential quotes from the data supports the categories and themes (Hatch, 2002). During the coding process, I utilized color-coding to aid in retrieving the data (Creswell).

Validity and Reliability

Several strategies were utilized by the researcher to validate the findings of this study. The researcher used triangulation of different data sources including questionnaire responses, individual interviews, and documents obtained from the site to find evidence to justify themes (Creswell, 2003). The RtI Effectiveness Survey assesses the areas of RtI team performance, implementation of RtI, classroom instruction, delivery of interventions, and is based on research related to effective RtI models (Lujan et al., 2008). Content validity refers to "the extent to which the questions on the instrument and the scores from these questions are representative of all the possible questions that a researcher could ask about the content or skills" (Creswell, 2008, p. 172). The authors of the RtI Effectiveness Survey based the development of the survey on elements of effective RtI models found in a literature review and trainings (Lujan et al.). I received permission from the authors to utilize the assessment tool in the action research study.

I utilized member checking of the individual interviews to determine accuracy of the transcription. Also, I utilized rich description of the findings including description of the setting and examples from interviews to provide an element of shared experiences (Creswell, 2003). I was aware of certain bias that I bring to the study due to my professional background as a special educator, general educator, assessment personnel, and counselor. I utilized a reflective process of bracketing during data collection to separate impressions, feelings, and early interpretations from descriptions. I also completed the questionnaire before data collection to identify bias. A research journal was kept to "monitor his or her personal reactions to what is being discovered" (Hatch, 2002, p.88).

Delimitations

This project study focused on the implementation of an Response to Intervention model for reading for a small, rural Texas school district. The study is delimited to eight teachers including six reading teachers, one each for K – 5th grade, a reading interventionist, and a Special Education teacher that were chosen by me. Five of the teachers have more than 15 years experience, one teacher has between six and 14 years of experience, and two teachers have less than five years of experience. Kindergarten through second grade teachers are self-contained and third through fifth grade teachers are departmentalized.

Potential Barriers

Limitations to this study may be teacher resistance and attitudes toward change, access to professional development for a small, rural school, adequate time for professional development and collaboration, type of RtI model implemented, materials

needed, and administrative support. Teachers have been provided limited training in Response to Intervention. An additional limitation may be comparing TAKS assessment results due to a different group of students taking the test for the grade level the previous year.

Needed Supports

It was an assumption that general education instruction includes research-based strategies. An additional assumption was that the teachers administer assessments in their classroom and utilize data to make instruction decisions regarding students. It was assumed that teachers implement interventions for students identified by the assessments as needing additional assistance.

Time Table

The project study began upon IRB approval. After consent for participation was completed, the questionnaire was administered and collected during the next vertical team meeting. The individual interviews were conducted, transcribed, and member checked over a period of three weeks. I completed analysis of documents over a two week interval. Data were analyzed to determine level of RtI framework implementation. An action plan and framework for RtI implementation at the research site were developed based on data analysis findings.

Qualitative Findings

Action research is "based on the proposition that generalized solutions may not fit particular contexts or groups of people and that the purpose of inquiry is to find an appropriate solution for the particular dynamics at work in a local situation" (Stringer, 2007). Response to Intervention is a flexible framework that is dependent on the local

context (Renaissance Learning, 2009). I transcribed the interviews by listening to the interview and typing the dialogue between the participant and me. A list of interview questions is located in Appendix C. I utilized member checking to establish credibility of the transcripts. A software program was not used during the transcription process. The data were analyzed using systematic coding to identify information from the transcripts rather than confirming the researcher's initial ideas (Rubin & I. Rubin, 2005). From the data six major themes emerged with subthemes as represented in Table 1. The following sections describe each theme including documentation from survey results, interview quotes, and analysis of documents.

Table 1.

Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
1. Collaboration	1.1 Teams
	1.2 Teaming Procedures
2. Data-Based Decision Making	2.1 Use of Data
	2.2 Universal Screening
3. Multitiered Instruction	3.1 Core Instruction
	3.2 Interventions for Struggling Students
4. Professional Development	
5. Parental Involvement	
6. Attitudes/Beliefs	6.1 Benefits
	6.2 Barriers

Theme 1 Collaboration

This theme relates to collaboration of stakeholders including general education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, interventionists, and parents. Full collaboration is important at every stage of RtI in order to raise student achievement (Whitten, Esteves, & Woodrow, 2009). The findings below are based on the responses to the "RtI Team Functioning" section of the RtI Effectiveness Survey that are summarized in Table 2. In addition, the findings were based on responses to interview questions, current Campus Intervention Team procedures, and the Campus Improvement Plan (LE, 2007, 2009).

Table 2.

RtI Team Functioning Results

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
RTI problem-solving team	87.5	12.5	0
Scheduled time to meet	100	0	0
Procedures for responses	100	0	0
Diverse team members	87.5	12.5	0
Communication System	87.5	12.5	0
Solution focused not referral focused	100	0	0
Written guidelines for tier placement	37.5	37.5	25
Use of Problem-Solving Method	87.5	12.5	0
Effective RTI Team Leader	100	0	0
Evaluation of RTI approach	87.5	12.5	0
Schedule of fidelity check	37.5	62.5	0
Campus resource list	12.5	50	37.5

Note. N=8 participants. The values represent percentages.

Subtheme 1.1 Teams. Currently, LE does not utilize an Response to Intervention team when a student is struggling. The participants responded to the item "Is an RtI problem-solving team in place on the campus?" with 87.5% "No" and 12.5% "Somewhat." Comments to this item included "We initiate the discussions ourselves. None in place that I know of,""Teachers and Title teacher" and "CIT Committee?". Teacher B stated:

> So I feel like we need a team and we need some kind of plan in place. I feel like we need a manual or something that tells us when we are having problems with a student what are the steps that we need to do because I feel everybody does something different.

The campus utilizes a Campus Intervention Team (CIT) during the prereferral process. The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states its purpose as the "Campus Intervention Team will identify students who need additional services that meet their learning needs in areas such as: Gifted and Talented, Special Education, Migrant, Bilingual/ESL, Title I" (LE, 2009, p. 17). The current CIT process is

> 1. Teacher identifies student with academic or behavioral problems.
>
> 2. Teacher discusses strategies informally with colleagues, administration, counselor, and/or support teachers. The teacher conferences with the parents of the child, and researches past records for previous support services, health problems, vision and hearing, etc.
>
> If the student is not making progress, and additional assistance is needed:
>
> 3. Teacher requests assistance of Campus Intervention Team (CIT) members. The teacher requests a CIT referral packet from the school counselor. The teacher completes the referral form and one of the observation forms. The referring teacher then distributes an observation form to others who teach the child. The entire packet is then returned to the school counselor. You will be notified of the meeting time.
>
> 4. A meeting is scheduled with the referring teacher, the student's parents and relevant CIT members. The Campus Intervention Team consists of a classroom administrator and/or counselor.
>
> 5. The team meets and has a brainstorming/problem-solving session. Ideas and strategies are shared and agreed upon as appropriate to use. The team may at any point feel that it is appropriate for a team member to observe this student. If so, the observer will share any ideas or suggestions resulting from observation. Documentation of the team meeting is given to the teacher and follow-up meetings will occur.
>
> 6. The teacher may request additional assistance from the team at any time (LE, 2007, pg. 2-3).

The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states LE will "investigate and begin implementation of the three-tiered (RTI) process to provide academic support for struggling students" (LE, 2009, p.18).

The teachers collaborate within their grade levels. The participants responded 50% "Somewhat" and 50% "Yes" to the item related to collaboration in teams at grade level for the purpose of planning high-quality instruction that is data-based in the "Core Instruction" section. Teachers also collaborate vertically and with interventionists. Teacher B stated "You team up with your partner or you go to the grade behind of you or ahead of you and you try to do what you can." Teacher B also stated that she collaborates with her grade level team and interventionist.

Subtheme 1.2 Teaming Procedures. Even though teaming occurs, teaming procedures are not in place on the campus. There is not a scheduled time to meet based on responses to the item for a scheduled time to meet. In addition, responses to the item addressing established procedures for prompt responses to teachers and parents were 100% "No". The only written response was "No consistent documentation to know this." Teacher H stated "We have nothing. I do not know what anybody's worked with on any of my students in [previous grade level] and I'm not sure exactly what [next grade level] requires other than me going and asking them about something." Teacher E commented "So we're getting the child on the same page through the grade levels and we've vertically aligned and we're doing better for each student. But, I think that I would need the framework to be in place." Based on the findings to the Collaboration theme, educators do share information about students, but on an as needed basis. Due to the lack

of teaming procedures, a consistent schedule for meetings as well as structure of the meetings do not occur. Also, a common RtI vocabulary is not used consistently (Dove & Steele, 2005).

Theme 2 Data-based Decision Making

This theme relates to the use of data to make instructional decisions. Types of data utilized are universal screening at Tier 1, diagnostics at Tier 1 and Tier 2, and progress monitoring at Tier 2 and Tiers 3 (Ogonosky, 2008). The findings below are based on the responses to the "Use of Data" section of the RtI Effectiveness Survey that are summarized in Table 3 and "Universal Screening" section that are summarized in Table 4. In addition, the findings were based on responses to interview questions and the Campus Improvement Plan (LE, 2009).

Table 3.

Use of Data

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
Specific data analysis process	87.5	12.5	0
Graphic display of data	75	25	0
Used for decision making	87.5	12.5	0
Written criteria for progress determination	100	0	0
Student progress monitoring system	37.5	62.5	0
Efficient and usable data collection system	50	50	0
Results used to make instructional decisions	12.5	25	62.5
Organized student profile results	75	12.5	12.5

Note. N=8 participants. The values represent percentages.

Table 4.

Universal Screening Results

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
Master calendar for academic and behavioral	12.5	50	37.5
Instrument aligned with curriculum	12.5	25	62.5
Available resources for implementation	0	75	25
Plan for administration	0	62.5	37.5
Process to manage results	50	50	0
Organized results for comparison	0	75	25
Results database	0	62.5	37.5
Results monitored for needed additional support	12.5	50	37.5

Note. N=8 participants. The values represent percentages.

Subtheme 2.1 Use of Data

Educators gather a variety of data. "Assessment at the elementary campus will be conducted as an on-going part of the instructional program" (LE, 2009, pg. 8). The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states progress monitoring by the teachers will include a variety of informal instruments such as classroom observations, checklists, conferences, and benchmark tests. It also states that computer technology will be utilized to identify strengths and weaknesses of students. The Campus Plan reports that educators will

"Analyze all test data AEIS [Academic Excellence Indicator System] indicators results, as a basis for TAKS preparation plans and other instructional plans" (LE, p. 10-11).

Data analysis occurs individually and at grade level. There is not a consistent process in place. The participants responded to the item related to utilizing a specific process to analyze data 87.5% "No" and 12.5% "Somewhat." The comments included "Do it on our own" and "Do it individually." The participants responded to the item related to making decisions regarding screening, placement, and changes in interventions based on data 87.5% "No" and 12.5% "Somewhat" including comments "Amongst the grade" and "Do it individually." The grade level team is monitoring student progress to make instructional decisions and differentiate instruction responses included 12.5% "No," 25% "Somewhat," 62.5% "Yes."

The participants indicated a data collection system for systematic student progress is somewhat being implemented with 62.5% responding "Somewhat" and 37.5% responding "No." Participants responded 100% "No" regarding using agreed upon written criteria to determine if progress is being made. Teacher comments included "Not behavioral" and "Benchmarks." Teacher E stated "It's kind of like a day by day, person by person."

Subtheme 2.2 Universal Screening. The Campus Plan (2009) states "A needs assessment will be conducted and monitored at appropriate times in the year by gathering data and documenting a student's learning" (p. 6). The participants responded to the item relating to a master calendar for school-wide screening with 12.5% "No", 50% "Somewhat", and 37.5% "Yes". Comments included "Not behavioral" and "Benchmarks." The participants' responses for the item related to a plan for screening

three times a year were 62.5% “Somewhat” and 37.5% “Yes”. Comments indicated benchmarks and Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) are used. Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade administer the TPRI. It is administered three times a year, beginning, middle, and end. Each grade level determines when the test will be given. Third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade administer benchmarks that are correlated to grade level standards. Vertical core subject teams determine administration dates. Screening instrument alignment with grade level curriculum item results included 12.5% “No”, 25% “Somewhat”, and 62.5% “Yes”.

The participants responded to the existence of a universal screening committee including a process identified to manage screening results with 50% “No” and 50% “Somewhat”. The comment was “Each classroom teacher reviews results and works with students.” Response to item relating to a results data base that allows a student performance to be monitored over time included 62.5% “Somewhat” and 37.5% “Yes.” Comments included “We monitor it from previous year and our year on our own.” and “Administration has these results to monitor, not teachers.” Teacher F commented:

> And another thing is like when we give TPRI we may know what our beginning of the year results are, but we don’t know if that is better than last year’s end of the year, worse than last year’s end of the year? We don’t know how they did in [previous] grade. So we don’t have anything to compare that with. Now we can compare our end of the year and our middle of the year to our beginning of the year. But, our beginning of the year is just like falling out of the air.

Monitoring of classroom-level results and decisions made when more support is needed for teachers or instructional programs item results were 12.5% “No”, 50% “Somewhat”, and 37.5% “Yes”. The principal reviews the results as indicated by the

comments. Teacher D stated “The principal does a good job of talking to us and she pretty much knows how every student has done since Pre-K.”

Based on the results to the Data-Based Making theme, data is gathered from various sources, but there is not a consistent analysis system in place. Interventions are not determined based on specific criteria, such as cut off scores or progress monitoring. Also, data is not reported in a uniform process across grade levels. Each grade level does administer universal screenings in reading, but it is not based on a master calendar. A consistent data analysis system and progress monitoring system is needed.

Theme 3Multitiered Instruction

This theme relates to the arrangement of district resources to provide a unified system of education based on a framework of increasing levels of intensity while the numbers of students decrease (Ogonosky, 2008). The findings below are based on the responses to the “Core Instruction” section summarized in Table 5 and “Delivery of Interventions” section summarized in Table 7 of the RtI Effectiveness Survey. In addition, the findings were based on responses to interview questions, the Campus Improvement Plan (LE, 2009) and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Results *(*TAKS*)* (TEA, 2009).

Table 5.

Core Instruction

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
Effective core instruction	0	0	100
Struggling students receiving high-quality Instruction	0	37.5	62.5
Resources provided to support learning	0	75	25
Teacher collaboration at grade level	0	50	50
Expertise in research-based instructional strategies	25	37.5	37.5

Note. N=8 participants. The values represent percentages.

Table 6.

LE Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Results (TAKS)

	2009 3rd	2008 3rd	2009 4th	2008 4th	2009 5th	2008 5th
Campus	94%	90%	92%	94%	93%	94%
African American	88%	80%	89%	91%	83%	92%
Hispanic	**	83%	**		>99%	**
White	97%	96%	91%	97%	97%	97%
Native American	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian/Pacific Is.	**	**	**	**	**	**
Male	94%	92%	89%	>99%	91%	94%
Female	95%	88%	94%	88%	>99%	>99%
Special Ed.	**	**	**	**	**	**
Economic Dis.	91%	91%	86%	88%	96%	94%
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**

Note. ** represents masked results due to small numbers. (Texas Education Agency, 2009)

Subtheme 3.1 Core Instruction. The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states " We will develop and implement school wide reform strategies that provide opportunities for ALL children to meet the State's proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement" (LE, p. 6) .The campus goal is to maintain or increase student mastery to above 90% in reading, mathematics and science for all groups. Based on previous TAKS scores (Table 6), the core instructional program for reading is meeting the needs of most

students on the campus. The item related to core instruction working for most students response was 100% “Yes”. Response to the item related to struggling students receiving high-quality instruction in the general education setting 37.5% indicated “Somewhat” and 62.5% “Yes”.

The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) supports implementing a variety of classroom strategies to assist struggling students by purchasing “supplemental material for intervention strategies in reading and mathematics in order that all meet academic standards” (LE, pg. 16). The results for the item related to teachers being provided the resources needed to support learning were 75% “Somewhat” and 25% “Yes”. The comments included “No RtI person”, “No intervention support staff at this grade level,” and “Need more support.” Teacher A commented “I start off working one on one with them having them read to me and work with them at recess or conference” and Teacher C remarked “I re-teach, I differentiate the instruction, do individual practice, and do a lot of one on one.” In addition, participants responded that teachers have not developed expertise in a variety of research-based instructional strategies. The results to this item were 25% “No”, 37.5% “Somewhat”, and 37.5% “Yes” including comments of “I wouldn’t consider the teacher an expert” and ”Would not consider our teachers experts.”

Table 7.

Delivery of Interventions

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
Ineffective core instruction ruled out	12.5	0	87.5
Research-based interventions selection procedure	62.5	37.5	0
Knowledge of research-based intervention criteria	100	0	0
Interventions linked to data	37.5	25	37.5
Support for intervention implementation	75	0	25
Evidence-based instructional strategies inventory	37.5	62.5	0
Implementation of student's intervention Plan	25	37.5	37.5
Frequent progress monitoring	0	37.5	62.5
RTI team determines intervention effectiveness	62.5	25	12.5

Note. N=8 participants. The values represent percentages.

Subtheme 3.2 Interventions for Struggling Students. Participants responded to the item indicating ineffective core instruction ruled out prior to receiving interventions with 12.5% "No" and 87.5% "Yes". Based on item responses, there are not procedures used for determining which research-based interventions to use with students, 62.5% "No" and

37.5% “Somewhat”, and team members do not know research-based intervention criteria, 100% “No”. Participants responded 37.5% “No”, 25% “Somewhat”, and 37.5% “Yes” to academic interventions being linked to assessment. The comments to this item included “On our own” and “We decide.” Teacher F commented:

> Usually, we just do something. I take it day by day. If someone experiences difficulty today, sometimes I might be able to work with them that day and sometimes I have to wait until my paraprofessional comes to my room for one of us to be able to work with that student.

Based on the Campus Improvement Plan, intervention strategies in reading included Accelerated Reading Instruction for 1st through 5th grade, Student Success Maker for Kindergarten through 5th grade, Super Phonics for Kindergarten (LE, 2009). Third through fourth grades are served by two Title 1 interventionists. There is not a Title 1 interventionist for grades Kindergarten through second grades. Also, serving on the campus is an English as a Second Language interventionist, a Speech Language Pathologist, four Special Education teachers, a guidance counselor, and one paraprofessional per grade level. Participants responded 75% “No” and 25% “Yes” that sufficient supports services for intervention implementation are in place. Also, the item correlated to the availability of an evidence-based instructional strategy inventory response included 37.5% “No” and 62.5% “Yes”. Teacher D commented “I get support from the Title teacher with interventions but as far as a step by step RtI intervention material, not really. I’ve never really thought about it before.” Teacher C stated “I think that there are some interventions that I’ve used, but there are many more that I know that are out there that we don’t have either the funds or the ability to access them.” Teacher D stated:

> Basically, as a classroom teacher, I try any reteaching. I try different learning styles. We pull in on an individual basis. Last year, we had a lot of tutoring going on in the after-school program. During the day, if that didn't seem to be helping any, we pulled out into smaller groups with our Title I teacher to work more small groups and kind of as a back-up to what we were doing in the classroom.

Two comments to the item related to personnel skill level in the intervention were "Need more training" and the survey results were 50% "Somewhat" and 50% "Yes". Teacher H remarked

> But, I feel like we need a person that is trained in it that can pull the children out and that can work with them. Like our aide, she's great with them. She works with them, but she's not trained in it.

Based on the results to the Multitiered Instruction theme, the core reading instruction is appropriate for most students. Educators do not perceive themselves as experts in using a variety of research-based instructional strategies. Implementation of interventions for struggling students is linked to assessment, but not consistently across grade level. Additional training in intervention implementation and an inventory of available research-based interventions are needed.

Theme 4 Professional Development

This theme relates to training and support that staff need to implement RtI including training on RtI process and infrastructure components such as research-based interventions and data-based decision making (Mellard & Johnson, 2008) The findings below are based on the responses to the "Professional Development" section of the RtI Effectiveness Survey that are summarized in Table 8. In addition, the findings were based on responses to interview questions and the Campus Improvement Plan (LE, 2009).

Table 8.

Professional Development

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
Assessment system for staff needs	75	25	0
Assessment system for new staff	75	25	0
Action plan included in master professional development plan	75	25	0
Research-based intervention proficiency support plan	37.5	62.5	0
Understanding research-based interventions	12.5	87.5	0
High quality training	12.5	87.5	0
Use of data and assessment	50	25	25
In-class modeling and coaching	62.5	37.5	0
Procedures for training needs	100	0	0

Note. N=8 participants. The values represent percentages.

Educators participate in in-service training on campus before school starts and scheduled days during the school year. They also attend workshops at the Texas Education Service Center located approximately 45 miles away. Based on the Campus Improvement Plan (2009), "Campus teachers and staff will continually refine their skills through diversified in-service, and staff development" (LE, p. 10).

The participants responded 75% "No" and 25% "Somewhat" to the item is an assessment system for the RtI professional development needs of staff in place. The

Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) will be used to evaluate teacher and appropriate training will be provided in response to the needs of the teachers (LE). The PDAS process includes one 45-minute observation by an administrator and completion of the Teacher Self-Report form which includes a Professional Development component (Texas Education Service Center Region XIII, 2009). Teacher C stated:

> I've been to I think one workshop which just sort of touched what RtI was and how that we are supposed to be implementing it. I understand the tier system. But, I think we would need training so that we would know who is implementing it in the different grade levels, understanding how your team works, and just basically really how the decisions are going to be made and being part of that system. We do not, I feel, I know that I have not been part of that to know what each grade level is doing now. I know that they are some on their grade levels, but I haven't been part of that so I don't know how they're working it on each grade level. And if we were to implement it throughout the system, I think that we would all need to be trained so that we would know what each one is doing and their job description and how this is going to flow from one grade to the next and one level to the next.

The participants responded 37.5% "No" and 62.5% "Yes" to the item that a plan is in place to support reaching proficiency in delivering research-based interventions. One participant commented "Collaborate with administration." The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states "LE staff will be given opportunities to attend staff development that will support their teaching needs" (LE, p.19). Teacher G stated "Well, I might have access to it and I'm not aware of it. But, I don't know. What I use works for me."

The item related to training being provided to aid teacher understanding of research-based strategies responses included 12.5% "No" and 87.5% "Yes". The comments included "Hit and miss on getting to go to training" and "Some". All reading teachers including interventionists in grades Kindergarten through Fourth have completed

the Texas Reading Academy which includes training in research-based strategies for Reading. The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states "Reading teachers will attend ongoing training focusing on the reading process, observation and assessment, and classroom intervention" (LE, p. 24).

The participants responded 62.5% "No" and 37.5% "Yes" to receiving in-class modeling and coaching that supports changes in instructional practices. The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) addresses mentoring teachers new to LE. "Subject area specialist (math and reading) will assist new teachers with understanding learning styles and how learning preferences impact the ways that students respond to teaching and learning" (LE, p. 28-29).

Based on the finding to the Professional Development theme, reading teachers have received training through the Reading Academies in research-based strategies. The PDAS system provides a procedure for reporting professional development needed. Modeling and coaching would provide teachers with support in implementing research-based interventions.

Theme 5 Parent Involvement

This theme relates to collaboration school staff and parents which is "consistent, organized, and meaningful two-way communication" (Mellard & Johnson, 2008, p. 140). The findings below are based on the responses to the "Parent Involvement" section of the RtI Effectiveness Survey that are summarized in Table 9. In addition, the findings were based on the student handbook and the Campus Improvement Plan (LE, 2009).

Table 9

Parent Involvement

Survey Item	No	Somewhat	Yes
Parent notification component	37.5	50	12.5
Parental Involvement from concern onset	25	12.5	62.5
Encouragement for active participation	62.5	25	12.5
Provided copy of intervention plan	87.5	0	12.5
Receive regular feedback on progress	0	25	75

Note. N=8 Participants. The values represent percentages.

Participants responded 37.5% "No", 50% "Somewhat", and 12.5% "Yes" regarding a parent notification component. Comments included "Teachers call on their own" and TPRI results. Item related to parents being involved from the beginning of a concern responses included 25% "No", 12.5% "Somewhat", and 62.5% "Yes" with comments "If the parent will come in for conference by the teacher not by RTI team." and "Teachers call in parents". Participants responded 25% "Somewhat" and 75% "No" to receiving regular progress feedback. Comments included "Teacher initiated only," "By classroom teacher," and "Weekly for behavior; 2-3 times grading period for academics."

The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) includes goals that target increased parental involvement using a variety of communication methods. Educators send home weekly folders in Kindergarten and First grade. Positive messages are also sent home on a regular basis (LE). The L Independent School District (ISD) Student Handbook 2009-2010 (2009) includes suggestions for parental involvement. It states "Both experiences

and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school" (L ISD, p. 3). The student handbook also informs parents regarding options for assistance if their child is struggling academically.

> If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention. The implementation of Response to Intervention has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of school districts to meet the needs of all struggling students. (L ISD, 2009, p. 6).

Based on findings, parental involvement is encouraged at LE. Procedures for parent involvement and additional support for parents in assisting their struggling students would be beneficial.

Theme 6 Attitudes/Beliefs

This theme relates to the attitudes and beliefs of stakeholders toward implementing an RtI framework on their campus. Understanding the need to implement the framework as well as the belief that one is competent to perform the tasks impact the success of RtI implementation (Batsche et al.,2006; Hall, 2008; Hilton, 2007). The findings below are based on the responses to the RtI Effectiveness Survey and interview responses.

Subtheme 6.1 Benefits. Participants believe that implementing a RtI framework on their campus would reduce the achievement gaps. Teacher H stated " I feel like we need one because we have a lot of at-risk children and some of them are not getting all the

interventions that they need to become better students." Teacher B commented that it would help their comprehension "so that there doesn't seem to be such an achievement gap within the classroom."

Another possible benefit of utilizing an RtI framework is a possible reduction in the number of referrals to special education. Teacher C commented:

> That's why I think that we need some kind of response to intervention framework setup on this campus because a lot of these students might be able to keep from being referred if there was the proper intervention at a very early stage in their development.

Teacher A also commented "I think it's very important and helpful so that you catch those students that you might not if there aren't steps to follow."

Another benefit is related to the support of the campus administration in implementing an RtI framework. The Campus Improvement Plan (2009) states:

> The mission of the LE school community is to help each child identify and cultivate his or her greatest potentials, and to provided a curriculum that will foster problem-solving, creative thinking skills, knowledge and the attitudes necessary to live a successful, healthy, fulfilling and informed life. (p. 1)

The participants believe the principal provides support allowing staff to attend training and by having knowledge of student performance. Teacher A commented that the principal is very supportive of attending workshops provided by the educational service center. Teacher D stated "The principal does a good job of talking to us and she pretty much knows how every student has done since the beginning."

6.2 Barriers. One of the main barriers to RtI implementation perceived by the participants is the time required for documentation, training, and carrying out interventions. Teacher F stated:

> With my background, I know what to do for (grade level). It's just having the time to pull them. I have to wait until it is either a quiet time when everyone else is busy working on something else. But, I don't want them to get behind on what everyone else is working on to pull them.

Teacher G stated "I know some teachers in other schools say that it is really good. They talk about all the paperwork and everything that they have to do." Teacher D commented "So, you have to use your conference, you have to use after-school, and all those things in order to see what level the child is at. . . because we spend a lot of extra time you know out of our pocket, out of our time to do, to help."

Another barrier is the resources needed to implement RtI including personnel and materials. Teacher G stated "We have so many children here that need special help and we don't even have a chapter, Title teacher, for (grade level) now. We really need all the help we can get. It can't do anything but help." Teacher F commented "The students that need intervention strategies are not always, with just one person, able to do that immediately. So, they just have to wait."

Discrepant Information

Creswell (2008) stated contrary evidence provides contradictory information about a theme because it does not confirm the theme. Qualitative research attempts to relate the complexity of the situation. By presenting discrepant information, the researcher enhances the credibility of the findings. One item of discrepant information is the item in the Parent Involvement section of the survey inquiring if parents are provided with a copy of the intervention plan. The participants responded 87.7% "No" and 12.5% "Yes." The participants included a special education teacher. Special education parents

are provided a copy of their child's individual education plan which is different from a copy of the intervention plan.

Another point of discrepant data involves an inventory of materials. The participants responded to the item related to a campus resource list of available materials, programs, or personnel to support student progress in the Team Function section of the survey with 12.5% "No", 50% "Somewhat", and 37.5% "Yes". Comments referred to benchmark tests. Teacher H stated:

> I guess we have some (research-based interventions). But it is things that we have pulled as teachers to try to help students. It's not necessarily what the school has helped us pull. It is strictly something that I have gone out and I've bought or I've researched online and I've done myself.

Teacher C stated "I think there are interventions that I've used, but there are many more that I know are out there that we don't have either the fund or the ability to access them. In the Delivery of Interventions section of the survey, participants responded to the item related to an inventory for resources on evidence-based instructional strategies with 100% "No". An inventory of resources may be dependent upon grade level.

Project Study Rationale

Action research addresses and solves practical and local problems (Creswell, 2008). RtI has been included in recent legislation without much guidance toward implementation (TEA, 2010). The project study focuses on utilizing data analysis to identify elements of an RtI framework currently in place at LE. Whitten, Esteves, and Woodrow (2009) stated:

> The goal of RTI is not to complete some 'official' version of the model. Rather, the very nature of the framework calls for meeting the unique needs of each student. Just as there is no uniform way to teach, there is no uniform way in which to administer RTI. This will be left to each school or district. (p. 8)

Implementing RtI involves the coordination of many processes among staff members (Whitten, Esteves, & Woodrow, 2009). Based on data analysis, an action for RtI implementation at LE was developed. An implementation plan allows educators to develop a systematic plan for long-term change from the teacher level up (Shores, 2009).

Conclusion

Qualitative research explores a central phenomenon that little is known about rather than to generalize findings to a population (Creswell, 2008). Many researchers agree that multiple tiers of intervention should be utilized. However, they have provided little direction for the implementation of RtI procedures (Denton, Vaughn, & Fletcher, 2003; Fuchs & L. Fuchs, 2006). Galvin (2007) stated strategies for supporting teachers within a new model of general education accountability and research-based practice should be explored. "The role of considering practitioners as collaborators in the process of RTI research cannot be overemphasized" (Galvin, 2007, p. 144). DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker (2008) state a system of interventions should fit the context of your school. The authors caution that ineffective teaching cannot be compensated by any system of interventions. The purpose of the action research study was to identify components of a RtI framework currently being used at LE during the prereferral process. Based on data analysis, an implementation plan for an RtI problem-solving model in reading at LE school was developed. It was my intent to explore methods that can help sustain the implementation of RtI and improve student achievement in a local context.

SECTION 3: THE PROJECT

Response to Intervention implementation is not the result of a formula that can be applied to every campus. It requires assessing the needs of each campus and developing a process for implementation that may take multiple years (Shores, 2009). This project study allows teachers to use their knowledge to produce actions that allow for a systemic change from the inside out (Pine, 2009).

Section 3 provides a description of the project study, including goals and a rationale. A review of the literature focused on research and theory of school reform and its application to RtI implementation. Project implementation including potential resources, existing supports, potential barriers, and timetable is discussed. I address possible societal changes for the local stakeholders and far-reaching community.

Description and Goals

This project study addressed the local problem that RtI has been included in recent legislation without much guidance toward implementation. LE utilizes several components of an RtI framework, but they are not implemented consistently across grade levels and subjects. There was a need to examine current educational practices in the district and develop an action plan for implementation. Jimmerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden (2007) stated that "School districts may benefit from implementing RtI procedures on a small scale with high quality while building local capacity for implementation on a wider scale" (p. 6).

The project focused on building background knowledge of an Response to Intervention (RtI) framework and developing an action plan for implementation based on data collection and analysis, as described in Section 2. The RtI Effectiveness Survey

results, individual interviews, and document analysis identified components of an RtI framework that are currently being utilized at LE. The researcher developed a guidance document consisting of three sections. The first section provides background information of RtI, the second section describes an action plan for RtI implementation, and the third section includes a glossary of commonly used RtI terms.

A goal of this project is that this guidance document will be utilized at the campus for which it was developed. Although the primary focus for this project study is providing guidance for RtI implementation in reading at LE, the guidance document can also be used to develop an action plan for math and behavior. Over the next several years, the guidance document can be used to scale-up to a secondary framework.

Rationale

Due to legislative mandates, accountability standards, and diverse classroom populations, teachers can be overwhelmed with trying to address each student's educational strengths and weaknesses. An RtI framework can provide a system for differentiating instruction based on students' needs, tracking students' progress, accessing various forms of professional development, and receiving support from other educators. A guidance document including an action plan was developed based on the results of the data analysis presented in Section 2. Components of an RtI framework currently being utilized at LE were identified. The implementation plan suggested steps in multilayered instruction, data-based decision making, student support team, parent involvement, and professional development.

Implementing RtI involves the coordination of many processes among staff members (Whitten, Esteves, & Woodrow, 2009).Currently, LE utilizes several

components of an RtI framework. However, these components are not implemented consistently across grade levels and subjects. The project study resulted in the development of a guidance document providing a road map to help educators develop a systematic plan for long-term change from the teacher level up (Shores, 2009).

Review of the Literature

Societal changes have compelled several reform efforts, resulting in changing student populations that include a larger number of learning needs being met in the regular classroom. Shores (2009) stated, "Educators express concern that the rapid changes in student population, legal accountability, and basic pedagogy experienced in schools since the mid 1990s have made teaching more difficult than at any time in the past" (p. 25). RtI is a framework that transforms how educators function and is not based on one program or curriculum. In conducting the literature review, I searched the EBSCO databases of the Walden University library, Questia online library, Texas A&M University-Texarkana library, East Texas Baptist University library and Google using the following terms: system change, response to intervention implementation, school reform theory, and school-wide positive behavior support. Even though little research identifying factors that aid in the implementation of a RtI framework exist, research related to previous educational change initiatives may help researchers and practitioners (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

School Reform Research

Many school reform changes have been dictated by legislation and linked to funding. Even when supported by legislation such as RtI, Berends, Bodily, and Kirby (2002) noted that most educational change efforts have limited implementation results

possibly due to change occurring from the top down. Vernez, Karam, Mariano, and DeMartini (2006) studied 350 schools implementing comprehensive school reform based on NCLB legislation utilizing surveys from principals and teachers and conducting 12 case studies. The authors' intent was to conduct a three year comparative longitudinal study however a large number of schools abandoned the reform model or changed the components. The authors noted that the higher the level of implementation was related to a high level of initial and ongoing professional development. Sansonti and Noltemeyer (2008) stated:

> Challenges inherent in educational reform, coupled with compelling needs to improve schools and research on how to promote change, demand that school improvement efforts develop and operate with shared meaning and responsibility. (p. 56)

The authors emphasized the need for conditions that build capacity for both the system and educators who work within the system.

Research related to School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) may provide possible factors and barriers that can be useful when considering RtI implementation, SWPBS contains features that are similar to RtI such as a tiered approach service delivery, decisions based on data, and progress monitoring. One study examined common features that may have encouraged implementation for two schools that successfully implemented SWPBS. The authors of the study noted stakeholder agreement for change, shared vision, administrative leadership commitment, autonomous teachers, commitment of financial resources, and restructuring of organization (George, White, & Schlaffer, 2007). Another study examined 70 educators in 26 Florida schools using a modified nominal group process to identify barriers and facilitating factors in

SWBPS implementation. The results included 21 barriers themes and 19 facilitator themes. The most significant barrier was absence of staff buy-in followed by insufficient data use, inconsistent implementation, inadequate award systems, insufficient time, elevated staff turnover, and philosophical differences between/among administration and educators. Facilitator themes included district support, effective use of data, administration support, school/level training meetings, a plan implementation, and team membership (Kincaid, Childs, Blaise, & Wallace, 2007). Based on this research, building capacity of the school and the individuals can change a school's culture so that educational change implementation can be successful (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

School Change Theory

In addition to research, previous theoretical change models such as Michael Fullan's model (1991; 2001; 2007), can be helpful in RtI Implementation. Fullan's model consists of three phases that are not linear. Changes at each level affect other levels. For large scale initiatives, Levels I to II may take five to ten years while three to five years for moderately complex changes.

Phase I is called Initiation which includes the processes that results in the decision to proceed with change from district-level administration to broad-based employee support. Reasons to initiate educational change include teacher advocacy, existence of quality innovations, legislatives or policy changes, and external change agents' recommendations (Fullan, 2007). Datnow and Stringfield (2000) synthesized findings from 16 projects and more than 300 case studies conducted by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk. The authors found that schools implementing educational change initiatives for opportunistic reasons such as available funding instead

of responding to a reform need did not achieve strong implementation. Shared vision for implementation strongly influences the level of implementation (George et al., 2007; Kincaid et al., 2007)

Due to being supported by educational legislation, educational advocacy groups, and research panels, many states have started transforming the special education referral process by focusing on early literacy instruction, early intervention, and progress monitoring. This shift is top-down, which when used in isolation, is cited as the most common factor related to educational change failing. It is important for all educators, general and special, to understand and accept RtI components in order to develop shared common attitudes and beliefs (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

Phase II, Implementation, refers to the first experiences at attempting to implement an educational change which is usually the first two or three years (Fullan, 2007). This phase is crucial to the change's success, which has been associated with the amount of student outcome improvement (Datnow & Stringfield, 2000). Fullan (2007) suggested three interconnected factors influencing change during Phase II. Change characteristics include four sub-factors including a perceived critical need for change, clear goals and change process procedures, complexity of the proposed change, and the quality and practicality of the change initiative. RtI requires a paradigm shift in making educational decisions. Uncertainty of decision making procedures in Tier 2 and Tier 3 exists (Fuchs, 2003; Fuchs et al., 2004; Speece et al., 2003). RtI may be perceived as a complex process by educators, due to attempting to fit RtI into their current systems, lack of clarity from field leaders, and lack of procedural steps. It is important not to depend upon legislation or other directives, but to provide a clear and convincing rationale for

RtI implementation. “RtI initiatives may be doomed for failure unless educators responsible for implementing change understand the need for such reform, as well as reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs related to practice” (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008, pg. 59).

Several local factors influence Phase II implementation: district factors, school board and community, building principals, and teachers. Previous negative change experiences in the district influence implementation (Fullan, 2007). Researchers found a positive relationship between the degree of change implementation and strong district-level support at 13 schools (Datnow & Springfield, 2000). McDermott (2000) found an opposite relationship between the term of leadership and the probability of implementing and sustaining school reform efforts. When implementing RtI, support for change by districts and schools and the involvement of staff in the change process will help determine the level of implementation achieved (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008). School board and community indirectly influence Phase II. The school board controls the power to hire and fire superintendents who either support or oppose change initiatives (Fullan, 2007). School boards also hear concerns from parents, staff, and community members. School boards can aid in implementation by helping to create a shared vision within a community. Parent-school relations contribute to change initiatives. Parents may not participate in a change initiative if they do not understand the process. When implementing RtI, it is important to collaborate with parents to problem-solve their initial concerns and to help them monitor students at home (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

Building principals and teachers affect Level II implementation. Hall and Hord (2001) identified the effects of principal leadership styles on implementation of a science

curriculum over a two year period of time. Active support of teachers in learning and utilizing the curriculum is provided by high initiator principals. Middle managing principals only met the minimum requirements, while low implementing principals did not assist teachers. The prior experiences with change and personality characteristics of teachers influence their willingness to attempt school reform. In a large urban district introducing inclusion, teachers completed a forced-choice survey on the necessary conditions needed to support an inclusion model. The results indicated that the first or second most important condition for over 74% of the participants was teachers' attitudes toward students (Weiner, 2003). Horner and Sugai (2005) noted the importance of teacher buy-in during SWPBS implementation. The authors suggested that it is necessary to obtain buy-in from 80% staff in building to achieve implementation.

Turnbull (2002) studied the influence of buy-in through a survey completed by 671 participants found seven variables including training, administrator buy-in, developer support, resources, knowledge of budget, influence in school-level implementation, and control over classroom implementation. The buy-in from year one was the most significant predictor of buy-in at year two. Districts, school boards and communities, principals, and teachers are crucial local factors in implementation. Ongoing evaluation of these factors and problem-solving concerns related to RtI implementation are very important steps in sustaining educational change (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

Phase III is Institutionalization, referring to sustaining and continuing to build the program over time. Limited research is available regarding factors related to sustainability of the change process, since many school change efforts do not reach Phase III (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008). Datnow and Springfield (2000) discovered that, after

the third year of a change reform, only one of 13 schools continued with implementation. Minimal research regarding third year change reform implementation exists due to resource intensive studies (Fullan, 2007).

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is critical to the implementation of RTI due to the requirement of current knowledge of research-based strategies needed for effective instruction. (Vaughn Gross Center for Reading & Language Arts, n. d.). Extensive professional development in research-based interventions, problem solving skills, and assessment skills will be needed regardless of the type of RTI model a school chooses to implement (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2005). This professional development should address research-based interventions and data-based instructional decision making. It should also include effective problem-solving team involvement, individual differences for learners, school-home collaboration, and accommodating diversity within general education (Jimmerson et al., 2007).

Guskey (2003) analyzed 13 different lists of effective professional development characteristics published within the last decade. The author identified 21 characteristics overall within the lists. The most frequently cited characteristic was the "enhancement of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge" (p. 749). The author found that most of the lists mention that the "provision of sufficient time and other resources" are needed to deepen teacher knowledge, for analysis of students' work, and for development of instructional strategies (p. 749). To have any impact on student achievement, time must be "well organized, carefully structured, and purposefully directed" (p.749).

Guskey (2003) also identified the "promotion of collegiality and collaborative exchange" as another characteristic noted on the lists (p. 749). The author stated that, for collaboration to be effective, it should be highly structured and purposeful as well as guided by clear goals to improve student learning. In addition, a majority of the lists identified the need for a defined approach of the evaluation of professional development. The evaluations should be aligned with reform initiatives and emphasize high-quality instruction (Guskey, 2003).

Another characteristic of the lists identified by Guskey (2003) was that professional development should be school or site-based. Guskey cautioned that collaboration between site-based educators aware of contextual characteristics and district-level personnel with a broader perspective is essential to providing quality professional development. Without this balance, staff members tend to be more interested in programs that are similar to what they are already doing instead of focusing on research-based programs. Also, Guskey noted that less than half the lists included the importance of student learning data analysis.

RtI Implementation

When considering implementing RtI, it is important to develop a plan that will facilitate the change initiative within the context of the school or district. The first step is to evaluate the needs of the school by assessing barriers and facilitators based on education change research. Identifying RtI components such as problem-solving teams and interventions that are already being utilized will aid in implementation. The collection and analysis of multiple sources of data including surveys, focus group

interviews with stakeholders, and observations of current processes and resource will help identify areas of strength and need (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008).

When developing a plan to address needs for implementation, specific goals, methods for meeting the goals, a timeline, and progress monitoring should be included. Teacher knowledge and beliefs should be addressed through professional development. In order to develop collegiality, stakeholders should be provided multiple participation opportunities during implementation phase. Supportive leadership can provide accountability. Involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making will help develop a shared vision. Plans for technical assistance and support including professional development, materials, technology, funding and assistance, and policy implementation should be outlined in the plan. It is essential to determine what support will be provided, how it will be provided, and who will provide it. "It is crucial for researchers, districts, and schools to consider such internal factors with regard to RtI implementation" (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008, pg 61). In order to develop infrastructures for RtI, the implementation plan should be monitored and rewritten as necessary. "Important elements to ensure when planning include supportive leadership, collegiality, affirmative teacher beliefs and knowledge, and sufficient capacity of both systems and individuals" (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, p. 64).

Implementation of Project

I developed a guidance document for RtI implementation based on data collection and analysis. The first section describes the background of RtI including the definition, history, and components. The second section provides an action plan for RtI implementation describing the current status of RtI components and the next steps for

implementation. Section 3 contains a glossary of RtI terms. The implementation and the timetable for this doctoral project is based on its approval. Upon completion of doctoral program, the guidance document will be published and shared with participants of the study and campus administrator utilizing a professional development seminar. The seminar and document may be presented to other stakeholders such as school board, parents, and other faculty members.

Potential Resources, Existing Supports, and Potential Barriers

During the project study, I identified several potential resources and existing supports already in place that will aid in RtI implementation however these components are not implemented consistently across grade levels. Currently, all students are receiving effective core instruction in reading. Grade level and content area collaboration exists. The Campus Intervention Team meets during the prereferral process. A variety of data is collected and analyzed individually and at grade level. These results are shared with students, parents, and educators. Staff has received training in research-based instruction and strategies. Campus leadership is an important support.

I identified potential barriers in RtI implementation. One potential barrier is time for team meetings and documentation of progress monitoring, interventions, and movement between tiers. Schedule for small groups, interventions, and professional development can also be difficult. Funding for materials, technology, and personnel can be a potential barrier.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

I developed a guidance document for RtI implementation. This document provides background information for RtI and an action plan. The document does not

present a specific RtI framework. In order for change to successfully occur, it is important for stakeholders to develop a specific framework and procedures. The goal of the guidance document was to help educators identify the need for RtI, how it relates to other mandates, and how it interacts with other practices in the building.

The guidance document will be presented to the campus administrator and participants of the project study. I propose that the guidance document be presented to the entire staff during a faculty meeting during the first few weeks of school. I recommend that the action plan focus on the content area of reading. The steps can be repeated for other content areas such as math and behavior as determined by administration and Student Support Team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Due to a shift for assisting struggling students in general education from special education, roles for educators may change. "Since RtI is a whole-school instructional framework intended to improve instruction and learning for all students, all faculty and staff members share responsibility for RtI" (TEA, 2008, p. 4). The principal will be responsible for leading in the development and implementation of the RtI framework. It is important for the principal to support personnel by providing staff development, participating in collaborate teams, and monitoring the fidelity of instruction at all tier levels (Idaho, 2009). Counselors and diagnosticians will assist with scheduling decisions, identifying student needs and progress monitoring, and assisting with selection of appropriate interventions. General education teachers play an essential role in RtI implementation. It is important for teachers to understand each component of an RtI framework and how it works at every level. Teachers should use a variety of strategies to

assist struggling students (TEA, 2008). Special education teachers and interventionist will need to collaborate closely with general education teachers and provide instructional training. They will provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 services. Paraprofessionals will implement small-group interventions and assist with progress monitoring (TEA, 2008). Parents should attend meetings, provide information about their child, and reinforce skills at home (Idaho, 2009).

Project Evaluation

The project study produced a guidance document for RtI implementation. The evaluation of the project will focus on the project itself and not whether RtI implementation meets certain goals used for goal-based evaluation. Project evaluation will not focus on formative evaluation occurring during RtI implementation or summative evaluation of the efficacy of the RtI implementation. An outcome-based evaluation will be utilized to evaluate the guidance document and action plan. The goals of implementing an RtI framework is to provide assistance to struggling students based on their needs and appropriate special education referrals. These goals can be evaluated each semester and longitudinally. These short-term evaluations can include the Student Support Team analyzing the number of students served in Tier 2 and Tier 3 to determine the effectiveness of the interventions and analyzing the number of special education referrals at the end of each semester. At the end of each year, grade level and vertical teams can perform test score data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum.

Long-term evaluation of the RtI implementation action plan to determine the level of component implementation should occur at the end of three years. Administrators and

teachers should complete the RtI Effectiveness Survey which can be administered after changes and adjustments are made to observe growth in the components of RtI (Lujan et al., 2008). The Student Support Team will utilize the results of the survey to enhance or amend the guidance document. Using feedback and suggestions from key stakeholders with first-hand knowledge of the guidance document will be a primary indicator in determining whether or not it is viable. The results will be communicated to the Student Support Team, faculty, and district administration.

Implications Including Social Change

The field of education has been influenced by a multitude of reform efforts as a result of societal changes. Educators are expected to meet the individualized needs of a larger number of students with special challenges including dyslexia, English language learners, Gifted and Talented, and struggling learners. RtI implementation has the potential to provide a framework for meeting the needs of all students (Shores, 2009).

Local Community

The project study of creating an RtI guidance document including an action plan for implementation will aid in improving instruction of all students by being proactive instead of reactive. Data will be used to link the needs of students with the appropriate interventions objectively instead of subjectively. RtI has the potential to provide a unified service delivery model at LE benefiting students, educators, and parents (Ogonosky, 2008; Howard, 2009; Whitten, Esteves, & Woodrow, 2009).

Far-Reaching

The guidance document can be utilized as a model for other school districts and campuses in developing an action plan for RtI implementation based on the assessment of

the needs of their campus. As RtI implementation begins to occur on more campuses, a shift may occur where the services students received do not depend upon their eligibility label. The focus should be on providing the services each student needs, not where and who is providing the service. RtI implementation will result in ongoing professional development as educators seek out new research-based interventions and instructional practices. Also, this project study can be a bridge between research and practice by illustrating methods for implementing research into real world educational settings (Ogonosky, 2008; Howard, 2009;. Whitten et al., 2009).

Conclusion

RtI assists educators in meeting instructional requirements of federal and state legislative mandates. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals Education with Disabilities of Improvement Act of 2004 direct schools to utilize early intervention in assisting the learning of all children. "Both laws emphasize the importance of high quality, scientifically-based instruction and interventions and the accountability for the progression of all students meeting grade level standards" (TEA, 2010, p. 1). RtI is "a seamless problem-solving process that enhances the learning of *all* children by using consultation and support among *all* educators-combining the unique talent of both general educators and specialists" (Ogonosky, 2008, pg. 4). School reform research and school change theory emphasize the importance of teacher buy-in and input in the change process (Sansonti & Noltemeyer, 2008). The project study can aid in successful implementation of an RtI framework at LE and possibly provide guidance for other campuses and school districts.

SECTION 4: REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This project addressed Response to Intervention (RtI) implementation by developing a guidance document including an action plan. The literature review focused on RtI background, RtI research studies, and school change theory research. Section 4 will evaluate the quality of the action research project including limitations. Reflection of the project study related to scholarship, project development, and leadership will be addressed. The project's potential impact for social change and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Quality Action Research

Creswell (2008) identified several criteria to assess the quality of an action research study. The first criterion examines if the project clearly addresses a problem that needs to be solved. The project study addresses the local problem of RtI implementation. Even though LE utilizes several components of a problem-solving RtI model during the prereferral process, there is not a formal framework in place. I developed a guidance document for RtI implementation including an action plan and timetable to address the problem.

Another criterion for evaluating the quality of an action research study examines if the action researcher collected sufficient data to help address the problem (Creswell, 2008). Data collection included a questionnaire, individual interviews, and documents including previous test scores and the current campus improvement plan. Data analysis identified components of an RtI framework used in the current prereferral process. The plan of action advanced by me was built logically from the data providing evidence of quality action research (Creswell, 2008). The guidance document for RtI implementation

I developed is based on the data collection and analysis described in Section 2. The first section of the guidance document describes the background of RtI including the definition, history, and components. The second section provides an action plan for RtI implementation describing the current status of RtI components and the next steps for implementation. Section 3 contains a glossary of RtI terms in order to develop a common vocabulary.

A quality action research study provides evidence that the plan of action contributed to the researcher's reflection as a professional (Creswell, 2008). I reflected on the data analysis and the literature review to develop an action plan for the context of the research site. I maintained a research journal and completed the survey prior to collecting data to identify bias. Respectful collaboration between action researchers and participants is another area examined to assess the quality of an action research study (Creswell). I met with participants to explain the goals of the study, voluntary participation, expectations of activities, and length of involvement. Methods for providing feedback to participants regarding data collected and member checking were implemented to facilitate collaboration. Action research enhances "the lives of participants by empowering them, changing them, or providing them with new understandings" (Creswell, 2008. p. 612). By responding to the survey and interview questions, participants were able to reflect on their understandings of an RtI framework and components that are currently being utilized on their campus. I gained insight into supports that aid in RtI implementation and to develop a plan to begin connecting research to practice.

Reporting the action research to audiences who might use the information is an important phase in evaluating a quality action study (Creswell, 2008). Upon completion of the doctoral program, the guidance document will be published and shared with participants of the study and campus administrators through a professional development seminar. Creswell (2008) suggested determining if the action research plan led to change or provide a solution that made a difference when evaluating the quality of action research. Analysis of the number of students served in Tier 2 and Tier 3 and the number of special education referrals can be used to evaluate the immediate effectiveness of the action plan. The RtI Effectiveness Survey can be administered at the end of three years to determine if the guidance document led to long-term change or provided a solution to the local program (Lujan et al., 2008).

Project Strengths

The guidance document can be implemented continually by the campus Student Support Team (SST). After implementing the action plan, the SST can administer the RtI Effectiveness Survey to observe growth in the RtI components. The results can be used to amend or enhance the guidance document and determine the next steps in RtI implementation (Lujan et al., 2008). The guidance document can be modified to include an RtI framework for other content areas and behaviors, and can be expanded to the secondary level.

The guidance document contains three sections. The first section describes the background and components of an RtI problem-solving framework. This section aids in establishing the foundational knowledge for stakeholders enhancing buy-in to the change process. The second section provides an action plan for RtI implementation, including a

timetable. The action plan is based on data collection and analysis described in Section 2. The third section contains a glossary of RtI terms to establish a common vocabulary among stakeholders. This glossary can be amended or changed as determined by the SST. The guidance document can aid in data-based decision making and intervention implementation consistently across grade levels.

This project allows for the continued input by the SST, educators, administrators, and parents. An ongoing cycle of problem identification, based on careful observation, reflection on the elements of the problem, development of a plan to address the problem, implementation of the change, and assessment of the plan's effectiveness based on careful observation can provide the basis for change (Hatch, 2002). It has the potential for ongoing professional development and establishing a unified service delivery model.

Limitations and Recommendations for Remediation

Even though the first section and the third section of the guidance document may be utilized by other campuses and districts, the action plan for implementation concentrates on facilitating change in the context of LE. The project study is not able to be generalized to other settings. The project study focused on reading and did not provide an action plan for implementation in other content areas or behavior. The action plan did not include an implementation plan for the secondary campuses. Teacher buy-in and opportunities for professional development will impact the implementation of the action plan. One possible alternative to addressing RtI implementation is to purchase a commercial RtI program that does not encourage adaptation based on contextual factors. Components of the program are plugged into existing structures without understanding

the rationale for the procedures. Contracting with a professional consultant to provide on-site development of an RtI framework is another alternative.

Scholarship

Scholarship involves a never ending journey of building knowledge by synthesizing information, collecting data, and constructing meaning from experiences. During this process, I have discovered the importance of peer-reviewed research. It was important to develop skills to critically analyze the research and determine relevant data and theories. Reflecting on the peer-reviewed research and applying the concepts to the context of my school aided in identifying the local problem, designing the data collection and analysis, and determining the project development.

Scholarship not only involves the ability to recognize relevant literature, it also includes gaining information related to the topic. During this process, I learned a vast amount about Response to Intervention. I learned about the background of RtI, including its theoretical base and events related to its development. I discovered different RtI models and key researchers in the field. I gained knowledge regarding RtI implementation by reviewing the process other schools have utilized. After conducting the literature review, I realized that even though common implementation steps occurred throughout the information, successful implementation requires applying these steps based on the context of each school.

Scholarship includes gaining the skills to search for peer-reviewed research and the development of writing skills to present findings in a coherent manner. Searching scholarly databases, including EBSCO, ProQuest, and ERIC, involved acquiring skills in utilizing search terms that resulted in relevant literature. Without these skills, saturation

of literature would have taken countless hours to achieve. Utilizing scholarly writing techniques requires the researcher to write for a specific audience while providing evidence to support their findings. These techniques were gained through peer reviews, practice, and guidance from professors.

Scholar

On my journey to becoming a scholar, I have developed competencies to gain new knowledge. I have discovered the importance of utilizing technology in my search. The ability to search scholarly databases to find relevant and vital research was invaluable in assisting in finding possible solutions to current problems. During the doctoral study process, I have acquired an expansive amount of knowledge about Response to Intervention. I developed skills in supporting my own opinions with evidence from research. Creating the action plan that can be readily implemented required application of the skills I acquired during my scholarly journey.

While reflecting on the doctoral process, I realized the struggles that I had to overcome at times. The amount of time required to complete the doctoral study was overwhelming. Time management strategies were implemented to complete the process. I had to learn to communicate through technology and develop technical writing skills. Another struggle included overcoming the feelings of isolation I sometimes felt while competing my doctoral study in an online collegial environment. Although the journey was difficult, the knowledge and skills I developed will assist me in being a lifelong learner.

Project Development and Evaluation

Development of the project required several phases. Prior to developing the action plan, research shaped the identification of the problem, types of data collected and analyzed, and objectives of the project. Problem identification included a literature review and recognition of stakeholders. The type of data collection tools implemented and findings generated were determined by the methodology selected and utilized to identify the problem. Project objectives were developed only after critical review of the findings. Integration of school change theory and RtI component implementation guided the development of the project.

Evaluation during project development and the project itself is a reiterative process. Stakeholders' perspectives and the context of the school influenced the project development. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs play a major role in the successful implementation of any change (Fullan, 2007). It was important to collect information to determine their needs and attitude toward RtI. A major factor related to context is resource allocation including personnel, funding, and materials. An additional factor related to context is administrator support. The type of project changed many times due to my lack of experience in project development, input from doctoral committee members, and findings of data collection. It was my goal to solve the identified problem by developing a readily implemented action plan that could be evaluated and revised to meet the current needs of the stakeholder.

Project Developer

While developing this project, I realized the breadth of skills needed to complete the different tasks. I was required to think critically and creatively while synthesizing a

vast amount of information including research methodologies, theories, and research studies in order to develop a project to solve a local problem. Collaboration plays a major role in project development. The importance of listening to stakeholders during project development cannot be overemphasized. The success or failure of the project depends upon their implementation.

In the beginning, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the process. As a result of the doctoral study, I developed abilities to identify the need utilizing a needs assessment and create a plan based on research. I understand the importance of identifying clear goals and objectives for evaluation purposes. I am accountable to the stakeholders for developing a project based on their needs. As a result of the doctoral study, I have developed tools to utilize in addressing other problems at my school.

Leadership and Change

When I began reflecting on the idea of leadership and my role as a teacher leader, it was necessary for me to define the characteristics. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) stated "Our definition is teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others toward improved education practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership" (p. 6). I realized teacher leadership is not just about my pedagogical competence, professionalism, or passion, being a teacher leader involves influencing change in students, teachers, and the entire school.

In order to successfully change the problem of not having a formal RtI framework, it was necessary to analyze all aspects of the change including existing RtI components, barriers, and other possible solutions. To gain a full perspective, I included

participants from a vertical reading team and two participants from special population interventionists. After reflecting on my doctoral study, a possible change in the participants and data collection method may have yielded a fuller perspective. Including all the reading teachers in the needs assessment phase by completing the survey would provided more data regarding the problem. Instead of individual interviews, conducting a focus group of the same participants included in my project study would give in-depth information without requiring a large quantity of time conducting individual interviews with each reading teacher.

Collaboration with key stakeholders is an important aspect of teacher leadership in influencing social change. It is essential to study practice and read other researchers' work as a group. The teacher leader should make their own work available for discussion and action by their colleagues (Libermann and Miller, 2007). "True change isn't just compliance with a set of directions; it involves rethinking what is done, why it is done, and how it is done" (Meredith, 2007, p. 23). While completing the project study, I was able to implement my leadership skills gained through the doctoral program at Walden University.

Practitioner

As a practitioner of research, I have created new knowledge based on direct practice and reflection. My project study helps to connect theory to practice. The project was based on knowledge gained by conducting a literature review and analyzing data. During this process, I have developed skills in facilitating collaboration, problem solving, communication, and managing diversity.

In order to continue to mature as a practitioner, it is important to identify areas where I struggled during this process. At times, it was difficult to remain focused on project objectives. As I was researching areas related to my study, I would deviate from the course of my project while reading research that interested me. I had difficulty establishing an accurate timetable for the phases of my project study. Data analysis and creating the project required a large amount of time that I did not include in my plan. By continuing to be a practitioner of research, I can not only influence my local context, but other teachers' values and beliefs

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

Development of the project highlighted the importance of developing an RtI framework within the local context. RtI has the potential to provide teachers with a large repertoire of research-based strategies by increasing collaboration between classroom teachers and educators. A unified service delivery model that does not focus on what is the cause of the student's difficulties, but on how to intervene to improve the student's quality of education would benefit all stakeholders of a school campus. This project study can be a bridge between research and practice by illustrating methods for implementing research into real world educational settings (Ogonosky, 2008; Howard, 2009; Whitten et al., 2009). By taking an inquiry stance toward teaching and assisting struggling students, RtI implementation can lead to "job-embedded teacher knowledge construction" (Dana & Yendol-Silva, 2008, p. 11). Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (2001) stated:

> A legitimate and essential purpose of professional development is the development of an inquiry stance on teaching that is critical and transformative, a stance linked not only to high standards for the learning of all students but also to social change and social justice and to the individual collective professional growth of teachers. (p.46)

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Much of the current research focuses on intervention studies investigating the effectiveness and process of instructional interventions and field studies describing the use of different models of RtI approaches in actual use. The studies have provided little guidance on how to implement and sustain an RtI framework (Denton, Vaughn, & Fletcher, 2003, Fuchs & L. Fuchs, 2006; Vaughn & L. Fuchs, 2006). Possible areas for future research include identifying the necessary readiness requirements for a particular campus or district, describing the necessary implementation phases included the activities needed to sustain RtI, and exploring the necessary steps of RtI that produce the maximum student outcomes (Sugai, Horner, Fixsen, & Blasé, 2010)

Sugai, Horner, Fixsen, and Blasé (2010) stated "An underlying necessity to RTI implementation is defining the systems level support and capacity that are needed to ensure sustainability and accurate implementation and durable outcomes" (p. 286). This project study developed an action plan for RtI implementation at LE. Other campuses could use the survey as a needs assessment to develop their own action plan utilizing the one developed for this project study as a model. Collaboration between researchers and practitioners in future research would aid in identifying supports necessary for sustainability of RtI frameworks (Galvin, 2007; Hollenbeck, 2007).

Conclusion

This project study resulted in the development of an action plan for Response to Intervention for a rural elementary school based on data collected from a survey, individual interviews, and document analysis. The findings included identifying the current level of practice in the areas of collaboration, data-based decision making, parent

involvement, professional development, and implementation monitoring. The strength of the project study is utilizing an action research model in gathering data from key stakeholders to create a solution to a local problem based on school change theory and review of relevant literature. Although its focus is limited to reading, the action plan includes a timetable for moving toward a unified service model for all students.

The transformation into a practitioner-scholar is ongoing Lieberman and Miller (2007) stated that "When leadership has scholarship as its foundation, it is more about expertise, credibility, and influence than it is about power, authority, and control" (p. 47). The doctoral study process provided insight regarding the potential teacher leaders have as agents of social change. Teacher leaders produce research based on personal practice and reflection and not due to someone else's observation and interpretation. Educators possess a responsibility to promote social change through connecting theory to practice on the quest to improving the learning of all students.

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APPENDIX A
LE Campus Improvement Plan
2009-2010

..... Elementary

Campus Improvement Plan

2009-10

The mission of the ..... Elementary school community is to help each child identify and cultivate his or her greatest potentials, and to provide a curriculum that will foster problem-solving, creative thinking skills, knowledge and the attitudes necessary to live a successful, healthy, fulfilling and informed life.

Elementary Belief Statements

1	We believe that all children can learn and deserve equal access to a full education. We believe that critical-thinking skills should be taught to enable children to resolve conflicts, make decisions, and identify and solve problems. We believe that when parents are involved in their children's education, students, teachers, and parents all benefit.

Goal 1: Eliminate Achievement Gaps
Implement strategies to maintain or increase student mastery to above 90% in reading, mathematics and science for all student groups .

Correlates with:

State Goals		
1) Performance - English	2) Performance - Mathematics	3) Performance - Science
State Objectives		
7) Student Performance	8) Instructional Techniques	
NCLB/ESEA Goals and Indicators		
3) Highly Qualified Staff		
Effective School Correlates		
1) Safe and Orderly Environment	2) Climate of High Expectations for Success	6) Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
Title I - Targeted Assistance Schools		
1) Use Resources to Help Meet Standards	3) Use Effective Methods	5) Highly Qualified Teachers
Title I - Schoolwide Programs		
3) Instructional	7) Student Transition to Elementary Programs	9) Identify and Assist with Student Difficulties

Indicator: TAKS Reading

Grade: All

Group	Current Performance ACCOUNTABILITY DATA Rate	Year	Desired Performance LONG TERM STATE OBJECTIVES Rate	Year	Desired Performance ANNUAL OBJECTIVES Rate	Year
All Students	96 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 96.8 %	2010
African American	94 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 95.2 %	2010
Economically Disadvantaged	95 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 96 %	2010
Hispanic	99 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 99.2 %	2010
White	97 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 97.6 %	2010

Indicator: TAKS Math

Grade: All

Group	Current Performance ACCOUNTABILITY DATA Rate	Year	Desired Performance LONG TERM STATE OBJECTIVES Rate	Year	Desired Performance ANNUAL OBJECTIVES Rate	Year
All Students	96 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 96.8 %	2010
African American	94 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 95.2 %	2010
Economically Disadvantaged	96 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 96.8 %	2010
Hispanic	99 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 99.2 %	2010
White	98 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 98.4 %	2010

Indicator: TAKS Writing

Grade: 4

Group	Current Performance ACCOUNTABILITY DATA Rate	Year	Desired Performance LONG TERM STATE OBJECTIVES Rate	Year	Desired Performance ANNUAL OBJECTIVES Rate	Year
All Students	89 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 91.2 %	2010
African American	78 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 82.4 %	2010
Economically Disadvantaged	86 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 88.8 %	2010
White	92 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 93.6 %	2010

Indicator: TAKS Science

Grade: 5

Group	Current Performance ACCOUNTABILITY DATA Rate	Year	Desired Performance LONG TERM STATE OBJECTIVES Rate	Year	Desired Performance ANNUAL OBJECTIVES Rate	Year
All Students	95 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 96 %	2010
African American	73 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 80 %	2010
Economically Disadvantaged	93 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 94.4 %	2010
White	99 %	2009	≥ 100 %	2014-15	≥ 99.2 %	2010

Strategies

Goal 1 - Strategy 1 Curriculum and Instruction

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009 - May 2010

Brief Description:
We will develop and implement schoolwide reform strategies that provide opportunities for ALL children to meet the State's proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement.
We will develop and implement schoolwide reform strategies that use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on research based instructional delivery system.
A needs assessment will be conducted and monitored at appropriate times in the year by gathering data and documenting a student's learning.
Fully integrate technology to enhance stucent achievement.
Use technology to diagnose and prescribe instructional needs for students.

Evaluation Benchmark:
Our objective is to meet our annual goals of 90% in every sub area of our student population on the state assessment test.
Our objective is to develop a variety of instructional options for students with special needs.
Increased use of technology, student portfolios, class schedules, Accelerated Reader test scores, CCC Progress reports. Student success data on report cards and benchmark tests. Successful completion of program and improvement in reading and math abilities.

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
Parent Support	Number of FTE's: None	None	$0.00
Library	None		$0.00
	Cost: None		

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Utilize Computer technology and other forms of technology to		X									X		

Goal 1 - Strategy 1 Curriculum and Instruction												
Activity	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**
identify strengths and weaknesses of students.													
We will continue to implement a reading program which addresses requirements set forth by NCLB requirements: *Phonics *Phonemic Awareness *Vocabulary Development *Comprehension *Fluency	Classroom teachers	X									X		
Utilize technology software (CCC, Study Island, Measuring Up E-Path) to address higher order thinking skills. Students will create products and demonstrate mastery of technology TEKS.	Computer Lab instructors	X									X		
Utilize technology resources (CCC, Saxon Phonics, Super Phonics), to provide supplemental reading and mathematics instruction in grades K-2 on a daily basis.	Computer teacher and aide, classroom teachers	X									X		
Utilize a variety of technologies to provide all special needs students with access to technology based instruction and adaptive/assistive devices (Franklin, Alpha Smarts, math/reading software and computers).		X									X		
Accelerated Reading instruction materials and strategies are used to provide intensive, targeted intervention programs for students who have been identified at-risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.	Principal	X									X		
Continue strategies modeling Best Practices research on strategies for teaching reading K-3: Using Oral-Reading Records Read Aloud and Shared Reading Guided Reading in Small Group Setting Reading teachers in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade	classroom teachers	X									X		

Goal 1 - Strategy 1 Curriculum and Instruction

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
(regular and special education) will attend Reading Academies and Reading Co-ops. Implement TAKS Writing Scoring Guide Training received at Region '. .' - October 2009													
We will continue to provide all students daily instruction in Physical Education and Fine Arts to ensure equity for ALL students in all instructional areas.	Classroom teachers	X									X		
We will continue scheduling that focuses on maximizing learning time: ninety minutes each for math and language arts daily. Thirty to forty-five minutes for integrated content (science and social studies).	,, Principal	X									X		
We will provide all students opportunities to improve Mathematics skills by implementing the following strategies outlined in the Texas Math Initiative: Provide remediation with paraprofessionals After school tutorials for at-risk students Summer school intervention to increase quality time/instruction for identified students Continue strategies using tools such as real objects, manipulatives, and technology to solve problems Monitor mathematics program with visits to the classrooms and analysis of student assessment data (AEIS, benchmarks, 9 week grade reports).	teachers, principal	X									X		
Assessment at the elementary campus will be conducted as an on-going part of the instructional program: Effectively utilize pre and post reading/math/writing benchmarks such as TPRI, TAKS results, ITBS scores Teachers select and use a variety of informal assessment instruments to monitor a student's progress teacher classroom observations checklists conferences	Classroom teachers, Principal										X		

Goal 1 - Strategy 1 Curriculum and Instruction													
Activity	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**
TAKS release test Measuring Up to the TEKS and Success Strategies for the TAKS Mathematics Standards in the Classroom Teacher made test focused on TEKS mastery													
The Professional Development and Support Teacher Self-Report will target the improvement of Academic Performance of ALL students on campus	classroom teachers, Principal	X									X		
Implement strategies to maintain or increase student mastery to above 90% in science for 5th grade students: Disaggregate TAKS Science objectives and focus on weaknesses below 90% mastery in the related TAKS objectives Attend Workshops on TEKS Based Integrated Lessons (Science/Math) in grades 1 and 2. Science curriculum materials provided (Science TEKS and TAKS information booklets, science equipment for labs) Implement strategies outlined in Science TEKS Toolkit	classroom teachers, Principal	X									X		
Fifth grade science Instruction Plan TEKS based instruction Student generated notebooks Hands on and interactive investigations Three (3) dimensional activities accompanied by two (2) dimensional TAKS worksheets Required reading written book reports of Science based AR books E-Path Electronics TAKS practice and benchmarking Professional development in Earth Science instruction After school Science Enrichment for 4th and 5th grades.		X									X		

Goal 1 - Strategy 2 Curriculum and Instruction

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009- May 2010

Brief Description:
We will develop and implement Schoolwide reform strategies that provide opportunities for ALL children to meet the State's proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement.
We will develop and implement schoolwide reform strategies that use effective methods and instructional strategies that are on research based instructional delivery system.
We will implement strategies to improve achievement : smaller class size (maintain low student-teacher ratio), Title I services, before and after school tutorials.

Evaluation Benchmark:
AEIS Indicator Report (final scores 90% or above in math, reading, science, writing) , Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores, TPRI scores.

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None	None	$0.00
	None		$0.00
	Cost: None		

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Implement incentive and award programs such as Accelerated Reading awards, Honor Roll Assemblies, Student of the Month, TAKS rewards for students who demonstrate mastery of the curriculum	Principal,Librarian, classroom teachers												
Provide supplementary reading/math instruction, materials and support to meet the needs of all the at-risk students needing help in meeting promotion standards													
Analyze all test data, AEIS indicators results, as a basis for	Principal, Counselor,												

Goal 1 - Strategy 2 Curriculum and Instuction

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
TAKS preparation plans and other instructional plans.	classroom teachers												

Goal 1 - Strategy 3 Improve student achievement

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009- May 2010

Brief Description:
Implement strategies to maintain or increase student mastery to above 90% in reading, writing, and math for all student groups.
We will develop and implement programs placements, and services that will enable each student to excel.
Teach TEK/TAKS objectives by using: a multicultural approach, individual instruction, by implementing inclusion through Title I and other programs.
Develop and strengthen programs to ensure that all children are successful and ready to learn.

Evaluation Benchmark:
TAKS scores(90% or above), observations, Iowa Test of Basic Skills levels, Texas Primary Reading Inventory.

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: 6.00	Compensatory Ed. Budget	$61,000.00
	Fully Comp. Ed Funded		
	Cost: $61,000.00		$61,000.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Provide a full day Pre-Kindergarten program for students who are at-risk educationally.	Principal, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals												
Implement strategies that impact student achievement in the areas of language and literacy such as letter knowledge and early work recognition, listening comprehension and motivation to read.	Classroom teachers, Principal,Paraprofessionals												

Goal 1: Curriculum and Instruction."""Improve the academic achievement/performance of all students."""""""

Goal 2: Elementary will continue to implement Special Education Services for qualifying students.

We will provide screening for Pre-K and Kindergarten students for speech and language services.
ARD committees will be utilized to carefully analyze student data to determine appropriate individualized educational goals, placement, and modifications for students.
We will utilize Special Education teachers as CIT committee members to provide guidance to teachers who are developing interventions for students who may eventually be referred for Special Education evaluation.

Correlates with:

State Goals		
1) Performance - English	2) Performance - Mathematics	3) Performance - Science
State Objectives		
2) Student Potential	7) Student Performance	
Effective School Correlates		
2) Climate of High Expectations for Success	6) Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress	
Title I - Targeted Assistance Schools		
4) Support Regular Education Program		

Strategies

Goal 2 - Strategy 1 All student population will achieve 100% mastery

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009- May2010

Brief Description:
Our objective is to develop a variety of instructional options and a continuum of services for students with special needs.

Our objective is to identify, evaluate and provide an individually designed, free and appropriate program for every student, in the least restrictive environment.

Evaluation Benchmark:
State Developed Alternative Assessment Scores of 90%, Classroom Progress Reports,
Appropriate IEP growth, reduction in the number of parental grievances.

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None	None	$0.00
	None		
	Cost: None		$0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Locate (CHILD FIND) identify and serve children with special needs.	Diagnostician, Principal	X									X		
Plan and implement a variety of classroom strategies to assist struggling students. Purchase supplemental materials for intervention strategies in reading and mathematics in order that all students may meet academic standards.	Campus Intervention Team, Principal	X											
Services for at-risk students will be provided through counseling and academic assistance in the libraries.	Counselor, librarian	X									X		

Goal 2 - Strategy 1 All student population will achieve 100% mastery.

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Provide differentiated instruction and other academic options for identified students that enrich curriculum and build critical and creative thinking skills. Support classroom teachers seeking training hours in Gifted Education.	classroom teachers, curriculum director	X									X		
Campus Intervention Team will identify students who need additional services that meet their learning needs in areas such as: Gifted and Talented, Special Education, Migrant, Bilingual/ESL, Title I.	Counselor, Principal, Diagnostician	X									X		
Continue to meet the educational needs of identified students by developing and implementing appropriate Individual Education Plans.	Principal	X									X		
Collaborative Planning Team Meetings held each three weeks to check progress of special education students in the least restrictive environment.	Classroom teachers, special ed teachers, principal	X									X		
Students identified as Limited English Proficient will receive multiple instructional strategies in the regular classroom. one-on-one assistance by the Title I aide/teacher, small group instruction, additional instructional time in the computer lab using high interest reading and math software.	Counselor, ESL teacher	X									X		
Limited English Proficient students will be placed in an English as a Second Language Program to be instructed by a certified ESL teacher.	ESL teacher	X									X		
Transitional programs will be initiated by the elementary campus to assist a preschooler's transition from an Early Childhood Program or a HEAD START Program to an elementary program. Notice of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten registration will be provided in Spanish and English.	Counselor, principal	X									X		

Goal 2 - Strategy 1 All student population will achieve 100% mastery.

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Orientation visit to kindergarten classrooms.													
In-service provided for faculty/staff to insure compliance in the areas of 1) referrals; 2) modifications; 3) confidentiality; 4) grading; 5) dyslexia	Principal, counselor, diagnostician	X									X		
Utilize diagnostician to ensure that effective communication exists between school personnel and families with special needs children.	Diagnostician	X									X		
Investigate and begin implementation of the three-tiered (RTI) process to provide academic support for struggling students.	Principal, counselor, CIT Team	X									X		

Goal 3: Our goal is to conduct effective communications from school to home and from home to school about school programs and children's progress.
We will recruit, develop, and retain the highest quality staff.
We will continue staff participation in mentoring new teachers and teachers new to
Elementary.
We will seek teacher input in the process of hiring perspective teachers and involve staff in problem-solving for the campus.
Elementary staff will be given opportunities to attend staff development that will support their teaching needs.

Correlates with:

State Objectives

1) Partnering Parents with Educators
2) Student Potential
3) Instructional Techniques
4) Curriculum
5) School Environment
6) School Personnel

NCLB/ESEA Goals and Indicators

4) Safe, Drug Free Learning Environments

Effective School Correlates

1) Safe and Orderly Environment

Goal 3: Create a positive campus culture among students, teachers, and parents.

Strategies

Goal 3 - Strategy 1 Improve student attendance and school discipline

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
May 2010

Brief Description:
We will offer incentives each six weeks to the grade level with the best attendance. Employ the services of a juvenile probation officer to assist with chronic absenteeism.

Evaluation Benchmark:
Yearly Attendance Report (97% for the year)
Annual ADA
Decrease in failure rate

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None None Cost: None	None	$0.00 $0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Provide attendance rewards for students with high attendance at semester end, and the end of the school year.	classroom teachers, principal										X		
Utilize the services of a juvenile probation officer to assist with chronic absenteeism.	Superintendent, Attendance Officer	X									X		
It is our goal to develop grade level incentives to improve discipline.	Principal, classroom teachers	X									X		
Teachers will establish a proactive approach to student discipline and classroom management.	Classroom teachers and principal	X									X		
Implement a Conflict-Resolution program to decrease incidences of violence among students.	Classroom teachers, counselor, principal	X									X		

Goal 3 - Strategy 1	Improve student attendance and school discipline												
Activity	**Person(s) Responsible**	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Strategies for violence prevention and intervention at the elementary campus will include a review of campus/district Crisis Response Plan, Safety drills and use of the classroom intercom system Fire evacuation, severe weather, and Crisis procedures will be set in place and practice drills will be held periodically.													
Provide resources (How To Be An Effective Teacher, Mentoring First Year Teachers) to new staff on classroom management.	Campus Principal	X									X		
Attend professional development to acquire campus-level knowledge and skills on the use of positive behavior supports (Texas Behavior Support Initiative).	CIT Team, campus principal	X									X		
Teachers and administration will establish a form of communication with parents. Guidance sessions with counselor emphasizing positive behavior and consequences.	Principal, classroom teachers, counselor	X									X		
Provide positive awards and incentives for students modeling positive behavior (student of month).	classroom teachers, staff, principal	X									X		
We will ensure that a variety of effective and timely methods and tools will be used to communicate regularly with parents, students, and community. Increase opportunities for participation through written invitations, phone calls (voice mail), E-mail.	School secretary, teachers, counselor, principal	X									X		
Active parent involvement is encouraged and supported in several ways: folders of student work sent home weekly (Pre-K-1) for parent review and comments. Staff members contact the families of students having academic or behavior problems. Documentation of contacts are recorded in a parent/involvement/contact Log.	Campus principal.counselor, faculty	X									X		
We will encourage and promote parent and community	Faculty and Staff.	X									X		

Goal 3 - Strategy 1 Improve student attendance and school discipline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Involvement opportunities in the following ways: Meet the teacher Night Boy Scouts Organizational Meeting Grandparents Breakfast 3rd grade Student Success Initiative Information Session Honor Roll Assemblies DARE Graduation (parents involved) Public School Week Open House	Counselor, principal												
Students will obtain appropriate problem solving skills. Students will maintain positive self-awareness. Implement District Crisis Management Plan and review all staff members concerning plan which places school safety high on the educational agenda.	, Principal												

Goal 3 - Strategy 2 Safe and Secure Environment for staff and Students

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009- May 2010

Brief Description:
Campus teachers and staff will continually refine their skills through diversified in-service , and staff development.

Evaluation Benchmark:
Monthly faculty meetings, agendas and sign in rosters for the academic school year 2008-2009.

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None None Cost None	None	$0.00 $0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Teachers and administrators will receive yearly professional development in the following topics: Confidentiality, Technology, Conflict Resolution and Classroom Management. Teachers will receive yearly updates on; Student Code of Conduct, Homework/Reteaching policies Grading Policies, TEKS alignment. Teachers will be evaluated using the PDAS and appropriate training will be provided in response to the needs of the teachers.	Campus principal												
We will provide support for new teachers and experienced teachers in the implementation of research based strategies that develop competent readers and writers. Reading teachers will attend ongoing training focusing on the reading process , observation and assessment, and classroom intervention	Region ` ": ESC												

Goal 3 - Strategy 2 Safe and Secure Environment for staff and Students

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Paraprofessionals who perform instructional support duties will attend training for certification in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.	Region ; ESC												
We will assign mentor teachers to beginning teachers and teachers new to the campus. Staff support will be provided for Gradebook and Curriculum Developer.	Technology Staff												
Implement a new security system which includes cameras, fences, and a new entry system. Provide visitor and staff identification.	campus principal												

Goal 3 - Strategy 3 Safe and secure environment for students and staff

Leader(s):
Marcella Young

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009 to May 2010

Brief Description:
Students will obtain appropriate problem solving skills;
Students will maintain positive self-awareness.
Implement District Crisis Management Plan and review all staff members concerning plan which places school safety high on the educational agenda.

Evaluation Benchmark:
District and Campus Crisis plan will be reviewed at monthly faculty meetings.

Resources Required:
None

FTE's Required:
Number of FTE's: None
None
Cost: None

Source of Funds:
None

Amount
$0.00
$0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Character Education Program (Character Counts) implemented. Classroom presentations on problem-solving, self-esteem and drug awareness (DARE) program. DARE program will build awareness among students of the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs and resistance to becoming involved in (TAOD).	Counselor, Principal, DARE Officer	X									X		
Students will explore and become aware of a variety of careers. Students will have beginning knowledge of career requirements and their association with the current curriculum using software programs such as Career-O-Rama and Texas C.A.R.E.S.	counselor												

Goal 3 - Strategy 4 Safe and Secure environment for staff and students

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009 to May 2010

Brief Description:
Campus teachers and staff will continually refine their skills through diversified in-service, staff development.

Evaluation Benchmark:
Monthly faculty meetings, agendas and sign - in rosters for the academic school year 2007-2008.

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None None Cost: None	None	$0.00 $0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Teachers and administrators will receive yearly professional development in the following topics: Confidentiality, technology, conflict resolution and classroom management. Teachers will receive yearly updates on: Student Code of Conduct, Homework/Reteaching Policies Grading Policies, TEKS alignment. Teachers will be evaluated using the PDAS and appropriate training will be provided in response to the needs of the teacher.	Campus Principal, curriculum coordinator	X									X		
We will provide support for new teachers and experienced teachers in the implementation of research based strategies that develop competent readers and writers. Reading teachers will attend ongoing training (Region VIII Reading Co-op through sessions focusing on the reading process, observation and assessment, and classroom intervention) .	Region ... FSC staff												

Goal 3 - Strategy 5 Effective planning and site-based decision-making

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009-May 2010

Brief Description:
The SBDM will assist, direct and support the improvement of student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs on the elementary campus.

Evaluation Benchmark:
AEIS Reports, Campus Improvement Plan Indicators

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None	None	$0.00
	None		
	Cost: None		$0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
SBDM will assist in improving campus communication within the campus and with parents and community. SBDM will assist in reviewing and revising the campus improvement plan each school year. SBDM will include a Special Education staff member on campus improvement committee to provide input into campus needs and support high expectations for ALL students. Utilize site base members for interviewing process. Hire certified staff with best preparation for all positions.	Campus SBDM and principal												
Campus level interview teams composed of core academic specialist will share in the interview process for the hiring of highly qualified teachers.	Grade level teachers												
Subject area specialist (math and reading) will assist new teachers with understanding learning styles and how learning	Principal and classroom teachers.												

Goal 3 - Strategy 5 Effective planning and site-based decision-making

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009-May 2010

Brief Description:
The SBDM will assist, direct and support the improvement of student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs on the elementary campus.

Evaluation Benchmark:
AEIS Reports, Campus Improvement Plan Indicators

Resources Required:	FTE's Required:	Source of Funds:	Amount
None	Number of FTE's: None	None	$0.00
	None		
	Cost: None		$0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
SBDM will assist in improving campus communication within the campus and with parents and community. SBDM will assist in reviewing and revising the campus improvement plan each school year. SBDM will include a Special Education staff member on campus improvement committee to provide input into campus needs and support high expectations for ALL students. Utilize site base members for interviewing process. Hire certified staff with best preparation for all positions.	Campus SBDM and principal												
Campus level interview teams composed of core academic specialist will share in the interview process for the hiring of highly qualified teachers.	Grade level teachers												
Subject area specialist (math and reading) will assist new teachers with understanding learning styles and how learning	Principal and classroom teachers.												

Goal 3 - Strategy 5	Effective planning and site-based decision-making												
Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
preferences impact the ways that students respond to teaching and learning.													

Goal 3 - Strategy 6 Improve/maintain a physically well run facility.

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
None

Brief Description:
We will continually and consistently commit resources necessary to maintain educational facilities and technologies and plan for their future improvement.

Evaluation Benchmark:
Weekly and monthly monitoring system to assess building and grounds status.

Resources Required:
None

FTE's Required:
Number of FTE's: None
None

Source of Funds:
None

Cost: None

Amount
$0.00
$0.00

Timeline

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Establish a monitoring system to assess building and grounds status. Staff submit routine maintenance needs as needed.	Custodians, Principal, Maintenance Director	X									X		
Implement FITNESSGRAM Fitness Assessment in grades 3-5.	P-E/Health instructor												

Goal 4: Member districts of the Region 8 Migrant Shared Services Arrangement will participate in effective professional development activities to ensure accurate identification and recruitment of migrant students.

As a member district of the Region 8 Migrant Shared Services Arrangement, we will coordinate with district families to facilitate Identification and Recruitment activities.

Correlates with:

State Objectives		
1) Partnering Parents with Educators	3) Dropout Prevention	7) Student Performance
NCLB/ESEA Goals and Indicators		
2) LEP will become Proficient in English		
Title I - Targeted Assistance Schools		
5) Opportunities for Professional Development	8) Coordinate and Integrate Services and Programs	

Strategies

Goal 4 - Strategy 1 Migrant Plan for Identification and Recruitment

Leader(s):

Leader Progress Report Dates:
August 2009 to May2010

Brief Description:
Elementary will participate in the Region Migrant Shared Services Arrangement professional development activities to ensure accurate identification and recruitment of migrant students.

Evaluation Benchmark:

Resources Required:
None

FTE's Required:
Number of FTE's: None
None
Cost None

Source of Funds:
None

Amount
$0.00
$0.00

Timeline

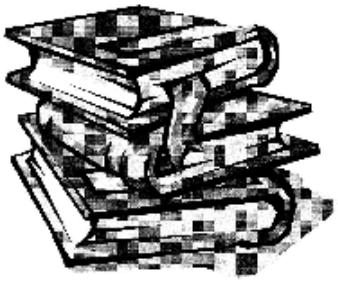
Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Participate in beginning of school year Migrant ID&R training for all SSA member districts.	LEA Migrant Coordinator and other related staff	X									X		
Survey all students at the beginning of each school year to determine possible eligibility. Survey returning migrant students at the beginning of each school year to check for summer moves.	LEA Migrant Staff												
Include survey in enrollment packets to screen new enrollees for possible eligibility.	LEA Migrant staff												
Interview families to make final eligibility determination.	LEA Recruiters/Migrant Staff												

Goal 4 - Strategy 1 Migrant Plan for Identification and Recruitment

Activity	Person(s) Responsible	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Conduct ID&R activities at spring Pre-K/Headstart Kindergarten Registrations.	LEA Recruiters/Migrant Staff												
Coordinate with the Region 8 Migrant SSA Parent Advisory Council to obtain new ideas for Identification and Recruitment Activities.	PAC Members												

APPENDIX B
Campus Intervention Team Procedures

Elementary School
Campus Intervention Team



Purpose:

- Provide appropriate academic and/or behavioral intervention for students who are experiencing difficulty.
- Provide strategies for teacher and parent use to help students succeed.
- Provide documentation of interventions and strategies.

Campus Intervention Team (CIT) Process

WHAT CAN A TEACHER DO FOR A CHILD WHO IS ACADEMICALLY OR SOCIALLY CHALLENGED?

1. Teacher identifies student with academic or behavioral problems.

2. Teacher discusses strategies informally with colleagues, administration, counselor, and/or support teachers. The teacher conferences with the parents of the child, and researches past records for previous support services, health problems, vision and hearing, etc.

IF THE STUDENT IS NOT MAKING PROGRESS, AND ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED:

3. Teacher requests assistance of Campus Intervention Team (CIT) members. The teacher requests a CIT referral packet from the school counselor. The teacher completes the referral form and one of the observation forms. The referring teacher then distributes an observation form to others who teach the child. The entire packet is then returned to the school counselor. You will be notified of the meeting time.

4. A meeting is scheduled with the referring teacher, the student's parents and relevant CIT members. The. Campus Intervention Team consists of a classroom teacher, a support teacher, an administrator and/or counselor.

5. The team meets and has a brainstorming/problem-solving session. Ideas and strategies are shared and agreed upon as appropriate to use. The team may at any point feel that it is appropriate for a team member to observe this student. If so, the observer will share any ideas or suggestions resulting from observation. Documentation of the team meeting is given to the teacher and follow-up meetings will occur.

6. The teacher may request additional assistance from the team at any time.

Linden-Kildare Elementary School
Campus Intervention Team Request Form

Teacher_____ Date_____

I am requesting additional help for

_____

The reason is ____academic ____behavior

Specific concerns are _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C
Interview Guide

Research Goal: To develop a RtI framework for LE

I appreciate you volunteering to participate in this interview. The purposes of this study it to develop a Response to Intervention framework and action plan for implementation. I would like to begin asking you questions about yourself and your teaching experience. There are no wrong or right answers to these questions. All information shared in this interviewed is confidential. In fact, a pseudonym for all participants will be used in the study. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question you are more than welcome to skip it.

As mentioned in the consent form, the interview will last approximately 20 minutes. I will be recording the interview as well as taking notes. Is this process still Ok with you? Do you have any questions or concerns before we start?

1. What is your teaching experience?
2. What is your background regarding Response to Intervention including training?
3. How do you feel about implementing a Response to Intervention framework on your campus? Please explain.
4.. Can you describe the steps you take when a student is experiencing difficulty in your class? Please explain.
5. Do you feel that you have access to research-based interventions including support in their implementation? Please explain.
6. Can you describe the activities that you need to implement RtI?
7. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you feel you would like to tell me about RtI?

Thank you for taking time to meet and be interviewed regarding your thoughts about Response to Intervention implementation. Your thoughts and opinion are very valuable to me as a researcher. I will send you a copy of the transcription for you to read. If you feel there are any changes that should be made, just let me know.

APPENDIX D

Permission to Use Survey

Subject : RE: [Fwd: RE: Survey Use Permission]

Date : Wed, Jul 01, 2009 09:07 AM CDT

From : Sandra Love <Sandra@MentoringMinds.com>

To : Leah Hamilton <leah.hamilton@waldenu.edu>

Leah,
I asked our owner, Michael Lujan, about permission to place a copy of the RtI Effectiveness Survey in the appendix of your dissertation. You do have permission to do so. We ask that you note this product is copyrighted with the appropriate documentation. I enjoyed talking to you via phone, and wish you success as you move forward with your study. Please let me know if you have any additional questions as you advance through your doctoral journey. Have a wonderful day!

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Love, Ed.D.
Educational Consultant
Mentoring Minds, LP
800-585-5258
800-838-8186 Fax
www.MentoringMinds.com

APPENDIX E

Form **QC9**

RtI Effectiveness Survey

Select the rating that best describes each indicator. (Refer to page 52 for details.)

RtI Team Functioning	No	Somewhat	Yes	Comments (Optional)
Is an RtI problem-solving team in place on the campus?				
Is scheduled time ensured for the RtI team to meet and review student needs?				
Does the team follow established, definitive procedures for responding promptly to teachers and parents?				
Does the team reflect diversity (classroom teachers, administrators, special education teachers, counselor, etc.)?				
Does the team have an effective communication system between team members, including procedures for all team members to review referrals and all pertinent information prior to RtI meetings?				
Does the RtI team work as a problem-solving team focusing on solutions for the student rather than promoting special education referrals?				
Are there written decision guidelines for determining tier placement options for students?				
Do team members demonstrate the use of steps in the Problem-Solving Method?				
Does the RtI Team Leader demonstrate effective facilitation and leadership at each team meeting?				
Does the team use quality control tools to evaluate the RtI approach, including how team members interact, how placement decisions are made procedural operations efficiency, and teacher satisfaction?				

Form
QC9

RtI Effectiveness Survey

RtI Team Functioning	No	Somewhat	Yes	Comments (Optional)
Is a master schedule in place for conducting fidelity checks (e.g., walk-throughs of high-quality instruction/interventions)?				
Is a campus resource list of available materials, programs, or personnel to support student progress?				
Universal Screening	**No**	**Somewhat**	**Yes**	**Comments (Optional)**
Is a master calendar developed for school-wide academic and behavioral screening for all students?				
Are the items on the screening instrument aligned with the curriculum content for each grade level?				
Are the resources available for screening implementation?				
Is there a plan for the administration of screening three times a year?				
Is a universal screening committee established and a process identified to manage screening results?				
Are the screening results organized to present a student profile of all students and their comparisons with each other in all appropriate subjects?				
Are screening results entered in a database so that student performance can be monitored over time?				
Are classroom-level results monitored and decisions made when teachers and/or instructional programs require more support?				

Form
QC9

RtI Effectiveness Survey

Use of Data	No	Somewhat	Yes	Comments (Optional)
Does the team analyze data using a specific process?				
Does the team display data in graphic format?				
Does the team use data for making decisions: screening, placement, movement between tiers, progress monitoring, and changes in instructional interventions?				
Does the team use agreed upon written criteria to determine if progress is being made?				
Is a data collection system established to implement systematic monitoring of student progress (e.g., CBM)?				
Are the data collection systems efficient and usable by all team members?				
Do teachers use progress monitoring data to make instructional decisions and differentiate instruction?				
Are progress monitoring results organized to provide a profile of student progress within each tier (e.g., graph of scores supplemented by student work samples)?				
Core Instructions	**No**	**Somewhat**	**Yes**	**Comments (Optional)**
Is the core instruction working for most students?				
Are the identified struggling students receiving high-quality instruction in the general education setting?				
Are teachers provided the resources needed to support learning?				

Form
QC9

RtI Effectiveness Survey

Core Instructions	No	Somewhat	Yes	Comments (Optional)
Do teachers collaborate in teams and/or at grade levels to plan high-quality, data-based instruction for students?				
Have teachers developed expertise in using an array of research-based instructional strategies?				
Delivery of Interventions	**No**	**Somewhat**	**Yes**	**Comments (Optional)**
Was ineffective core instruction ruled out prior to the student receiving interventions?				
Is a procedure used for determining which research-based interventions to use with students?				
Do team members know the criteria used for considering a practice to be research-based?				
Are academic and/or behavioral interventions linked to assessment data?				
Are sufficient support services in place for implementation of interventions?				
Is an inventory developed/available for resources on evidence-based instructional strategies to support students in reading, mathematics, and writing?				
Is the delivery of interventions implemented by personnel skilled in the intervention?				
Are interventions implemented as described in a student's intervention plan?				
Are progress monitoring measures administered frequently enough to assess the intervention and the responsiveness of the student to the intervention?				
Do interventions continue until the RtI team reaches a collaborative decision to discontinue and/or adjust the interventions?				

Form **QC9**

RtI Effectiveness Surve RtI Effectiveness Survey

Professional Development	No	Somewhat	Yes	Comments (Optional)
Is a system in place to assess the RtI professional development needs of staff?				
Is a plan in place to assess the RtI professional development needs as new staff is hired?				
Is an action plan for initial and continuing RtI professional development incorporated into the master professional development plan?				
Is a plan in place to support teachers and staff for reaching proficiency in the delivery of research -based interventions for academics and behavior?				
Is training provided to advance teacher understanding of research-based strategies?				
Is training provided to advance teaching skills for improving academic achievement using high-quality instruction?				
Are all appropriate personnel trained in the use of data and assessment to inform and instruct classroom practice?				
Do teachers receive in-class modeling and coaching to support changes in instructional practices?				
Are procedures in place for teachers to communicate a need for additional RtI support and training?				
Parent Involvement	**No**	**Somewhat**	**Yes**	**Comments**
Is there a parent notification component?				
Are parents involved at the onset of an academic and/or behavioral concern?				
Are parents encouraged by team members to be active participants in RtI meetings?				
Are parents provided with a copy of the Intervention Plan for their child?				
Do parents receive regular feedback on the progress of their child?				

Form
QC9

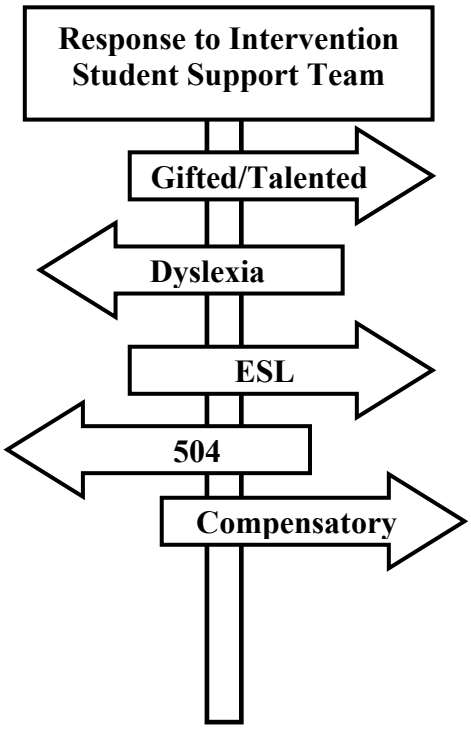
RtI Effectiveness Survey
Additional Notes

Note. *RtI Effectiveness Survey* from *Response to intervention implementation guide: Team member notebook* (p. 105-110) by M. Lujan, S. Love, and B. Collins, 2008, Tyler, TX: Mentoring Minds, L.P. Copyright 2008 by Mentoring Minds, L.P. Reprinted with permission.

APPENDIX F

Guidance for Problem Solving

A Journey to Improving the Education for ALL Students



LE Student Support Team
2010-2011

By: Leah Hamilton

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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SECTION 1: RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance in implementing an Response to Intervention framework to address the learning needs of all students at LE. Response to Intervention is "a seamless problem-solving process that enhances the learning of *all* children by using consultation and support among *all* educators-combining the unique talent of both general educators and specialists" (Ogonosky, 2008, pg. 4). This guidance document is based on a review of literature and data collected by the researcher during the doctoral study process for Walden University. The first section includes a background and description of an Response to Intervention framework, the second section includes an action plan for RtI implementation, and the third section is a glossary of commonly used RtI terms. The timetable may need to be adjusted due to doctoral study approval and RtI team input. RtI includes much of what educators already do. Some of these practices are performed in new ways in order to help all students succeed (Whitten, Esteves, & Woodrow, 2009).

Background of Response to Intervention

The Texas Education Agency (TEA)(2008) defines Response to Intervention (RtI) as" the practice of meeting the academic and behavioral needs of <u>all</u> students through a variety of services" (p. 1). RtI contains the following key elements:

- High-quality instruction and scientific research-based tiered interventions aligned with individual student need
- Frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic and/or behavioral decisions
- Application of student response data to important educational decisions (such as those regarding placement, intervention, curriculum, and instructional goals and methodologies). (TEA, 2008, pg. 1)

RtI assists educators in meeting instructional requirements of federal and state legislative mandates. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals Education with Disabilities of Improvement Act of 2004 direct schools to utilize early intervention in assisting the learning of all children. "Both laws emphasize the importance of high quality, scientifically-based instruction and interventions and the accountability for the progression of all students meeting grade level standards" (TEA, 2010, p. 1).

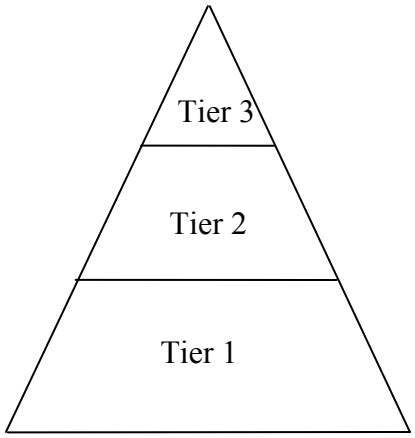
The Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Texas Education Code (TEC), and local board policy provides directives regarding the instructional needs of students that are dyslexic, gifted and talented, compensatory, at-risk, Section 504, English as a second language, and special needs. The Student Success Initiative (SSI) states all Texas students will receive instruction and support needed to be academically successful in reading and math. Districts and charter schools are required to administer early reading instruments to all K-2 students to assess reading development and comprehension to determine if students are at-risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. School districts must implement an accelerated (intensive) reading program that addresses students' reading difficulties and catch-up them up with typically performing peers (TEC §28.006, 2007).

Response to Intervention is not a new theory and is based on over 20 years of research.

> The developmental history of RTI includes significant contributions from applied behavior analysis; curriculum-based measurement; precision teaching; prereferral intervention; teacher assistance teaming; diagnostic prescriptive teaching; data-based decision making; early universal screening and intervention; behavioral and

> instructional consultations; and team-based problem solving. (Sugai, Horner, Fixsen, & Blase, 2010, p. 287-288)

In addition to addressing the instructional needs for struggling students, RtI provides a framework for addressing the instructional needs of other student populations such as. dyslexic, English language learners, Gifted and Talented, and 504 students. "It is a framework for *systematically* determining how well instruction is working and making adjustments to accelerate learning for all" (Renaissance Learning, INC., 2009, pg. 3). The benefits of RtI include "more effective instruction, increased student achievement, more appropriate LD [learning disability] identification, increased professional collaboration, and overall school improvement" (TEA, 2008, p. 1).



TIER 3 Intensive academic or behavior interventions custom-designed to target specific individual needs of students that have not been successful in Tiers 1 and 2. Approximately 5-10% of the students
TIER 2 Supplemental instruction in addition to core class instruction for students that have not been successful in Tier 1. Approximately 10-15% of the students
TIER 1 High quality core class instruction aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) including research-based instructional strategies, on-going assessment, on-going professional development, and intervention within the general classroom. Approximately 80% of students

Figure 1 Multi-tiered Framework. Adapted from "System of Intervention Pyramid," by Kentucky Department of Education, 2008, *A Guide to the Kentucky System of Interventions,* p. 5.

Table 1

RtI Activities

	Tier	Tier 2	Tier 3
Teach core academic and behavioral curricula	X	X	X
Analyze academic/behavioral instructional practices	X		
Classrooms utilize effective, high quality, research-based instructional practices in academics and behavior	X	X	X
Implement data collection plan for academics and behavior	X		
Complete universal screenings for academics and behavior	X		
Instruction directed by formative and summative assessments of academic and behavioral skills	X	X	X
Support family and community engagement	X	X	X
Individual student needs are matched with a variety of academic/behavioral interventions.		X	X
Provide professional learning opportunities for academic and behavioral instruction	X	X	X
Continue progress monitoring of academics and behavior		X	X

Note. Adapted from "System of Intervention Pyramid," by Kentucky Department of Education, 2008, *A Guide to the Kentucky System of Interventions,* p. 5

Component I: Student Support Team

The campus-based Student Support Team consists of general education and special education teachers and other personnel. It meets regularly to deal with any learning or behavioral concerns of students. The goal of the team is the early identification of struggling learners to facilitate improvement in their educational outcomes. “Before a referral for a special education evaluation, state law requires that your child be considered for all support services available to all children. These services may, but are not limited to: tutoring, remedial services, compensatory services, response to scientific research-based intervention (RtI), and other academic or behavior support services (TEA, 2010, pg. 1). Grade level teams may be utilized at Tier 1 and Student Support Team at Tiers 2 and Tier 3.

The Student Support Team has a shared understanding of available interventions and the basis on which those intervention decisions are made. The Student Support Team focuses on the student’s instructional needs. It does not diagnose impairments but identifies learning problems. Student Support Team may include the following members: principal, general education teacher(s), intervention specialist/teacher, parent, counselor, and other support staff as appropriate for student. Several different campus teams may aid in the implementation of an RtI framework including RtI Leadership Team, Grade Level Team, Student Support Team, Content Area Team, and Multidisciplinary Team (Idaho Department of Education, 2009).

Component II: Data Based Decision Making

Response to Intervention provides a framework for utilizing data efficiently by defining "what data should be considered, when, on what children, and with what resulting actions" (Renaissance Learning, p. 1). It provides a model for allocating resources where they will do the most good based on the same data. Adjustments may need to be made for schools that are already data driven. "Data is all around us, but all too often, teachers are not given the time, or tools to interpret the data" (Shores & Chester, 2009. p. 35).

Table 2.

Assessment Types

Type of Assessment	Purpose
Universal Screening	Assess all students to identify those who are not making academic or behavioral progress at expected rates.
Diagnostic	Determines what students can and cannot do academically or behaviorally.
Progress Monitoring	Determines what interventions are producing the desired effects.

Note TEA, 2008, p. 3

Universal screenings are administered three times a year to determine if a problem exists. "Progress monitoring helps teachers choose effective, targeted instructional techniques and establish goals which enable all students to advance appropriately toward attainment of state achievement standards (TEA, 2008. p.3). Reliable student performance data and data-collection systems are essential for a reliable RtI framework. The benefits of progress monitoring include:

- Accelerated learning due to appropriate instruction
- Informed instructional decisions
- Effective communication with families and other professionals about students' progress
- High expectations for students by teachers
- Appropriate special education referrals
- Documentation of student progress for accountability purposes

(TEA, 2008, p. 3).

Component III: Multitiered Instructional Model

Response to Intervention utilizes a multitiered service delivery model including layers of increasingly intensive intervention in response to student-specific needs.

> Tier 1: Teachers use high-quality core class instruction aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in which about 80% or more of the students are successful. This tier is the crucial foundation of the RtI instructional model.
>
> Tier 2: Students are identified for individual or small group intervention in addition to core class instruction. This level includes scientific research-based programs, strategies, and procedures designed and employed to supplement, enhance, and support Tier 1 activities. District-established standard protocol matches appropriate intervention strategies to specific student needs. Tier 2 addresses the needs of approximately 10–15% of the students.
>
> Tier 3: Students who have not responded adequately to Tiers 1 and 2 receive specific, custom-designed individual or small group instruction (designed using a problem-solving model) beyond the instruction in Tier 1. This level of intervention is aimed at those students who have identified difficulties academically or behaviorally. Tier 3 addresses the needs of approximately 5-10% of the students. (TEA, 2008, p. 1-2)

Response to Intervention utilizes scientific, research-based interventions accepted or reviewed by field of study peers that are experts. Rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures resulting in valid and reliable data are utilized in experimental or quasi-experimental designs of strategies, programs, or interventions (NCLB, 2001). According to the NCLB requirements, scientifically based research

> (A) Means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and

> (B) Includes research that—
> (i) Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
> (ii) Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
> (iii) Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;
> (iv) Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;
> (v) Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
> (vi) Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review. (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1411(e)(2)(C)(xi))

Due to a shift to assisting struggling students in general education from special education, roles for educators may change. "Since RtI is a whole-school instructional framework intended to improve instruction and learning for all students, all faculty and staff members share responsibility for RtI" (TEA, 2008, p. 4).

Component IV: Parent Involvement

Parents are an important part of the Response to Intervention process by providing information about their child's learning strengths, interests, and academic needs. It is essential to provide parents data regarding their child's response to instruction and interventions. Graphs and progress monitoring reports are helpful in providing a visual representation (Lujan, Love, & Collins, 2008). The LE Handbook (2009) states:

> Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavioral support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention. The implementation of Response to Intervention has the potential to have positive

> impact on the ability of school districts to meet the needs of all struggling students. (p. 6-7)

Component V: Professional Development

The most common cause of failed intervention is a lack of fidelity of implementation. Even though scientific research may indicate that an intervention model is successful, it can only be successfully implemented "if teachers are provided sufficient on-going program-specific training and agree to implement all aspects of the model as designed and as tested, and uphold that agreement" (TEA, 2008, p. 3). The validity and reliability of a Response to Intervention program depends upon a strong professional development plan (Lujan, Love, Collins, 2008). The professional development plan should be differentiated and based on each teacher's level of understanding at that time (Howard, 2009).

Component VI: Monitor Implementation

A process to evaluate the impact of an RtI framework toward accomplishing campus goals should be utilized to determine implementation effectiveness (Shapiro & Clements, 2009). The RtI Effectiveness Survey assesses the areas of RtI team performance, implementation of RtI, classroom instruction, delivery of interventions, and the intervention and is based on research related to effective RtI models (Lujan, Love, & Collins, 2008). "The purpose of this assessment tool is to document the data, analyze the results, and use the feedback to improve the effectiveness of the RtI process" (Lujan et al., p. 53).

Special Education Referral

The Individuals Education with Disabilities of Improvement Act of 2004 permits local education agencies to use RtI as one of the variety of ways to determine Learning Disabilities eligibility. "This use of RtI addresses concerns with models of LD identification that primarily rely on the use of IQ tests and performance discrepancy" (TEA, 2008, p. 4).

Secondary Programs

Currently, little research is available on the use of RtI in secondary schools. When a student is struggling, schools usually address struggling students' needs through tutoring programs. Using a RtI framework, teachers that have been trained in scientifically researched interventions would target the deficiency during tutoring. Progress monitoring would determine if the intervention is effective and adjustments could be made (TEA, 2008).

Behavioral RtI

Students' behavior can impact academics negatively and students' academics can impact behavior negatively. Utilizing a RtI framework can have a positive effect on academics and behavior. The same components are used in both academic and behavioral RtI (TEA, 2008).

RtI Implementation

When developing a plan to address needs for implementation, specific goals, methods for meeting the goals, a timeline, and progress monitoring should be included. Teacher knowledge and beliefs should be addressed through professional development.

In order to develop collegiality, stakeholders should be provided multiple participation opportunities during implementation phase. Supportive leadership can provide accountability. Involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making will help develop a shared vision. Plans for technical assistance and support including professional development, materials, technology, funding and assistance, and policy implementation should be outlined in the plan. It is essential to determine what support will be provided, how it will be provided, and who will provide it. "It is crucial for researchers, districts, and schools to consider such internal factors with regard to RtI implementation" (Sansoti & Noltemeyer, 2008, pg 61). In order to develop infrastructures for RtI, the implementation plan should be monitored and rewritten as necessary (Sansoti & Noltemeyer).

TEA has suggested several options in implementing an RtI framework and scaling-up to a secondary model over several years. One option is to begin using an RtI framework in the early grades and implement it in higher grades over several years. Another option is to focus on Tier 1 instruction the first year and add Tier 2 and Tier 3 in the next two academic years (TEA, 2008). Whitten, Esteves, and Woodrow (2009) stated:

> The goal of RTI is not to complete some 'official' version of the model. Rather, the very nature of the framework calls for meeting the unique needs of each student. Just as there is no uniform way to teach, there is no uniform way in which to administer RTI. This will be left to each school or district. (p. 8)

Implementing RtI involves the coordination of many processes among staff members (Whitten et al., 2009). Several of these procedures already exist at LE but they are not implemented consistently across grade levels. An implementation plan focusing

on the area of reading is included in Section 2. It is based on data collected by the researcher during the doctoral study process for Walden University.

SECTION 2: RtI IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

This section includes an action plan for RtI implementation in the area of reading. The steps can be modified to include other core subjects and behavior during the expansion of the RtI framework. The following steps should be completed in implementing the foundation for a multi-tiered instructional framework. The resources in the reference list provide additional information and examples to aid in developing procedures of an RtI framework.

Component I: Student Support Team

The Student Support Team has a shared understanding of options and the basis on which those intervention decisions are made. It meets regularly to deal with any learning or behavioral concerns of students. The goal of the team is the early identification of struggling learners to facilitate improvement in their educational outcomes. The Student Support Team may include the principal, general education teacher(s), intervention specialists, parent, counselor, and other support staff as appropriate for student. Full collaboration is important at every stage of RtI in order to raise student achievement (Whitten et al., 2009).

Currently, a Campus Intervention Team is utilized during the prereferral process. Teachers collaborate in grade level teams and vertical teams. Educators share information about students, but on an as needed basis. Due to the lack of teaming procedures, a consistent schedule for meetings as well as structure of the meetings does not occur. Also, a common RtI vocabulary is not used consistently (Dove & Steele, 2005).

Component 1 Action Plan

1. Identify Student Support Team membership.

2. Establish plan for communication and collaboration among stakeholders including common RtI vocabulary.

3. Establish SST procedures including roles and responsibilities, team norms, shared vision, initial core beliefs, and evaluative criteria.

4. Implement a well-defined problem-solving method to identify areas students are experiencing difficulty.

5. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan (Kansas State Department of Education, 2009; Kentucky Department of Education, 2008; Lujan et al., 2008).

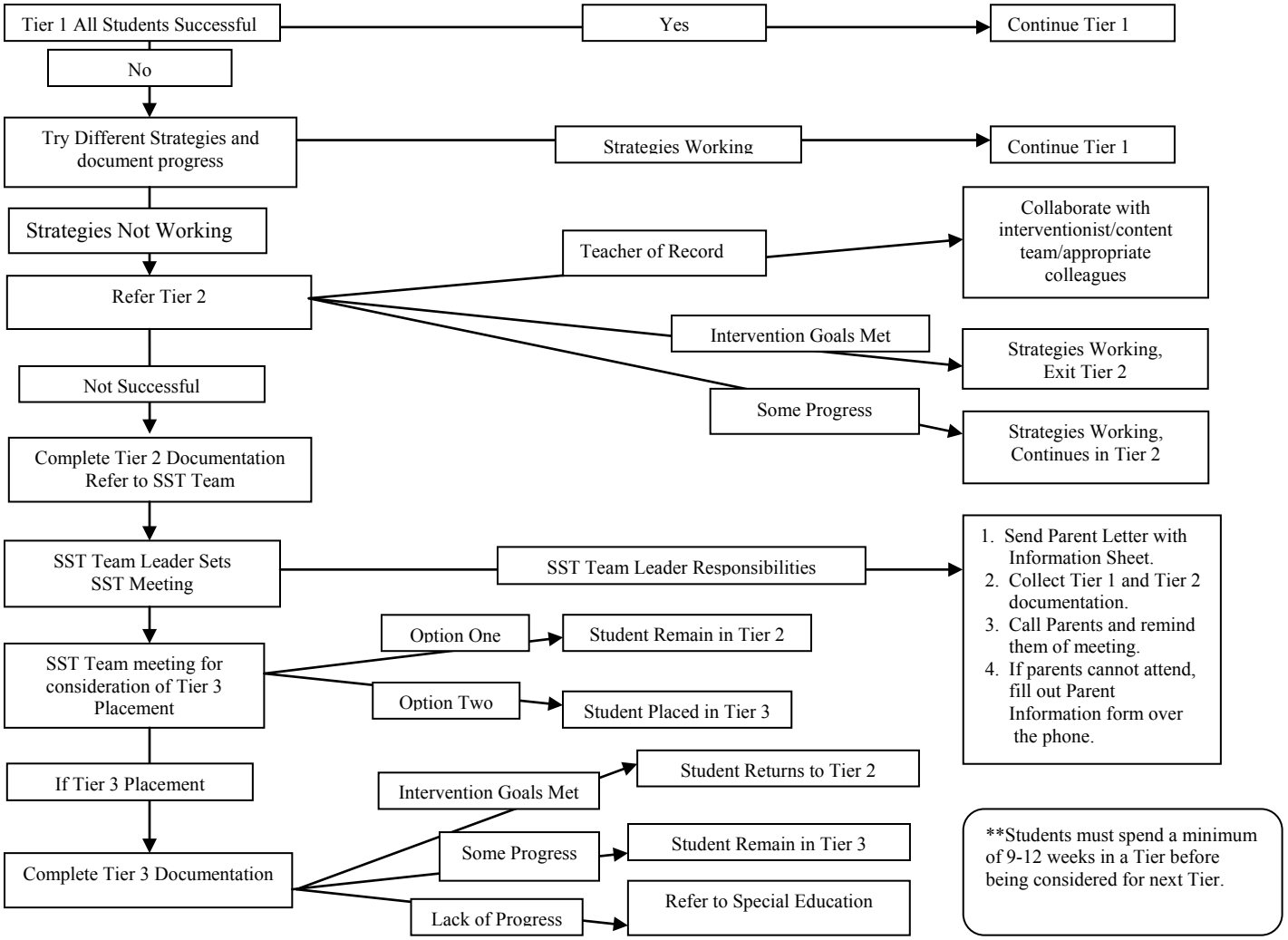


Figure 2. LE Student Success Flow chart Adapted from Aransas County ISD, 2009.

Component II: Data Based Decision Making

Data Based Decision Making is an integrated data assessment and collection system utilized to inform decisions at each tier based on student performance data and professional judgment. Universal screenings identify students whose academic performance is on target and those who may be at risk. They are usually administered three times per year, usually beginning of school, middle of school, and end of school. Progress monitoring determines extent that students benefit from classroom instruction, tiered interventions, and curriculum effectiveness.

Currently, data is gathered from various sources, but there is not a consistent analysis system in place. Interventions are not determined based on specific criteria, such as cut off scores or progress monitoring. Also, data is not reported in a uniform process across grade levels. Each grade level does administer universal screenings in reading, but it is not based on a master calendar. A consistent data analysis system and progress monitoring system is needed.

Component II Action Plan

1. Select universal screening assessment and establish school-wide universal screening schedule including minimal three times per year and determine criteria or cut points to determine at-risk students.

2. Select progress monitoring assessments and establish procedure to determine frequency of administration including how often and how many, and criteria for assessing effectiveness of intervention.

3. Select diagnostic assessments and establish decision rules for administration.

4. Identify outcome assessments such as state assessment.

5. Develop plan to monitor fidelity of assessment implementation including administering tests and scoring.

6. Develop data collection and documentation system including frequency of data collection, charting and analysis method, number of data points collected before analysis, and progress monitoring process for all students. Data collection plan should include a decision rule to determine effectiveness of intervention.

7. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan. (Kansas State Department of Education, 2009; Kentucky Department of Education, 2008; Lujan et al., 2008).

Component III: Multitiered Instructional Framework

Response to Intervention utilizes a multi-tiered service delivery model including layers of increasingly intensive intervention in response to student-specific needs. District resources are arranged to provide a unified system of services utilizing scientific, research-based interventions. Movement between tiers is fluid and based on data (Ogonosky, 2008).

Based on data collection, the core Reading instruction is appropriate for most students. Educators do not perceive themselves as experts in using a variety of research-based instructional strategies. Implementation of interventions for struggling students is linked to assessment, but not consistently across grade levels.

Additional training in intervention implementation and an inventory of available research-based interventions are needed.

Component III Action Plan

1. Provide effective behavior and academic instruction to all students based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

2. Align instructional techniques across grade levels.

3. Establish intervention implementation procedures including how interventions will be implemented, when intervention will be implemented, who will implement them, and who will monitor for implementation fidelity.

4. Develop a resource list for the general education teacher to assist in intervention implementation.

5. Establish procedures for monitoring student progress and making recommendation for interventions based on data.

6. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan (Kansas State Department of Education, 2009; Kentucky Department of Education, 2008; Lujan et al., 2008).

Component IV: Parental Involvement

Parent or guardian involvement is "consistent, organized, and meaningful two-way communication between parents and school staff regarding student progress and related to school activities" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2008, p. 32). Parents provide important information by providing information about their child's learning strengths, interests, and academic needs. Currently, parent involvement is

encouraged and parents receive regular feedback on progress. Consistent communication procedures and parent training are needed to improve parental involvement.

Component IV Action Plan

1. Develop a communication plan to inform families about academic and behavior-related instructional strategies implemented in classroom utilizing a variety of methods including classroom newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and orientations.

2. Explain universal screening and progress monitoring information and results to student's family as part of conference procedures and in intervention planning..

3. Provide parent training in assisting student learning and behavior.

4. Involve parents in developing the individual learning plan by including them in RtI meetings.

5. Provide multiple opportunities for parental input in their student's instructional program including parent-teacher conferences and invitations to RtI meetings.

6. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan. (Kansas State Department of Education, 2009; Kentucky Department of Education, 2008; Lujan et al., 2008).

Component V: Professional Development

Professional development refers to systematic experiences implemented over a period of time allowing "educators to acquire and apply knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities to achieve personal, professional, and organizational goals and to facilitate student learning" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2008, p. 32). Reading teachers have received training through the Reading Academies in research-based strategies. The PDAS system provides a procedure for reporting professional development needed. To successfully implement a RtI framework, it is necessary for teachers and staff to have opportunities to participate in focused quality professional development relating to RTI processes, procedures, and practices. Staff at the Region Education Service Center can provide large group training and content area training. Specialists and master teachers can provide modeling and coaching support in implementing research-based interventions.

Component V Action Plan

1. Provide a variety of professional development opportunities to teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals including grade level meetings, coaching, modeling, and book study.

2. Provide professional development in the following areas:

RtI overview including history and legal requirements, multi-tiered instructional framework, data based decision making, administration and scoring of assessment, fidelity of implementation, parent involvement, use of universal, supplemental, and

intensive interventions, problem-solving teams and collaborative decision-making, change in staff roles and responsibilities in a RtI system.

3. Provide awareness training and communication about RtI system to parents and community (Kansas State Department of Education, 2009; Kentucky Department of Education, 2008; Lujan et al., 2008).

Component VI Monitor Implementation

Evaluation of RtI framework implementation allows the campus to assess progress toward goal of assisting all students in learning. Fidelity of implementation focuses on implementation of the decision-making process, delivery of instruction, and validity of assessment administration. Currently, the Campus Improvement plan is reviewed annually and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills *(*TAKS) scores are analyzed. Information from additional areas could be utilized in monitoring RtI implementation.

Component VI Action Plan

1. Develop a systematic process to monitor "the consistency of universal screening instruments, progress monitoring, data-based decision making, and instructional interventions" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2008, p. 33).

2. Develop procedure to verify "reliable administration, scoring, and analysis of assessments" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2008, p. 33).

3. Monitor instruction to ensure research-based instructional practices are implemented (Kentucky Department of Education).

4. Administer RtI Effectiveness Survey to evaluate components (Lujan et al., 2008) .

5. Evaluate number of students served in Tier 2 and Tier 3 to determine effectiveness of interventions.

6. Evaluate number of special education referrals to determine effectiveness of RtI procedures (Kansas State Department of Education, 2009; Kentucky Department of Education, 2008; Lujan et al., 2008).

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RtI Framework Implementation Action Plan

Table 3

Implementation of Component I Student Success Team

Task	Timeline	Person Responsible
1. Identify Student Support Team (SST) membership.	August, 2010	Principal
2. Establish plan for communication and collaboration among stakeholders including common RtI vocabulary.	August, 2010	Principal and SST
3. Establish SST procedures including roles and responsibilities, team norms, shared vision, initial core beliefs, and evaluative criteria .	Aug./Sept., 2010	SST
4. Implement a well-defined problem-solving method to identify areas students are experiencing difficulty .	Aug./Sept. 2010	SST
5. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan.	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams

Table 4

Implementation of Component II Data Based Decision Making

Task	Timeline	Person Responsible
1. Select universal screening assessment and establish school-wide universal screening schedule including minimal three times per year and determine criteria or cut points to determine at-risk students .	Aug./Sept.. 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
2. Select progress monitoring assessments and establish procedure to determine frequency of administration including how often and how many, and criteria for assessing effectiveness of intervention.	Fall, 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
3. Select diagnostic assessments and establish decision rules for administration .	Fall, 2010	BLT/Interventionists/ Vertical Team
4. Identify outcome assessments such as state assessment.	Aug./Sept. 2010	BLT/Interventionists/ Vertical Content Team
5. Develop plan to monitor fidelity of assessment implementation including administering tests and scoring.	Fall, 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
6. Develop data collection and documentation system including frequency of data collection, charting and analysis method, number of data points collected before analysis, and progress monitoring process for all students. Data collection plan should include a decision rule to determine effectiveness of intervention.	Fall, 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams

Table 5

Implementation of Component III Multi-tier instruction framework

Tasks	Timeline	Person Responsible
1. Provide effective behavior and academic instruction to all students based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.	2010-2011	Faculty and Staff
2. Align instructional techniques across grade levels.	Sept./Oct 2010.	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
3. Establish intervention implementation procedures including how interventions will be implemented, when intervention will be implemented, who will implement them, and who will monitor for implementation fidelity	Sept./Oct 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
4. Develop a resource list for the general education teacher to assist in intervention implementation.	Aug./Sept. 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
5. Establish procedures for monitoring student progress and making recommendation for interventions based on data.	Aug./Sept. 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
6. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan.	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams

Table 6

Implementation of Component IV Parent Involvement

Tasks	Timeline	Person Responsible
1. Develop a communication plan to inform families about academic and behavior-related instructional strategies implemented in classroom utilizing a variety of methods including classroom newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and orientations .	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
2. Explain universal screening and progress monitoring information and results to student's family as part of conference procedures and in intervention planning	2010-2011	SST
3. Provide parent training to support families in assisting student learning and behavior at home.	Fall, 2010	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
4. Involve parents in developing the individual learning plan by including them in RtI meetings.	2010-2011	SST``
5. Provide multiple opportunities for parental input in their student's instructional program including parent-teacher conferences and invitations to RtI meetings. .	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
6. Plan professional development opportunities to support implementation of action plan.	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams

Table7

Implementation of Component V Professional Development

Tasks	Timeline	Person Responsible
1. Provide a variety of professional development opportunities to teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals including grade level meetings, coaching, modeling, and book study. .	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams
2. Provide professional development in the following areas: RtI overview including history and legal requirements, multi-tiered instructional framework, data based decision making, administration and scoring of assessment, fidelity of implementation, parent involvement, use of universal, supplemental, and intensive interventions, problem-solving teams and collaborative decision-making, change in staff roles and responsibilities in a RtI system. Each topic should be addressed in one session.	2010-2011	SST, Grade Level Teams, and Vertical Teams Education Service Center Consultant can provide training at no cost.
3. Provide awareness training and communication about RtI system to parents and community .	Fall, 2010	SST

Table 8

Implementation of Component VI Monitor Implementation

Tasks	Timeline	Person Responsible
1. Develop a systematic process to monitor the consistency of universal screening instruments, progress monitoring, data-based decision making, and instructional interventions.	Fall, 2010	SST
2. Develop procedure to verify reliable administration, scoring, and analysis of assessments.	Fall, 2010	SST
3. Monitor instruction to ensure research-based instructional practices are implemented.	2010-2011	SST
4. Administer RtI Effectiveness Survey to evaluate components (Lujan, Love, & Collins, 2008).	Dec., 2010/May, 2011	SST
5. Evaluate number of students served in Tier 2 and Tier 3 to determine effectiveness of interventions.	Dec., 2010/May, 2011	SST
6. Evaluate number of special education referrals to determine effectiveness of RtI procedures.	Dec., 2010/May, 2011	SST

Table 9

Professional Development Topics

RtI Overview including history and legal requirements This topic should provide a brief description of RtI including definition, major components, related laws, and advantages of implementing the RtI process.
Multitiered instructional framework This topic should provide a more in-depth description of each Tier including Assessments utilized, interventions provided, parent involvement, and staff roles .
Problem-solving process/data-based decision-making This topic should provide an in-depth description of the different types of data including universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic. The problem-solving process including campus procedures should be explained.
Administration and scoring assessment This topic should address any assessment that is administered including procedures, scoring, and test interpretation. These sessions should be targeted at specific grade levels and subject content.
Fidelity of implementation This session should define implementation fidelity, identify possible barriers, and identify fidelity procedures.
Parent involvement This topic should address importance of parents involvement, strategies for parental involvement, and parent communication plan.
Use of universal, supplemental, and intensive interventions This topic should discuss the different levels of interventions and provided participants with an opportunity to identify interventions available on their campus.

SECTION III: GLOSSARY OF RtI TERMS

Accommodation: Changes in how students access information and demonstrate learning that does not change the expectations for performance or change the construct that is being measured (Lujan et al., 2008).

Aimline: The line on a graph that represents the expected student growth over time (Lujan et al., 2008).

Baseline data: The data collected before the initiation of an invention that is compared with data collected during or after intervention implementation (Lujan et al., 2008).

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA): An assessment used to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of a student based on the goals of instruction. It does not compare students to other students (Lujan et al., 2008).

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM): A probe used to identify student levels of proficiency in specific learning areas (Lujan et al., 2008).

Cut Point: The proficiency level used to identify students who need academic or behavioral interventions (Lujan et al., 2008).

Data Points: The points on a graph that represent student achievement at a specific time (Lujan et al., 2008).

Data-Based/Data-Driven decision making: A process that involves collecting, analyzing, and summarizing information to guide development, implementation, and evaluation of an action. Utilizing data is critical in determining individual student responsiveness to instruction(Lujan et al., 2008).

Diagnostics: Assessments that determine what students can or cannot do successfully in academic and behavioral areas (TEA, 2008).

Discrepancy Model: The method of identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability based on a severe discrepancy between scores on a norm-referenced intelligence test and a norm-referenced achievement test in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or mathematical reasoning (Lujan et al., 2008).

Fidelity of implementation: Monitoring measures to ensure interventions are implemented as intended and consistently (Lujan et al., 2008).

High-quality instruction or intervention: Instruction or intervention that has been shown through scientific research to result in high learning rates for most students (Lujan et al., 2008).

Intervention: A change in the method or degree of instruction a student receives with the goal of improving performance and achieving progress based on the academic or behavioral needs of the student (Lujan et al., 2008).

Intervention plan: A specific plan to improve the academic or behavioral performance of a student including support and interventions (Lujan et al., 2008.

Intervention services: Additional assistance provided to a student to improve academic or behavioral student performance such as Dyslexia, 504, and English Language Learners (Lujan et al., 2008).

Prereferral Process: Process implemented to provide interventions to a struggling student prior to referring for a special education evaluation. This process usually does not include frequent progress monitoring or examination of the quality of general education instruction received by the student (Cortiella, 2006).

Probes: Brief classroom-based assessments used for progress monitoring (Lujan et al., 2008).

Problem Solving Model: Response to Intervention model that includes a behavioral definition of the problem, collection of baseline data, hypothesized reason for the problem, explicit goal setting, development of an intervention plan, evidence of fidelity of treatment implementation, data indicating student responsiveness to treatment, and comparison of student performance to baseline. If the student is unresponsive, the team may make a referral for an eligibility evaluation. Multidisciplinary teams that at least include the principal, school psychologist, special education teacher, and classroom teacher conduct these activities (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

Progress Monitoring: A scientifically-based practice that measure ongoing student progress to determine the effectiveness of the intervention plan and make adjustments as needed (Lujan et al., 2008).

Response to Intervention: This is a method of academic intervention design to provide early assistance to children who are performing poorly. *The RtI is a* process of "(1) providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs, and (2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to (3) make important educational decision" (Batsche, et al., 2006, p. 5)

Standard Treatment Protocol Model: Response to Intervention model focusing on the use of the same empirically validated treatment for all children with similar difficulties in a given area such as reading. This approach aids in screening out students who may have difficulties due to inadequate prior instruction (Fuchs, et al., 2003). The process and content are designed so that students receive intensive supplemental instruction with increased time and smaller group size. The student is considered disability-free and returns to the classroom if response to treatment is successful (Graner, Faggella-Luby, & Fritschmann, 2005).

Student Support Team: A group of education who collaborate regularly about students who did not meet cut points for the universal screening and are receiving interventions based on a RtI framework (Lujan et al., 2008).

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS): The Texas state assessment of the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills* that is administered beginning at third grade (TEA, 2004).

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): The state mandated curriculum specifically designed to help students make progress in reading by emphasizing the knowledge and skills most critical for student learning (TEA, 2004).

Tier 1: The level of RtI model that includes the core instructional curriculum and interventions that take place in the regular classroom (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Tier 2: The level of RtI model that includes core instruction in the general classroom and supplemental instruction by an interventionist. It requires more intensive intervention and progress monitoring (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Tier 3: The level of RtI model that includes core instruction and intensive resources including special education services (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Universal screening: Assessments administered to all students to identify those who are not making academic or behavioral progress at expected rates (TEA, 2008, p. 3),

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