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The Key Components of a Highly Effective Title I Reading Program

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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George Spalaris

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2016

Abstract

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by

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MA, Wilmington University, 1997

BS, University of Pittsburgh, 1990

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

In a suburban school district in the northeastern United States, 10% to 15% of students at an elementary school received Title I reading services resulting in a low performing school designation. The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to complete a process-based evaluation identifying key instructional components of a high performing Title I reading program. Using data-based decision making theory as the conceptual framework, the goal of this study was to examine key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in a school consistently scoring in the 90th percentile or higher on the state reading test. Data collection occurred by observing 5 Title I reading classrooms to identify curricular and instructional components used in the delivery of Title I services, followed by in-depth interviews conducted with the 5 classroom teachers in Grades 1 through 4. The school's principal and the district's federal program coordinator were interviewed to gain perspectives about program outcomes. Archival data were reviewed to determine program strength through standardized student achievement scores. The responsive interviewing model was used for data analysis followed by the inductive and interpretive approach to identify categories and 6 themes: assessment, cooperative learning, staffing of a state-certified reading specialist, availability of leveled readers, management of student grouping and differentiated instruction, and delivery of curriculum aligned with Common Core Standards. Findings identified curriculum changes necessary for a successful Title I reading program. The resulting project was a presentation for district officials to adopt an effective reading program model. This study contributes to positive social change through implementation of course design leading to local student retention and higher reading achievement scores.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my parents, Nick and Dolly Spalaris, who have been my biggest fans during every minute of my life. It was through their sacrifice, encouragement, and love that I became the educator that I am today. Often, my parents tell me how proud they are of my efforts and who I have become. In actuality, it is I who am so very proud to call them the most influential people in my life.

This project study is also dedicated to my loving, kind, beautiful, and precious daughters, Brianna, Emily, and Allison. From the first day I started at Walden University, they have always supported me, sometimes through words of encouragement while at other times, keeping the house quiet enough so that I could study and write in my own little library upstairs. I thank God for these three wonderful blessings in my life, for without your love, this journey would have never taken flight. I love you so very, very much.

To my sister Nikki, you and I are truly meant to be siblings. You were my first friend, and more importantly, you are my best friend. Your love is one of my greatest blessings, and my achievement is largely in part to your constant strength. I am so proud of the educator you have become. It is so very fitting and well deserved.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

In 2002, President Bush signed No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) into law. The law's purpose was twofold: to ensure that all children in the United States received a high-quality education and to close the achievement gap between children who typically performed well in school and those who did not. Children performing poorly in school historically have (a) been from minority racial and ethnic groups, (b) had disabilities, (c) lived in poverty, or (d) not been native English speakers (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). NCLB provided more than $1 billion per year to help children learn to read through the Reading First program, which was designed to ensure that all children learn to read on grade level by the third grade. The Reading First program provided financial assistance to states and many school districts to support high-quality reading programs based on scientific data (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). Specific to this qualitative case study, NCLB was important; however, locally, many students were not meeting expected reading levels leading up to the June 2014 deadline. By this deadline, 100% of students within the Title I program were required to read at current grade level. In December 2015, Congress passed and President Obama approved the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015). ESSA (2015), a bipartisan measure, reauthorized the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965), the nation's longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students (ESSA, 2015).

By June 2014, Congress had been unable to act on a revision to NCLB for school districts that failed to meet the 100% proficiency expectation (U.S. Department of

Education, 2014a). Because of failing to meet the 100% proficiency expectation by June 2014, school districts around the country were permitted to apply for waivers to the mandates of NCLB. Guidelines for states interested in applying for waivers were established by the U.S. Department of Education. As of June 2014, 46 states and the District of Columbia had filed for waivers releasing them from some provisions of NCLB, including the requirement that all students must have been proficient in reading and math by June 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a). Under such waivers, states must have adopted college- and career-ready standards for reading in Grades 1 through 10, focused attention to the most troubled schools, and created guidelines for teacher evaluation based, in part, on student performance (House, 2013). Additionally, states were encouraged to implement plans with clear goals, mid-course corrections, and consequences for failure to make needed progress regarding student achievement (Rich, 2012). In a review of state waiver applications, nearly half of the states applying for waivers used growth in student test scores as a criterion for 50% of a teacher's annual overall evaluation (Ayers & Owen, 2012).

With the initiation and expectations of NCLB, and now with states such as Pennsylvania that have replaced NCLB with the ESSA via waiver (Burke, 2012), school districts across the country were expected to use data from state and local assessments to determine particular needs in relation to student achievement in reading. Educators nationwide were expected to utilize instructional practices and resources that helped students meet required grade-level reading proficiencies. School district central office administrators and building principals used data from Pennsylvania's standardized

assessment, known as the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), to identify areas in which students need additional educational materials and modified instructional delivery.

In a suburban school district in the northeastern part of the United States, an elementary school had received attention as a low performing school because 10% to 15% of the students qualified to receive Title I reading services. In this school, like many of its counterparts across the country, there was an achievement gap in the academic performance between students who are of a low socioeconomic status (i.e., students who received Title I services) and those from a higher socioeconomic status (i.e., students who did not receive Title I services; U.S. Department of Education, 2011a). Educators attempted to close the reading achievement gaps, which became clear on standardized assessments, between the various socioeconomic groups (Appendix J). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2011b), focus on improving reading proficiency for Title I students has led to more targeted interventions; however, the local Title I reading program had not completely closed the achievement gap, which was expected since the inception of NCLB. For example, a study conducted by the Center for Education Statistics indicated that Title I students trailed their non-Title I counterparts by an average of 20 test points on the National Assessment of Education Progress reading assessment in the elementary grades (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012). This 20-point difference is the equivalent of approximately two grade levels (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012).

Improving reading proficiency for Title I students has been a concern on the national level. Children of lower socioeconomic status who were reading below grade

level by the third grade were 2 to 3 times more likely to drop out of school as compared to those who had never been socioeconomically disadvantaged (Hernandez, 2011). Hernandez (2011) stated that students' inabilities to read on grade level were the result of environmental aspects of the opportunities available to lower socioeconomic students compared with students who were not socioeconomically disadvantaged. However, Sparks (2011) concluded that lower socioeconomic students, whose parents provided engaging learning environments in the home, did not start with the same academic readiness gaps seen among poor children in general (Sparks, 2011).

Factors such as, but not limited to, student tracking, negative stereotyping, peer pressure, and test bias tended to lead to the achievement gaps between Title I and non-Title I students (Viadero, 2013). Schools across the country enacted a large number of strategies to close these achievement gaps. Reform programs included reducing class size, creating smaller schools, expanding early-childhood programs, raising academic standards, improving the quality of teachers provided to lower socioeconomic students, and encouraging such students to participate in higher level academic courses (Hernandez, 2011). The local school had attempted to address similar reform efforts for its Title I reading program. The successes and drawbacks of these reform efforts were evident in the problem on the local level.

Definition of the Problem

In a large suburban school in the northeastern United States, Title I students were not performing as well as non-Title I students in reading on the state standardized assessment. Figure 1 describes the difference between Title 1 and non-Title 1student

performance levels (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDOE], 2012a). Figure 1 identifies how Title I students in Grades 3 and 4 were performing lower than their non-Title I peers on the state standardized reading assessment. The percentages of Title I students were higher in the categories of Basic and Below Basic, both of which identify students who are meeting expected grade level proficiency status in reading.

County	District	Grade	Group	% Advanced Reading	% Proficient Reading	% Basic Reading	% Below Basic Reading
Anywhere	Anywhere School District	3	All Students	39.7	49.7	5.3	5.3
Anywhere	Anywhere School District	3	Econ. Disadv./Title I Students	30.8	51.9	7.7	9.6
Anywhere	Anywhere School District	4	All Students	39.1	50.7	7.6	2.6
Anywhere	Anywhere School District	4	Econ. Disadv./Title I Students	27.9	55.8	14.0	2.3
					=proficient		=not proficient

Figure 1. 2012 PSSA reading district proficiency results by grade level.

Students receiving Title I services were identified through multiple criteria, including standardized assessments and socioeconomic status, as needing extra support with their reading skills. The disparity between the reading proficiency level of Title I and non-Title I students was reflected in the school district's exams. The local problem of Title I students not meeting expected reading proficiencies reflected the larger picture of a national achievement gap in reading between Title I and non-Title I students. From 2002 to 2012, students in a local school district's Title I program were meeting and exceeding national performance indicators in reading instruction (PDOE, 2012a).

For all students in the local school, the average reading proficiency score on the annual Pennsylvania State assessment was 86%, which was 5% above the national proficiency expectations (PDOE, 2012b). Since the inception of the PSSA exams, students in the local school district routinely scored between 10% to 45% higher than the state average on an annual basis. Various remedial reading programs were integrated by

reading specialists into the K-12 curriculum to improve the performance of students who were not meeting reading proficiency expectations (Helf & Cooke, 2011). However, as the proficiency expectations were raised to 100% by the end of the 2013-2014 academic year (AY), additional personnel, instructional resources, and time were thought to be needed to close the gap between students who are proficient in reading and those who were not (Bempechat, 2008). Despite these attempts to close the gap, the problem persisted as additional students were identified as *not proficient* on the annual standardized assessment (Fullan, 2009). Students who were deemed *not proficient* were found in the disaggregated groups (i.e., the special education population, English as a Second Language [ESL] students, etc.) who routinely struggled to meet proficiency levels for a variety of reasons.

Due to the high percentage of students in the disaggregated groups who were not reading on grade level, reading teachers were responsible for analyzing specific levels of student work related to literacy skills in accordance with instructional grouping and strategies used for different types of learners (Stichter, Stormont, & Lewis, 2009). Classroom teachers incorporated the practice of independent reading (Sanden, 2012). Moreover, the problem of helping learners with special needs meet expected proficiency levels not only impacted the students who were struggling with reading instruction, but also the teachers who provided such instruction. Research showed that some students managed to master naming speed and phonological awareness quite easily while others were unable to grasp reading concepts without intense intervention and additional instructional time (Kirby, Georgiou, Martinussen, & Parrila, 2010).

When students felt confident about their own literacy, not only did they learn more effectively in their discipline, but they also used those skills to expand their knowledge to tangent subjects (Santamaria, Taylor, Mark, Keene, & Van Der Mandele, 2010). Moreover, students were afforded opportunities to assimilate new textual information with their existing background knowledge and prior experiences in order to expand their schema (Fisher & Frey, 2012). Developing instructional strategies to engage the students in learning and to think critically enhanced their understanding of course content. Instructional strategies included asking higher level thinking questions with the deliberate teaching of graphic organizers to help students structure their understanding about literature (VanTassel-Baska, Bracken, Feng, & Brown, 2009). Students who struggled with literacy were more likely to require intervention and explicit instruction on how to problem solve when reading for meaning and comprehension (Zimmerman, 2012).

Guided reading activities tended to afford the student extensive structured practice when reading for meaning while building fluency and comprehension skills (Hedin, Mason, & Gaffney, 2011). Allor and Chard (2011) stated that the relationship between fluency and comprehension was causal and that many students struggled to comprehend text because they struggled to identify specific words. Additionally, research showed that providing direct instruction in addition to other reading interventions helped students better understand what they read, communicate with others about what they read, and apply what they read (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011).

Despite the fiscal assistance provided by the federal government via Title I, the local district had not been able to achieve a 100% reading proficiency rate for all learners. Within the district's Title I reading classrooms, emphasis was placed on developmental factors such as phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. The purpose of this study was to examine the key instructional components of a high performing Title I reading program. Doing so led to the production of a model of an effective reading program, which could be replicated in Title I schools nationwide.

In this case study, I sought to understand the components of a highly performing Title I reading program in a northeastern school district that had been nationally recognized as a school of excellence. The information obtained identified prominent, research-based practices specific to instruction that proved successful to having Title I students meet grade-level proficiency levels on annual standardized assessments. Additionally, I explained how the research-based practices could be replicated in a local school in order to promote reading proficiency amongst its Title I student population.

Rationale

In the following sections, I explain why I chose to conduct a process-based evaluation of a highly effective Title I reading program. The focus was to determine what the school was doing instructionally that resulted in the academic success of its Title I student population. I also describe the importance of the problem on national, state, and local levels. Additionally, this study reviewed the programs and processes that were being utilized to remedy the problem.

Evidence of the Problem at the National Level

Since 2001, federal performance-based benchmarks measured students' reading proficiencies in Grades 3 through 11. Each year, the benchmark had increased for the overall percentage of students required to meet this expectation. Schools that did not meet yearly benchmarks faced penal measures including, but not limited to, allowing students to transfer to a school that was performing satisfactorily in relation to the benchmarks, adopting new curriculum, and/or replacing school staff until corrective action is made (PDOE, 2013f). Conversely, Ladnier-Hicks, McNeese, and Johnson (2010) claimed that reading achievement is likely to remain the same or decrease following a curriculum change. Teachers worked to develop student-centered active pedagogy and take time to align content, assessment, and instruction so that future instruction built on what students already know (Mascolo, 2009).

In addition to having established, national benchmarks, curricula were used to develop a shared language to use in the classroom as well as shared expectations for outcomes (Peck, 2010). One study revealed the negative consequences of high stakes standardized testing on Title I reading classes, which included the emotional toll faced by students who were placed in remedial reading courses, while also establishing the positive outcomes of a supportive curriculum through an engaging Title I reading program (Donalson, 2009). Moreover, other variables such as school- and teacher-specific characteristics were attributed to promoting students' reading skills, which led to higher student achievement and self-efficacy (Stichter, Stormont, Lewis, & Schultz, 2009).

According to Sunderman (2008), the public education community was critical about the fact that school improvement was determined by measuring student achievement through standardized tests. Such criticism emphasized the fact that when school districts attempt to achieve mandated adequate yearly progress (AYP), they were likely to narrow curriculum, diminish the importance of higher order learning, and discourage implementation of fundamental improvements (Sunderman, 2008).

In fiscal year 2013, over $13 billion of tax revenue was dedicated to Title I remediation programs to help improve student aptitude with the expectation that all children perform at appropriate developmental levels (Delisle & McCann, 2013). Because of the recent recession, educational budgets continued to be downsized on the federal, state, and local levels. State and local school district leaders faced unprecedented accountability as they determined which changes helped meet the needs of every learner. Whether it was needed changes to the quality and differentiation in the curriculum, encouraging performance-based contracts to educators, or providing supplemental remediation services through privatized agencies, public school districts continued to search for the right combination of high-quality instructional programming and responsible economic management (Miller, Hess, & Brown, 2012).

Ensuring that all students in a school met expected proficiency level was a primary responsibility of everyday leadership (Stullich, Eisner, & McCrary, 2007), and Marzano (2003) concluded that such leadership could be the single most important aspect of a school's approach to resolving achievement difficulties. The role of the school principal had undergone significant transformation during the past decade (Marzano,

2001). At the forefront of the change had been an unprecedented emphasis on student achievement and the associated accountability brought forth from NCLB (Lee & Reeves, 2012). Student achievement has always been of importance to all school leaders; however, today's principals have constantly defined their primary responsibility as that of a school's instructional leader (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). Similar to past generations of school leaders, the building principal had also assumed the responsibilities of facilities manager, public relations director, and business operator among others. Because student achievement is measured in terms of performance on standardized state assessments, the decisions made by the school principal have been defined by the academic needs of students and the professional needs of teachers. Today's instructional leaders often strive to encourage the development of a community of practice within a school that enabled all of the stakeholders to have a certain level of ownership in the educational process. The instructional leader has allowed staff members, parents, community members, and students the opportunity to envision, discuss, develop, implement, and assess the many facets of implementing a highly effective Title I reading program within the school district. Through the collaborative process, via the teachers' collective bargaining agreement and parents' entitlement to input in the Title I program, the aforementioned individuals are all established stakeholders. Administrators and educators assessed various Title I programs that attempted to increase student achievement in reading. Furthermore, administrators utilized these data to provide teachers with the needed training to ensure that diverse learners were meeting mandated achievement levels. Classroom teachers and the reading specialist were encouraged to reference this data to

make informed decisions and monitor the progress of their students in a manner that was measurable and accurate.

Evidence of the Problem at the State Level

The state where the study took place requested a waiver from NCLB, which was approved on August 20, 2013 (PDOE, 2013a). Under the waiver, the state adopted the Student Success Act (SSA, 2013). Under the SSA, the state focused on the following three areas:

- Had students ready for careers or college through the use of high-quality assessments.
- Developed recognition and accountability standards for all public schools by the development of a school performance profile that provided a comprehensive overview of multiple measures of student achievement, thus abolishing AYP.
- Improved and supported effective teachers and principals via a new educator evaluator system, which had gone into effect for teachers in 2013-2014 AY and principals in 2014-2015 AY (PDOE, 2013b).

For Title I schools under the state's waiver, each received a federal designation of Priority, Focus, or Reward based upon the following three yearly measurable objectives:

- Student participation on the PSSA and Keystone Exams standardized assessments.
- Student graduation or attendance rate.

- Reducing the number of all students who score below proficiency levels on the PSSA and Keystone Exams by 50% over a six-year period (PDOE, 2013c).

For Title I schools designated as Priority or Focus, each had access to intervention and support services from PDOE to assist in improving student achievement. Regardless of designation, Hall (2013) concluded that it was critical that all schools, irrespective of performance, had the incentive to improve and the support to do so.

Under the SSA, alternative methods were developed and discussed that enabled states to have accountability measures in place for student academic achievement and growth, while establishing a more holistic means of assessing every student. One such alternative was designed to assess student progress through multiple measures including performance assessments and student continuation in school (PDOE, 2013a). Such methods also assessed the progress of ESL students and students with disabilities based on the professional testing standards for yearly academic growth and applied the gains of these students throughout their entire school careers as compared to achievement within a given timeframe (Sunderman, 2008).

An effort to promote ambitious instruction led to reduced standards of success in many states (Cohen, Moffitt, & Goldin, 2007). For states not functioning under the tenet of SSA, schools that did not meet the expected annual federal academic thresholds risked losing funding for Title I reading programs that supplemented the existing curriculum. The mandates of NCLB also posed a threat to the entire school population as a state could potentially take over a struggling school. If the state does take over a school, it could lead

to the dismissal of teachers and administrators as well as jeopardize the overall enrollment of the school as all students could transfer to a nearby higher-performing school within or outside of the local school district. There are multiple factors that contributed to the problem of schools not meeting annual performance benchmarks, among which were the timely requirements posed by federal and state guidelines, the differentiating growth of a disaggregated population of students (e.g., lower socioeconomic status, race, learning disabled, migrant, etc.), and dwindling federal, state, and local funds to support various educational programming (Weinstein, Stiefel, Schwartz, & Chalico, 2009). My project study addressed this problem by researching the components of a highly effective Title I reading programs specific to instruction.

In August 2013, the PDOE's request for a waiver from NCLB was approved by the U.S. Department of Education (PDOE, 2013a). Through this waiver and the adoption of the SSA, the state assumed a new accountability system. Instead of Title I schools being deemed as making or not making AYP, under the new accountability system, they were designated as Priority, Focused, or Reward (PDOE, 2013b). In 2013, PDOE recognized Reward schools and provided intervention and support services for Focus and Priority schools. PDOE's new accountability system focused on the following four annual measureable objectives:

- Test Participation: To meet this goal, a school must achieve 95% participation rate on the PSSA exams.

- Graduation Rate: A school must achieve an 85% graduation rate, or if a graduation rate is not applicable, the school must meet the target of 90% attendance rate or improvement over the prior year.
- Closing the Achievement Gap for All Students: The achievement gap is determined by comparing the percentage of students who are proficient or advanced on the PSSA exams. Fifty percent of the gap must be closed over a 6-year period.
- Closing the Achievement Gap of Historically Underperforming Schools: Same approach as for All Student, this objective applies to a nonduplicated count of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners enrolled for a full AY taking the PSSA Exams (PDOE, 2013d).

Under PDOE's new accountability system, individual schools received an academic performance score based on several data points. The new state measure was known as the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (PSPP; PDOE, 2013e). The PSPP scoring system was based on a 100-point system and gave individual schools a single-building level academic score from 0 to 100. Schools earned more than 100 points for students who had earned advanced scores on state exams. There were many elements that contributed to the academic score and were categorized as follows:

- Indicators of Academic Achievement (40%)
- Indicators of Closing the Achievement Gap (5%)
- Indicators of Academic Growth (40%)

- Other Academic Indicators (10%)
- Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement (Up to 7%; PDOE, 2013e).

When PDOE adopted this new accountability system, it stated that the purposes for developing the PSSP included informing the public of school performance, providing a building level score for educators as part of their evaluation system, allowing the public to compare schools across the state, and giving schools a methodology to analyze their strengths and needs (PDOE, 2013e).

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

With the state's adoption of the new accountability program in August 2013, public schools had received a School Performance Profile Score (PDOE, 2013e). In this qualitative case study, the local school received a building academic level score of 67.8, falling below the passing score of 70.0, which designated the school as a Focus school on PDOE's new accountability system (PDOE, 2013b). The school researched for the case study received a Building Academic Level Score of 92.4 (Chute, 2013). A score of 92.4 designated the school as a Reward school, thus a review of the components of the Reward school's Title I reading program was conducted. The school of study was also recognized as a National Blue Ribbon Award for accomplishment in student achievement. To qualify for the National Blue Ribbon Award, one third of the public schools nominated by each state must have enrollments that included at least 40% of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, all nominated public schools need to meet their state's annual measurable objectives or make AYP in each of the 2 years prior to nomination (2011-2012 AY and 2012-2013 AY) and need to do the same for the year in

which they are nominated (2013-2014 AY; U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). Public schools nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Schools award must meet one of two eligibility criteria: (a) be an Exemplary High Performing School, which is among its state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments for nationally normed tests, or (b) be an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School, which is among its state's highest performing school in closing achievement gaps between the school's subgroups and all students over the past 5 years (U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). The local high-performing school for review in the study met the requirements of an Exemplary High Performing School based upon the performance of all students, including all of the school's subgroups, on the two most recent PSSA Exams in reading.

The Local Setting

For this case study, the principal/Title I coordinator, reading specialist, classroom teachers, and paraprofessional of the highly effective Title I school in a nearby district were solicited for voluntary involvement in the study. Interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers who had a direct role in the facilitation and management of Title I reading services within the subject school. The principal and teachers were asked to provide candid beliefs about the Title I program for the purposes of garnering insight to its successes and suggestions for any desired improvement. The participants in the study were from a similar school district, in terms of size and socioeconomic background, as the district where I was employed. Additionally, the district of study and my district of employment were within the same county, which gave us access to the same intermediate

unit where federal programs were managed as a liaison between the school districts and the state's Department of Education.

Definitions

The following special terms were used throughout this study.

Data-based decision making: Data-based decision making is the discipline of using results, or quantitative and qualitative data, to inform pedagogical and programmatic decisions (Marsh, Pane, & Hamilton, 2006).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A bill that was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. This bipartisan measure reauthorized the 50-year-old ESEA (1965), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students (ESSA, 2015).

Growth model: A formula used to compute AYP in school districts that miss the annual AYP target but are making adequate growth toward proficiency (PDOE, 2013d).

Highest Performing Schools: A Title I school that has the highest absolute performance over a number of years for all subgroups on a statewide assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2011a).

Instructional components: Instructional components are the objectives, learning outcomes, skills, and knowledge to be developed. Instruction, equipment and materials, resources, and evaluation tools contribute to the development of instructional components (Merrill, 2001).

Management component: Instructional material resources, such as school facilities, building, equipment, and so forth, that contribute to the overall leadership and

facilitation of the educational program to optimize the learning experience (Schottlaender, 2014).

Materials and equipment component: Products used to support instructional content including acts, concepts, generalizations or principles, attitudes, and skills (Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2011).

Reading model (In-class): An organizational reading model where students receive reading instruction within an allotted 2.5 hours of reading/language arts instruction per day in the classroom setting (Rayner & Reichle, 2010).

Reading model (Out-of-class): An organizational reading model where students of a specified ability group received reading and reading interventions within the 2.5 hours of designated reading/language arts time per day outside of the regular education classroom setting (Rayner & Reichle, 2010).

Safe harbor: A designation for groups of students who show at least a 10% reduction from the previous year in the percentage of students who score below proficient on the state's annual standardized assessment (PDOE, 2013c).

Student Success Act (SSA): A bill that was introduced into the United States House of Representatives during the 113th Congress in July 2013 that addressed education policy and altered parts of both ESEA and NCLB (SSA, 2013).

Title I: Enacted in 1965 under ESEA, this policy is committed to closing the achievement gap between low-income students and other students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a).

Significance

In a local school district, there was a problem of Title I students not reading at the same proficiency level of their non-Title I peers. By conducting this process-based evaluation, I was able to identify the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program that produced high student performance on annual proficiency examinations conducted by the state. Specific to the local problem, Title I students did not perform as well as non-Title I students on the state reading assessments. Under the SSA, school districts were expected to reduce the number of all students who scored below proficiency levels on the PSSA and Keystone Exams by 50% over a 6-year period (PDOE, 2013b). The principal, who was also the district's Title I coordinator, the reading specialist, the classroom teachers, and a paraprofessional reviewed and discussed the instructional components of their reading program and the students' reading results. By gaining this information about the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program and how they can be replicated in a local school district, student academic performance should change for the better. Positive social change would occur for all members of the school community.

Guiding/Research Question

In the local school, Title I students were not meeting expected reading proficiencies on the annual state assessment. With state assessment results not meeting annual mandated benchmarks, the local school needed to reflect on the delivery of curriculum and instruction in order to promote necessary reading growth in its Title I student population. In a neighboring school district to the local school, similar Title I

students were outperforming their non-Title I peers. In order to determine what was leading to high student success at the neighboring school, I chose to research the educational programming. The following research question guided this study:

RQ: What are the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in which students were consistently scoring in the 90th percentile (or higher) on standardized state assessments?

This case study conducted a process-based evaluation with the purpose of identifying the key instructional components that promoted students' reading achievement.

Review of the Professional Literature

The purpose of this study was to identify prominent instructional components being used in a Title I reading program where students scored *proficient* or *advanced* on the state's annual standardized assessment. A thorough literature review revealed what was known about the instructional components in a successful Title I reading program and their influence on student achievement.

For this case study, key ideas and search terms were used for the provision of research. These key ideas and search terms included the following: *theories of Title I teaching and learning, essential features of Title I programs, assessment indicators, instructional leadership, parental and community involvement, professional development,* and *leadership paradigms*. Additionally, theoretical and research-based sources were used for the collection of research. Such sources included peer-reviewed journals, published dissertations, published national studies, and educational labs for research and

study. Finally, databases such as ERIC, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar were utilized for the collection of scholarly-reviewed resources published between 1965 through 2015, specific to the study of the problem.

Conceptual Framework

The theory of data-driven decision making (DDDM) in education referred to teachers and administrators systematically collecting and analyzing data to guide a range of decisions to help improve the success of students and schools (Marsh et al., 2006). Marsh et al. (2006) suggested that multiple forms of data are first turned into information through analysis and then combined with stakeholder understanding and expertise to create knowledge for which action can then take place.

DDDM took place in a wide variety of contexts, from the federal and state levels down to the classroom and individual student levels, each with its unique reporting and analytical needs (Thorn, 2001). During the height of NCLB, DDDM was most prevalent in accountability measures that required systematic collection an analysis of high-stakes test data (Means, Gallagher, & Padilla, 2007).

Gandal and McGiffert (2003) believed that by using the DDDM process properly, educators focused their instruction more effectively on student needs. DDDM was a system of teaching and management practices through which educators received detailed information about student achievement (Mandinach, Honey, & Light, 2006).

With the initiation and expectations of NCLB, school districts across the country used data from state and local assessments to determine particular needs in relation to student achievement, instructional practices, and financial resources to accomplish this.

Under NCLB, federal and state legislation related to school accountability were a primary cause of the increased emphasis on DDDM in the United States (Kaufman, Graham, Picciano, Wiley, & Popham, 2014). DDDM at the federal and state level was characterized by high-stakes, statewide testing that was administered once per school year by each state (Kaufman et al., 2014). Chen, Heritage, and Lee (2005) stated that annual tests told teachers how well students did on the test, but gave limited information about what students did well on, and even less about why they did well. Kaufman et al. (2014) stated that more attention was paid to creating processes that inform decision making, which was intended to impact student outcomes. DDDM models were designed to emphasize the creation and development of collaborative teams that drove data collection, analysis, and decision-making within a school (Kaufman et al., 2014). DDDM models included Data Wise (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005), Data Teams (Reeves, 2004), and Berhardt's Portfolio Model (Bernhardt, 2009). The commonalities and distinguishing features of the three models were seen in Figure 2 (Kaufmann, Grimm, & Miller, 2012). Figure 2 conveys how a school entity can use the DDDM model for determining how to use data for making decisions for improvement of educational programming. Figure 2 identifies how a school can emphasize planning for needed changes, develop an ongoing monitoring process, make instructional changes, and encourage collaboration amongst the stakeholders for the improvement of educational programs.

DDDM Model	Commonalities	Distinguishing Features	Number of Steps
Data Wise Improvement Process (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005)	Have iterative cycles that used data to identify school-based problems Used instruction as the primary lever to address student learning needs Emphasized planning for and ongoing progress monitoring of the effects of implemented changes Used school-level data teams to implement the process, including data examination and the identification of relevant instructional changes Encouraged collaboration, particularly among teachers	**Included a "prepare" phase** that emphasized effective teaming and assessment literacy **Observed instruction** as part of data collection to understand a root cause of student learning needs **Developed single, whole school focus** on an instructional strategy to address a priority need	8
Decision Making for Results (Reeves, 2004)		**Focused on both high- and low-achievers** with a focus on setting SMART goals **Identified multiple strategies** to address prioritized needs	6
Plan-Do-Check-Act (Bernhardt, 2009)		**Employed tutorials** to target students at various levels of proficiency (geared around re-teaching concepts) **Facilitated enrichment** pull out to support students who mastered content **Encouraged instructional grouping** of students based on their performance on standardized assessments	4

Figure 2. DDDM model—Commonalities and distinguishing features.

The building principal used the quantitative data from standardized assessments to identify areas in which students needed additional educational materials and modified instructional delivery (Lezotte, 2001). Student achievement on standardized assessments was the only form of evaluation recognized by state and federal educational agencies in determining the effectiveness of public schools to meet the requirements of NCLB. The notion of DDDM in education was modeled on successful practices from industrial manufacturing such as total quality management, organizational learning, and continuous improvement (Marsh et al., 2006). Marsh et al. (2006) found input data, such as student demographics, were defined as objective information. Process data were qualitative such as the effectiveness of instructional practices (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

When attempting to implement a successful Title I program, schools replicated the basic principles that made existing Title I programs successful. According to Pechman and Fiester (1996), there were five key characteristics for any successful Title I schoolwide program: (a) a shared vision, (b) time and resources for planning and program design, (c) skillful management and a well-defined organization structure with a clear focus on academics and assessment, (d) continuing schoolwide professional development, and (e) parent and community involvement. Pechman and Fiester stated that the shared vision was one of the most important key concepts of a schoolwide study. The shared vision of a school did not focus on those students who needed remediation in order to improve achievement, but focused instead on a commitment from the entire teaching staff to reeducate all students towards a high common standard. Having students achieve at a higher standard was accomplished through the development of new curricula

and instructional strategies. School administrators made decisions about the appropriate time and resources needed for staff members to prepare a schoolwide Title I program. As Lezotte (2001) stated, the principal acted as an instructional leader and persistently communicated the mission of the school to staff, parents, and students. Furthermore, the principal understood and applied the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the program, which was articulated for the school mission to achieve the overall effectiveness of the organization (Lezotte & Pepperl, 2001). Achieving organizational effectiveness included the management component of proper planning, acquisition of resources, training of staff, and the process of implementation. The structure of the schoolwide planning team consisted of coleaders from various groups including administration, regular education, remedial education, and parents and other community representatives. There was a direct correlation between a school's effectiveness and the retention, recruitment, and development of the members of the schoolwide planning team on the direct results of student achievement (Loeb, Beteille, & Kalogrides, 2012). The effective and meaningful use of data, targeted student interventions, and teacher collaboration needed to be imbedded strategies at any school in which significant turnaround was to be achieved (Sparks, 2011). Such areas for improvement in the elementary school included the reading curricula, available instructional technology, instructional process programs, and combinations of curricula and instructional processes (Slavin, Lake, Chambers, Cheung, & Davis, 2011). Specific examples included antecedent-based instructional teacher practices such as attention signals, prior knowledge supports, previews, instructor modeling, student modeling, and

organizational prompts (Schottlaender, 2014). These teacher practices were recognized as serving an essential role in setting the stage for the delivery of effective academic instruction during literacy time in elementary schools (Stichter, Stormont, & Lewis, 2009).

The school principal adhered to antecedent-based instruction while also providing teachers with the right processes, tools, and time to work at the instructional level. By providing teachers with the necessary instruction and resources to help promote learning, teachers began to change their practices, which helped to meet the need of every learner regardless of proficiency level. Over time, in order to help build schoolwide consensus for Title I programming, schools properly developed staff (Desimone, Smith, & Phillips, 2013). Effective staff development included visits to the classrooms of fellow teachers, on and off grade-level meetings, and comprehensive review of curriculum issues (Dempster, Benfield, & Francis, 2012). The schoolwide planning team also partook in off-sight workshops, visited to neighboring districts with accomplished Title I services, and engaged in visits from nationally renowned experts in the development of remedial reading programs. Once a schoolwide program was developed, the instructional staff offered remedial services throughout all subject matters within a grade level. For example, a grade level developed a thematic unit, which was taught in the core subject areas, and in the areas of art, music, foreign language, and physical education. Students were exposed to problem-solving and creative thinking exercises, which enhanced their mastery of reading regardless of course content. The common effective school management process requires closely monitoring student academic achievement. The

schoolwide planning team reviewed multiple indicators of student progress by using a combination of assessment strategies, which included teacher-designed tests, standardized-criterion test and norm-referenced tests, portfolios of students' work, and mastery skills checklists (Pechman & Fiester, 1996). The school used frequent diagnostic assessments in reading to ensure that children were developing a deep-working knowledge of fundamental learning. Through the utilization of DDDM, the local school was able to systematically collect data and analyze it to determine the instructional and curricular needs of the Title I student population. The data collected allowed school personnel to focus on the areas of need within the students' reading deficiencies and create strategies to promote reading achievement. The DDDM process guided the study in determining the key instructional components of the highly effective Title I program that could be replicated through a model within the local school for the Title I program's expected success.

Title I Expectations

Title I was enacted in 1965 under ESEA. The purpose of the policy was to close the achievement gap between low-income students and their peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a). The basic principles of Title I stated that schools with large concentrations of low-income students received supplemental funds to assist in meeting students' educational goals. The number of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program determined low-income students. For an entire school to qualify for Title I funds, at least 40% of students must have enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program (MacMahon, 2011).

Title I has been considered the primary component for national standards-based reform policies (Patterson, Campbell, Johnson, Marx, & Whitener, 2013). Meaningful Title I programs have emphasized a connection between routine, daily instructional activities and the integration of Title I remediation strategies to promote student growth in a specific content area (California Department of Education, 2011). However, Title I in itself is considered far from what would be required to eliminate the achievement gap between proficient and nonproficient readers, which poses the thought of determining the components of an effective Title I reading program. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006) stated that the evaluation of a successful Title I reading program involved the reviewer's ability to remain open to continuing feedback. McNamara (2002) concluded, in order to determine the utility, relevance, and practicality of an evaluation study, the following process should occur:

- identify the major outcomes to be examined;
- choose the specific outcomes to be reviewed;
- specify what observable measures will suggest that one is achieving key outcomes with the involved parties;
- specify a target goal of clients;
- identify what information was needed to validate the designated measures;
- determine how information was realistically and efficiently gathered;
- analyze and reported all findings.

An evaluation design was implemented to understand how the program worked and how results were accomplished, leading to the determination of the key instructional

components and how a replication of a model of an effective reading program could be implemented in a Title I school.

Instructional Models

Title I services provide students the opportunity to receive more in-depth instruction, thus concentrating more time and attention on specific areas of development needed remediation. The instructional models of delivery for Title I services included the following:

- *In-class services*: In this model, teachers assessed Title I students using multiple measures. Students worked in small groups within the classroom and worked with supplemental materials to the regular curriculum. Teachers enabled students to create while balancing literacy framework jointly constructed to suit the school context of curriculum (Kennedy, 2010). The Title I teacher also worked with targeted students one on one. The inclusive classroom model provided a classroom where students, regardless of their background, had choices for accessing content, responded to it, expressed what they knew, and became engaged in the learning process (Neal, 2015).
- *Pull out services*: In this model, Title I teacher pulled students from the regular classroom setting during a portion of the children's Reading/Language Arts class. The Title I teacher worked with target students in a smaller learning environment with a small number of students. The Title I teacher adjusted the instructional delivery to align with the regular education curriculum but presented it in a manner that was more apt to the needs of the

Title I targeted students. For children with the greatest reading difficulties, small group, or even one-to-one instructional sessions are most effective (Slavin, Lake, Davis, & Madden, 2011). For readers with milder reading deficiencies, a strong evidence base supported small-group interventions, especially in the early years of school (Wanzek and Vaughn, 2007). Within the local school district, all four of the aforementioned services were provided to Title I students. However, only in-class and pull-out services were required for Title I students as they occurred within the state mandated instructional school day and during the 180-day instructional school year (PDOE, 2013c).

- *Extended day services*: Parents of students receiving Title I services had the option of sending their children to extended day programs through afterschool tutoring sessions during the instructional school year. These tutoring sessions occurred twice per week for an hour after school had dismissed. Teachers with certifications as reading specialists were the first to be offered the tutoring positions. The average class size of an afterschool Title I reading tutoring program ranged between two to five students per grade level. Research revealed that extended day services helped to increase achievement and indicated that students learned more when they received more instruction, when they were given more individual help, and when their questions were answered promptly in relation to learned activities during the regular instructional day (Nelson-Royes, 2013).

- *Extended year—summer program services:* For the extended year/summer reading program, Title I targeted students received individualized reading assistance from a Title I teacher twice per week for 45 minutes per session. The Title I teacher worked with the targeted student to reinforce skills and concepts that the regular education teacher provided during the course of the recently completed school year. Students who participated in summer reading programs demonstrated significant growth in regular word knowledge, regular and pseudo sound-symbol relationships, and oral reading fluency (Magpuri-Lavell, Paige, Williams, Akins, & Cameron, 2014).

Materials and Resources

Title I teachers used numerous educational resources that helped students bridge the gaps in their reading development. The materials chosen by the Title I teacher were required to supplement, not supplant, the regular education reading curriculum (Bronzo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013). What the Title I teacher used to reinforce instruction should've supported a variety of differentiated instructional strategies with a focus on alphabetic and phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary building, and writing (Scott, 2011).

Professional Development

Under Section 1119 of ESEA (1965), every school which received Title I funds was required to provide quality professional development which improved the teaching of academic subjects consistent with a State's content standards in order to meet the

State's student performance expectations (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Professional development should meet the following conditions:

- Support instructional practices that were geared to challenge state content standards and created a school environment conducive to high achievement in the academic subjects.
- Support the Title I school's plans and schoolwide program plans.
- Draw on resources available under other programs such as Title II and Title III.
- Include strategies for developing curricula and teaching methods that integrated academic and vocational instruction.
- Include strategies for identifying and eliminating gender and racial biases in instructional materials, methods, and practices (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

Professional development should focus on subject-matter knowledge and deepen teachers' content skills (Cohen & Hill, 1998). Concrete teaching activities should be based on specific learning needs of the students. Additionally, professional development should be grounded in a common set of professional ideals showing teacher how to connect their work to specific standards for student performance (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon 2001). The professional development needs a school can include stakeholders from both within and external of the educational organization.

Parent and Community Involvement

The Title I Parent Involvement section of NCLB required each Title I school to develop a written parental involvement policy that described the means for carrying out the requirements of the law (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The school should have ensured that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities was sent to the parents of Title I children in a format and in a language that was spoken in the home. The parent involvement policy should have described how the school provided instruction, materials, and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement in order to foster parent involvement.

Overall management. Under the federal and state guidelines, Federal Programs Coordinators (FPC) provided leadership and were responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of all federal programs within the local school agency (Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators, 2014). Additionally, the FPC was involved in the planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating of all federal program services so that the school district offered the best possible educational programs and services to qualifying students.

Accountability. The SSA was introduced into the United States House of Representatives during the 113th Congress. As a result, in December 2015, Congress passed the ESSA. The ESSA was a bill that was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. The SSA made fundamental changes to many federal educational programs eliminated the national school accountability requirements and goals created under NCLB, and allowed states to develop their own accountability systems in lieu of a

national accountability system. In short, the goal of SSA was to return responsibility for student achievement to states, local school districts, and parents. The SSA passed in a House vote of 221-207 on July 19, 2013. One of the main goals of the SSA was to improve educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged students. Specific to Title I, SSA allowed qualifying schools to receive funds to promote the academic achievement of students in need. Additionally, reforms under The SSA included the following:

- The elimination of AYP. States developed and implemented a set of assessments for all students in reading, math, and science.
- The elimination of federally mandated interventions currently required of poorly performing schools. States were given the flexibility to develop appropriate improvement strategies and rewards.
- The repeal of "Highly Qualified Teacher" requirements. States developed teacher evaluation systems that measured an educator's influence on student learning.
- The implementation of annual report cards for states and school districts. These report cards included disaggregated data on student achievement and high school graduation rates.
- The repeal of a myriad of existing small-scale federal K-12 educational programs. A new Local Academic Flexible Grant was created which provided funding to states and school districts for afterschool programs, tutoring, and student safety measures.

Under the new 2015 law, change means that non-waiver, which are those still operating under NCLB, need to establish new accountability systems. The accountability systems should prescribe specific long-term goals, indicators, weights of indicators, methodology, school support and improvement strategies, and exit criteria (Ferguson, 2016).

Student achievement. Effective Title I schoolwide models included clear goals for student achievement, methods and materials linked to these goals, and continuous assessment of student progress (West & Peterson, 2007). For student achievement, decisions made for the schoolwide mode were based on real-time, accurate data and included research-based classroom interventions (Isernhagen, 2012). Specifically, the goals for student achievement were integrated with the regular curricular program of a school and did not exist in isolation. For instance, using collaborative discussion and child-created graphic organizers together to enhance read-alouds was a promising practice for scaffolding children's comprehension of stories (Barrett-Mynes, Moran, & Tegano, 2010). In addition to needing good word decoding and listening comprehension skills, good readers noted the structure and organization of text, monitored their understanding while reading, made predictions, integrated what they knew about the topic with new learning, and made inferences (Harlaar et al., 2010). Furthermore, attitude, motivation, time management, anxiety, concentration, information processing, study aids, and test-taking strategies were considered when examining the characteristics of an effective reading program (Karasakaloglu, 2012).

Effective reading programs often took into consideration the social developmental level of the learners and five specific variables: (a) literature which focused on positive character traits, (b) role models easily identified with students, (c) read alouds for classroom participation, (d) questioning that students used during and after the read alouds, and (e) follow-up activities created to reinforce the in-class reading sessions (Russell, Hicks, & Riley, 2013). The results of student achievement in Title I reading programs are assessed through demonstrated proficiencies on standardized exams. Interventions developed for the implementation of curriculum and instructional delivery is founded in research-based data. The application of curricular design, utilization of various educational resources, facilitation of instructional processes, and analysis of standards-based assessments were contributing factors to the achievement of the Title I learner.

For students who were having trouble, teachers attended to the students' needs by delivering intensive, longer, and more frequent interventions (Moore & Whitfield, 2009). With timely feedback, the teacher changed direction or increased the intensity of instruction (Christ, Zopluoglu, Long, & Monaghen, 2012). At the Dixon Educational Learning Academy in Detroit, Michigan, instructional leaders adopted five essential elements when assessing student achievement (Marrapodi & Beard, 2013). These five elements were known as SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, results-based and time-bound (Supovitz & Klein, 2003). The information obtained from the aforementioned elements allowed educators to make instructional improvements to specific learning needs of individual students. The Center for American Progress concluded that a

deviation from time-bound learning time had great potential to boost student achievement and closed instructional achievement gaps (Miller, 2013). In a formal recommendation, the Center for American Progress encouraged schools to expand learning time and added 300 additional hours to the standard school-year schedule. Additional hours allowed more time for academic focus, enrichment programming, and teacher collaboration. That instructional time ensured that students became autonomous readers and suggested the need for methodologies that moved students' reading skills from basic decoding to fluency to comprehension of text and beyond (Basaraba, Yovanoff, Alonzo, Tindal, 2013). Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy (2009) claimed that methodologies allowed students to navigate the path from basic comprehension to higher level critical reading while employing the same reading methods and strategies of their non-Title I peers.

Other school districts across the country looked into various options as a means of providing students with additional educational supports in helping to close achievement gaps. With the help of organizations like The Wallace Foundation, a national philanthropic organization that seeks to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children, school districts looked at non-traditional funding sources to address the needed extra time and resources to help struggling students reach proficiency (Browne, Syed, & Mendels, 2013). For example, at P.S. 186 in Brooklyn, New York, schools and community organizations, such as the non-profit NIA Community Service Network, banded together to provide students with academic and cultural experiences, which aimed to enhance the total learning experience for disadvantaged children (Browne, Syed, & Mendels, 2013). These collaborations allowed educators to combine

additional instructional time after school hours for students with the assistance of volunteers who provided their time and knowledge to provide Title I students with various afterschool programs, youth and family counseling services, summer day camps, and cultural arts programs. Through this collaboration, P.S. 186 established an effective partnership, which sustained a cost structure that allowed for 35% more learning time at only 10% additional cost (Browne, Syed, & Mendels, 2013). Other schools reviewed by members of The Wallace Foundation have capitalized on opportunities to increase their school days and years in order to establish several whole-school strategies, which aimed to improve educational quality and outcomes. In addition to the aforementioned extracurricular programs, schools have adopted the following to assist in helping low-income, low-achieving students to meet proficiency expectations: (a) more instructional days before state assessments, (b) cross-disciplinary curriculum and classes, (c) enrichment and foreign language options, (d) daily tutoring, (e) weekly professional development, (f) daily intervention blocks, (g) academic support, and (h) partner-run apprenticeships (Kaplan, Farbman, Deich, & Clapp-Padgette, 2014). Curriculum, instruction, and assessment were aligned which provided a coherent vision for learning that fostered achievement in the intellectual, ethical, and social development of the learners (Jackson & Lunenburg, 2010). In terms of professional development, Fisher, Frey, and Nelson (2012) stated that schools provided teachers with professional development and time to focus on analyzing student work and planning lessons based on that work.

The literature review focused on factors concerning the performance of Title I students who did not meet required reading proficiencies as demonstrated on annual standardized assessments. The overriding purpose of this case study was to conduct a process-based evaluation of the prominent instructional components, in a high achieving Title I school, that improved the learning and social development of the local school's Title I reading population.

Implications

By identifying the instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program, staff members in a local school district gained an understanding of what was needed to have their students meet required proficiency levels on state assessments. Identifying the key instructional components of the studied Title I reading program helped the staff to meet the goal of having all Title I students reading at expected grade level.

There were many inconsistencies, inequities, and challenges in NCLB. The literature review provided a thorough understanding of the new guidelines, in the form of the SSA, which were created to help school districts across the country meet consistent expectations for student achievement. While sorting through the vast amount of information, common themes became evident particularly of the SSA on instruction. These themes included how the data could drive decision-making in educational leadership and the controversies that surfaced among various stakeholders who had accountability for student performance. The evidence from the literature suggested that

an emphasis on quality instruction could bring about social change to both local schools and Title I reading programs (see Appendix A).

Conclusion and Summary

Through this research, I looked forward not only to learning about the instructional components that had a profound effect on student achievement, but also to examine how these components influenced the leadership styles and philosophies which accompany successful Title I schools. There were opportunities for an instructional leader to not only learn from colleagues who have achieved success, but also to create and define personal accomplishments in terms of educational programming and leadership initiatives which have yet to be developed.

A school principal has learned from both quality leadership characteristics and an understanding of the needs of today's students. The principal has applied what has been successful in meeting expected performance levels of the students and staff currently under his leadership while continuously developing new and effective instructional components for every learner.

In Section 1, the intent to examine the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program was introduced. The rationale for choosing this as a local problem was found within the expectation of a local school to meet required federal mandates of reading proficiency levels through an adopted state waiver known as the SSA. School principals, as the instructional leaders, were ultimately responsible for providing the leadership, resources, and other components necessary in helping all Title I students meet expected grade level proficiency standards. The significance of this study

was found when the key instructional components were identified in a highly effective Title I reading program. In Section 1 of this case study, a review of the literature addressing the local problem was conducted which presented this problem on a broader scale as every public school system in the state must also have its students meet the reading proficiency expectations established under federal law. Finally, Section 2 of the case study included a detailed account of the qualitative approach used to measure the key instructional components of a successful Title I reading program.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

With this qualitative case study, I attempted to determine the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in an elementary school that had consistently scored at or above the 90th percentile on a state standardized test. Section 2 focuses on the description of research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis. Title I staff of a nationally awarded school were observed and interviewed, and archival data were reviewed. I analyzed and compared the data and determined common themes amongst the various information.

Overview of the Study

As McNamara (2002) stated, process-based evaluations were used to understand fully how a program worked and how it achieved its results. This process-based evaluation of a highly effective Title I program relied on a case study in which I explored the depths of the program by collecting detailed information using a variety of data collection methods (Creswell, 2009). McNamara (1998) stated that a process-based evaluation carefully collected information in order to make necessary decisions about the program. Process-based evaluations were useful for long-standing programs and for accurately portraying how a program might be replicated (McNamara, 2002).

The research design was an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). Not only was I interested in learning about a general problem, I had an intrinsic, vested interest in the case as I attempted to replicate the key instructional components of the studied Title I reading program within my local school setting. This case study required the use of

interviews, classroom observations, and archival data as a means of collecting data. The purpose for conducting a process-based evaluation, which focused on the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program, was to recognize the effects of the program from the viewpoints of those who established and maintained its design. The research question guiding this study was this: What are the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in which students were consistently scoring in the 90th percentile (or higher) on standardized state assessments?

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

An intrinsic case study approach was appropriate to examine the instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program and how these led to student proficiency results on state standardized assessments. I was guided by my interest in this case as the results from the study were used to promote student achievement in a local school setting with a similar population of Title I students.

In the review of the literature, five qualitative strategies of inquiry were presented (Creswell, 2009). After a review of the five strategies, the design used for the case study was an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). The case study design allowed the participants to offer their viewpoints on the successful components of their Title I reading program.

After examining the other qualitative strategies, I rejected them in favor of the case study. Narrative research might have been appropriate to the study. With this strategy, however, I was expected to combine stories from the participants' lives with those in my life to develop a collaborative narrative (Creswell, 2009). For this study, there was no significance in focusing on a participant's life outside of the school

environment. If the participant's home life were a focal point of the study, there would have been a concern that the research would not have had a direct effect on the participant's home life.

The second qualitative design reviewed was phenomenological research. This design was a strategy in which I would have identified the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenology is the study of what all individuals have in common because they share a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The reason I rejected the phenomenological research design was that there was a need to evaluate different viewpoints in a sampling of participants in the Title I reading program in order to establish an evaluation of the overall program.

Ethnography was not considered for the study because it would have required me to study a cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period (Creswell, 2009). Studying a cultural group over a designated period of time was not necessary for this project study as the program evaluation collected, reviewed, and analyzed data from the current-day educational programming of the school of study.

The final strategy of grounded theory would have required me to derive an abstract theory of an interaction that was grounded in the views of the participants (Creswell, 2009). The grounded theory strategy was not considered as it expected the creation of a theory about the participants and a particular incident; it was, therefore, not appropriate for a program evaluation given its limited scope of the research.

Summative Evaluation

The purpose of completing a summative evaluation was to judge the worth of a program at the completion of program activities, specifically to focus on program outcomes (Scriven, 2010). The Title I reading program at a neighboring school district, which has been recognized as a United States Blue Ribbon Award School of Excellence, was evaluated for how to replicate a model of an effective reading program and implement it in a Title I school. A summative evaluation was used for this study.

Summative evaluation is designed to identify a project's effectiveness after a specified length of time while determining accomplishments in terms of its goals and objectives achieved (Scriven, 2010). At the conclusion, summative evaluation judges the worth, or value, of an intervention (Tyler, Gagne, & Scriven, 1967). This evaluation identified the key instructional components of a high-performing Title I reading program. Using qualitative methods of data collection provided insight into determining the instructional components of the Title I reading program in Grades 1 through 4. Summative evaluation is described as outcome-focused rather than being process focused (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007). The interview questions for the participants were selected by carefully considering what was important to know about the program and what it was I wanted to understand and/or closely examine in the program (McNamara, 2002).

A quantitative evaluation would not have provided the detailed level of information found in a qualitative study. In a qualitative study, the role of the researcher is the primary resource of data collection (Creswell, 2007). Other approaches, such as

ethnographic and grounded theory, focused more on the development of theory and not on exploration. As Patton (2002) stated, the purpose of a program evaluation is to improve program effectiveness. Patton also said that a program evaluation is the systemic collection of information regarding the activities and outcomes of programs to make judgments, improve program effectiveness, and inform decisions about future programs. Additionally, Hosp (2012) stated that a program evaluation is the process of gathering information or data to advise, design, produce, and implement decisions. This specific program evaluation promoted the finding of the instructional components in a Title I reading program that led to high student achievement on standardized exams.

Program Evaluation Goals and Outcomes

Emphasis for the case study was placed on the key instructional components of a highly successful Title I reading program. The goal of this program evaluation was to established the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program: (a) the instructional component specific to lesson planning, designing, and diversity; (b) curriculum design specific to research-based methodologies, practices, and techniques; and (c) assessments specific to performance tools and related data analysis. The purpose of the program evaluation was to offer recommendations for replication of a model on behalf of the district's Title I reading students. The beneficiaries of the research would include the local school stakeholders who are directly associated with Title I reading services.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Faculty and administrators. The participants were educators who helped me better understand the problem and answer the research question (Creswell, 2007). The participants included the school's principal, the district's federal programs coordinator, one Title I program teacher (who was also the school's reading specialist for Grades 1 through 4) and four regular education classroom teachers, one from each grade level (1 through 4). The sampling of participants led to a transparent view of the participants' perceptions of their reality (Hatch, 2002). These participants were chosen for their extensive knowledge of the Title I reading program as well as for their willingness to share their insights and perspectives about the high-performing program. The techniques used in the research study setting were assessed through observations, teacher and federal programs coordinator interviews, and review of archival data, including, but not limited to standardized test scores. In addition, all informative materials regarding the Title I program that were disseminated to the families of Title I students were reviewed. The Title I teacher/reading specialist, the school's principal, the district's federal programs coordinator, and regular education teachers of the highly effective Title I school were solicited for voluntary involvement in the study.

Classrooms. The classrooms observed for the study included a total of four regular education elementary classrooms. One classroom for each grade (1 through 4) was observed. Also included in the study was the observation of a remedial reading classroom. The remedial reading classroom was managed by a state-certified reading

specialist. The reading specialist's classroom was not grade specific as the reading specialist taught pull-out learning sessions with Title I students in Grades 1 through 4. The participants of the study were the classroom teachers from the four regular education classrooms and the reading specialist. The regular education classrooms included students in Grades 1 through 4 with a sample size of five to 25 students per classroom. The classrooms chosen for observation in this study included students who have demonstrated expected reading proficiency for their grade level. The population of interest for the third and fourth grade classrooms included students who were enrolled in the Title I reading classes who met the *proficient* or *advanced* level on the annual state standardized reading assessment. The population of interest for the first and second grade classrooms included students who were enrolled in the Title I reading classes who met grade level proficiency on the Terra Nova standardized assessment. The school being observed for this study also included kindergarten students. These students were not included in this study as they were the only grade level in the school that did not participate in a standardized reading assessment. All students involved in the study were reflective of a regular education elementary classroom. My time constraints, as well as the ability to gain observable access to the participants, were the rationale for the small sample size. The small sample size also allowed me to gain a more in-depth level of inquiry for each participant in the sample. No students, or groups of students, were excluded from the subject classroom.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) communicated approval of the project study as evidenced by IRB Approval Number 08-13-15-0134198. For this qualitative study, the teachers, principal, federal programs coordinator, and Title I teacher/reading specialist of the highly effective Title I school were solicited for voluntary involvement in the study. Interviews were conducted with the five teachers, the building principal, and the district's federal programs coordinator who had a direct role in the facilitation and management of Title I reading services within the subject school. The interviews were conducted with the participants at the school of study. Interviews occurred during either the participants' planning period or during afterschool hours. The interviews allowed the interviewees to provide candid observations about the Title I program for the purposes of garnering insight to its successes and gathering suggestions for any desired improvement. The interviews were recorded using the Voice Memos application on an iPhone then transferred to a flash drive. The interviews were then transcribed using Microsoft Word. The voice memos were then deleted from the iPhone.

For the follow-up procedures, first and foremost, I limited the collection of information to only specific data as it pertained to the participants' role in providing Title I services to the students. I made a conscientious effort to abstain from collecting any personal information such as gender, age, years of professional service, and so forth. Secondly, I ensured the participant that his or her interview data were held in the strictest of confidence. The interviews were kept on a flash drive, which was kept in a locked storage unit that could only be accessed by me. Additionally, all paper and electronic

documents will be destroyed 5 years after the conclusion of this research study. Fink (2006) stated that others who need to know may also have access to the interview information. For the interviews in this study, there was not a need for another individual (ex: a secretary) to have access to the interviews. I was certain to delete the interviews completely and all the corresponding data from the flash drive after it had been completed, analyzed, and presented in the expected model. Finally, all e-mail correspondence between the participants and me occurred on the participants' and my work e-mail addresses. The participants provided their e-mail addresses through permission of their principal. The e-mail addresses provided by the participants were their preferred, primary e-mail addresses, which were provided through the school entity. All e-mail correspondences were deleted at the conclusion of the study. E-mails had not been archived to assure that all traces of the e-mail strands were deleted from the district's server.

Methods of Establishing Researcher-Participants Working Relationship

The participants of the study were invited to provide candid and detailed responses that would be held in the strictest of confidence. Obtaining the support from the institutional leader (i.e., the principal) gave me better access to the participants and the data, and that made an easier reception for me (Hatch, 2002). Additionally, I was employed in the same capacity (i.e., principal/federal programs coordinator). In this position, I felt that I had established strong relationships with Title I teachers, classroom teachers, as well as those in administrative roles at the school district level. From this

perspective, I had a solid understanding of the culture of a quality Title I reading program.

Ethical Consideration of the Participants

Following Walden IRB approval, as well as approval to conduct research at the study site, I met with school principal in his office. I shared the background of the study, the purpose, the potential benefits, the research question and methods, privacy and protection of the participants, and how dissemination would occur. One letter of cooperation was provided, to the school principal, for completion by each participant in the school of study. I shared the purpose of the study, what my timeframe would be for conducting the research, how I would gather information, how participation is optional and participants can opt out at any time, and that confidentiality will be of the upmost importance. This meeting lasted approximately 20 minutes. I e-mailed participants prior to the site visit. The e-mail regarded the scheduling of a brief meeting before the data was collected. These meetings occurred individually, with each participant, as a means of maintaining confidentiality. Each meeting was held in the main office conference room and lasted approximately 15-20 minutes from the time of welcoming the participant to the time of the participant's departure. During the meeting, participants were made aware that their identities would be completely anonymous in order to protect their privacy in the matter of participation within the study. During each individual meeting with the first, second, third, and fourth grade teachers, the Title I teacher/reading specialist, and the paraprofessional, the researcher attained informed consent. Also during this time, participants were informed about the proposed study, in a way that allowed them to

consider whether or not to participate. Participants were notified that enrolling in the research was voluntary and that could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Participants were told the purpose of the study, foreseeable risks/discomforts to the individual, potential benefits to the individual or others, confidentiality protections for the individual, compensation plan, contact information for questions regarding the study, participants' rights, and in case of injury the conditions of participation, including right to refuse or withdraw without penalty. Negotiated research agreements between me and the participants included collecting informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality, providing opportunity for opting out, and sharing the results of the study with proposed solutions resulting from the program evaluation (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002). Allowing participants to withdrawal during the data collection process was another requirement for ensuring ethical treatment (Hatch, 2002). Participants were also informed that all documents were password protected, their names would not be connected to the study, and all data would be destroyed 5 to 10 years after the study is over. Then, participants had an opportunity to ask questions. They were given the consent forms and told to return them to the researcher, using a pre-paid, self-addressed stamped envelope, within three days as this provided each participant the sufficient privacy and time to consider participation.

Classroom observations were held in each participant's classroom. Observations occur during the participant's Reading class at a predetermined time approximately 30-60 minutes of observation time (see Appendix B). The observation protocol form was be loaded onto my laptop and a paper copy was given to the participant prior to the start of

the observation period (see Appendix B). The researcher entered the classroom as students were rotating classrooms so as to not call attention away from the classroom teacher and distract students. The researcher sat in a location chosen by the classroom teacher in order to remain in the least distracting area as possible. The observation protocol form was completed for each participant's reading classroom. The completed observation protocol form was shared with each participant at the conclusion of the interview process (Appendix D). Participants were permitted to elaborate on classroom observations if desired.

On the day of the interviews, I established a quiet and secure place in the main office conference room so as not to disturb the flow of activities of the participants or the school site. Each participant participated in one interview. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were informed again that the study was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time. Before the start of the interview, a copy of the interview questions was provided to each participant (see Appendices E & F). Each participant was given 30-45 minutes to conduct the interview. Interviews were held either before school, during the participants' plan periods, or after school. I began the interview with a transparent explanation of the study and clarified that anything revealed during the interview process was omitted from the study if deemed harmful (Merriam, 2002). The teacher participants completed six interview questions each and the principal and federal program coordinator completed 14 interview questions each (see Appendices G & H).

Following the interviews, participants were told that the interview would be transcribed within three days of the interview taking place (see Appendices G & H). At

the end of the third day following the interviews, transcribed interviews were shared with the participants, via e-mail, for member-checking purpose, giving participants an opportunity to review the interview and make changes if necessary. Any changes made by the participants occurred within three days of their receipt of the transcriptions. I made all necessary changes provided by the participant, e-mailed the updated version, and received confirmation from the participant that they were in approval of the final version of the interview.

Two days after the completion of the classroom observations and the interviews, I conducted a review of archival data, which included standardized test results, specific to students' reading achievement levels, through the use of two assessment tools: PSSA and Pennsylvania 4Sight Benchmark Assessments (see Appendix J). Standardized state assessment scores were provided as archival data that was warehoused by the PDOE as well as by each school district across the state and was available for public consumption. The data was found through archival records, most of which were accessible through public forums via the PDOE's online records warehouse and the school districts' websites and/or curricular offices (see Appendix J).

Data Collection Procedures

Merriam (2002), Creswell (2007), and Hatch (2002) stated that a qualitative study attempts to understand the phenomenon as experienced and understood by the participants. Qualitative interviews consisted of structured, open-ended questions (see Appendices E & F); however, the interviewer needed to develop questions depending on

the participants' responses, the context of the interview, and the relationship between the interviewer and participants (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002).

The qualitative analysis of reading interview scripts, observation notes, or other documents gathered in the data collection process (see Appendices B through I) allowed an educator to determine strengths and impediments through the use of such data (Maxwell, 1996). The analysis of data took place after each component of the data had been acquired. Following each observation, the observation protocol forms were maintained in a Microsoft Word 2013 document. The observation protocol forms were comprehensive, objective, and detailed in relation to determining the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program. The responsive interviewing model was used for data analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The questioning pattern of responsive interviewing was flexible and allowed questions to evolve in response to what the interviewee said; new questions were designed to table the experience of knowledge of each interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Responsive interviewing was personal in nature as it called upon the participants' personal thoughts.

In order to develop accuracy and credibility of the findings, I used triangulation, peer debriefing, and transcript review in the study. Creswell (2009) recommended that using multiple strategies would enhance a researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince the reader of that accuracy. Through triangulation, I associated the data from the interviews, observations, and archival data. If themes were established based on the commonalities of the interviews and observations, then the process was claimed as adding validity to the study (Creswell, 2009). For the transcript

review part of the study, I gave the interviewees the ability to read the transcripts of the interview. The interviewees either approved or disapproved that the data collected were valid. For peer debriefing, I provided documents to a colleague at Walden University, who had successfully completed the Educational Leadership (EdD) doctoral program. I requested feedback on the collection and analysis of data. Using the peer debriefing strategy involved an interpretation beyond myself as the researcher, thus adding validity to the study. If negative or discrepant cases were collected, those data were collected, recorded, and analyzed in the same fashion as all other data. I stayed vigilant to not adhere to an initial intuition and fail to review the counter data.

Observations

Creswell (2009) stated that observations were acceptable for the collection of important information in a qualitative case study. Yin (2009) stated that case studies should occur in the natural setting of the case. Yanow (2002) believed that observations were a significant data source that provided an opportunity for sense-making and yielding data through interactions. During the observation of Title I reading teachers within the instructional setting, the management of instruction illustrated the successful components of the program in order to help students meet expected annual state proficiency levels. One 30- to 60-minute classroom observation was conducted in each participant's classrooms. During the observation, information was maintained on an observation protocol form located on a laptop. The observation protocol form contained the instructional component and the materials and equipment components, which were being utilized within the Title I reading program (see Appendix B). Additionally, the

observation protocol form contained information in relation to the participants, setting, and activities, which were used for the analysis of data (Creswell, 2009).

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the Title I teachers, the principal, and the district's federal program of a specific elementary school (see Appendices G & H). The interviews allowed me to gather information in relation to the teachers' perspectives of the key instructional components of the school's Title I reading program. As Janesick (2004) concluded, interviews were important sources of data in qualitative studies because descriptive data were likely to be acquired from the participants. Additionally, Yin (2009) stated that interviews were important to a case study because the questions developed by me answered the question of *why*. Each adult participant participated in one 15- to 30-minute interview, which was recorded on my phone using the Voice Memos application for review and analysis at a later date. I established mutually convenient interview dates and times with the participants (see Appendix C). Interview protocol questions included the central research question of the research study as well as a list of subsequent questions specific to the Title I reading program that was being evaluated (see Appendices D & E).

Archival Data

In addition to observations and interviews, archival data of the students' standardized test results were reviewed. Permission was obtained from the principal of the participating school to collect the data for this study (see Appendix I). The principal also provided permission to utilize facilities and collect students' demographic and test

data. For the study, the reading achievement levels for the students in the school's Title I reading program were reviewed. The key piece of archival data that was collected for the case study was an assessment tool called the PSSA. The PSSA was a common state standardized assessment tool used in all 501 public school districts across the state of Pennsylvania. Another assessment tool that was used in the research is the Pennsylvania 4Sight Benchmark Assessments. This local assessment was aligned to the PSSA Exams, and it provided an estimate of student performance on the PSSA as well as a guide to classroom instruction and professional development efforts. Unlike the PSSA Exams, the Pennsylvania 4Sight Benchmark Assessment was not required to be utilized by all 501 school districts; however, many school districts in the state routinely incorporated the Pennsylvania 4Sight Benchmark Assessment into their curricula as a means of measuring student growth in reading prior to taking the state mandated assessments each Spring. Annual PSSA scores were provided as archival data that were warehoused by the PDOE as well as by each school district across the state and were available for public consumption. The school's PSSA and 4Sight Benchmark assessment results were found through archival records, most of which were accessible through public forums via the PDOE's online records warehouse and the school districts' websites and/or curricular offices.

Through data collected from the interviews, observations, and archival data, triangulation of the results helped to determine the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in which students were consistently scoring in the 90th percentile (or higher) on standardized state assessments. The results of the study

(see Appendix A) identified how a replication of a model of an effective reading program could be implemented in a Title I school.

Role of the Researcher

As part of a qualitative study, I investigated the data from the role of a Walden student as well as from the role of an assistant principal and federal programs coordinator. As a school administrator, I provided educational planning in the development, implementation, and assessment of the district's Title I reading program. I have been in the field of education for 25 years, with 18 of the 25 years in the capacity of a school principal and 8 years in the role of federal programs coordinator. With a background in federal programs, I was able to easily and thoroughly coordinate my research with the federal programs coordinator of the study school for the collection and analysis of the data. The participants in the study were from a similar school district, in terms of size and socioeconomic background, as the district where I was currently employed. Additionally, the district of study and my district of employment were within the same county, which gave them access to the same intermediate unit where federal programs were managed as a liaison between the school districts and the state.

Because of my experiences as a school principal of a Title I building, as well as my responsibilities as the district's Title I coordinator, I created prejudices in how the participants' responses construed. Title I teachers and federal program coordinators may have responded in a way they believed I would want them to respond. That possibility of bias could have existed. Bias could have created a threat to the interpretation of collected data for this study. Instead, I stressed to the participants that there were no correct or

incorrect responses in the interview process. I asked that all responses for the interview process be candid as the participants were assured of the strictest confidentiality. In the role as the only observer and interviewer in this study, I clearly wanted the participants to understand that I was approaching the interview process from a collegial stance and not a supervisory one. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated that researchers examine their perceptions and how these perceptions might have skewed the research that was being conducted. To ensure that the research was valid and impartial, I maintained objectivity, at all times, while gathering the needed data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved making sense out of text data. Creswell (2009) stated that data analysis involves moving deeper into understanding and making an interpretation of the larger meaning. The analysis of data took place after each component of the data had been acquired. Following each observation, the field notes were maintained in a Microsoft Word 2013 document. The field notes were comprehensive, objective, and detailed in relation to determining the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program (see Appendix D).

The responsive interviewing model was used for data analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The questioning pattern of responsive interviewing was flexible and allowed questions to evolve in response to what the interviewee said; new questions were designed to table the experience of knowledge of each interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Responsive interviewing was personal in nature as it called upon the participants' personal thoughts. Thus, I was able to build trust between the interviewee and me.

The information gathered during data collection was organized and stored in secure databases for both paper and electronic formats. The data collected on paper were stored in a locked area as well as within a locked container (i.e., in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office). The data collected electronically was secured in a database that was password protected on a local intranet, which was also secured and monitored.

The following information was used for the interview document: date, participant number (each participant was identified by number in order to maintain anonymity; e.g., Participant 2), time and length of interview (e.g., 13:00 EST, 45 minutes in length), and interview number (this identified the number of times the participant had been interviewed).

Evidence of Quality and Procedures

In order to develop accuracy and credibility of the findings, I looked to use triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks in the study. Creswell (2009) recommended the use of multiple strategies that would enhance my ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as to convince the reader of that accuracy. Through triangulation, I associated the data from the interviews, observations, and archival data. If themes were established based on the commonalities of the interviews and observations, then the processes were claimed as adding validity to the study (Creswell, 2009). For the member checking part of the study, I gave the interviewees the ability to read the transcripts of the interview. The interviewees then either approved or disapproved that the data collected were valid. For peer debriefing, I provided documents to a colleague at Walden University, who had successfully completed the Educational Leadership (EdD)

doctoral program. I requested feedback on the collection and analysis of data. Using the peer debriefing strategy involved an interpretation beyond me, thus adding validity to the study. If negative or discrepant cases were collected, those data were collected, recorded, and analyzed in the same fashion as all other data. Being a Title I coordinator for several years, I stayed vigilant to not adhere to an initial intuition and fail to review the counter data.

Interviews

Each participant was asked a set of interview questions specific to the Title I reading program in the school of study. The interview questions sought information specific to the participant's role in the reading program. To ensure accuracy, member checks took place after the interview. Through member checking, I confirmed the accuracy of the findings by asking each research participant to confirm them (Creswell, 2008). Following each interview, I transcribed the entire interview. Once each interview was transcribed, I sent the transcription of the interview to the appropriate participant. The participant was given 5 days for member checking to ensure for accuracy as well as to provide additional comments if desired. Each participant was asked to reply within 5 days, via e-mail, to me and provide verification of the transcription of the interview as well as to provide additional comments if preferred. Once I received verification from all of the participants, I reviewed all of the data. I coded and made notes of the analysis. Cross-referencing was completed to note common themes throughout all of the interviews.

Any characteristics that might have identified the participants were excluded in the final transcriptions. The teachers who were interviewed are identified as Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 as a means of concealing their actual names. The data collected on paper have been stored in a locked area as well as within a locked container (i.e., in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office). The data collected electronically have been secured in a database that was password protected on a local intranet, which was also secured and monitored.

During the interviews, the questions and recording device were with me at all times. They were transferred into my home, transcribed into a password-protected document on a password-protected computer, and then placed in a locked, password-protected safe. All data on the laptop were transferred to a flash drive. Once the data were transferred to a flash drive, the data were deleted on the laptop. Once I was done working on the results, I placed the data back into the password-protected safe. All data will stay in the locked safe until it is destroyed 5 to 10 years after the study is officially over.

Observations

One 30- to 60-minute observation was conducted in each participant's classroom. A total of five classroom observations were completed. One observation was conducted for each grade level teacher in Grades 1 through 4, and one observation was also conducted for the reading specialist who taught students in Grades 1 through 4. Prior to each classroom observation, I shared a classroom observation protocol form with each participant. The purpose of this was to ensure that each participant knew exactly what I would be attempting to identify during his observation. The observation protocol form

contained the instructional component and the materials and equipment components, which were being utilized within the participant's classroom. During each observation, I focused on seven specific components in each participant's classroom. Those components were as follows: student grouping patterns, the presented curriculum, instructional methods and techniques, the instructional program and delivery of said instruction, the scope and sequence of instruction, the use of instructional materials and media resources, and the differentiation of instruction. During each observation, the information was collected and maintained on an observation protocol form located on my laptop. Once I conducted all of the classroom observations, data were reviewed and coded using analysis. Cross-referencing was completed to note common themes throughout all of the observations.

Archival Data

Student standardized test scores were reviewed and evaluated to determine the achievement levels for students in the school's Title I reading program. The PSSA exam is given near the conclusion of the school (late Spring) in every public school in the state of Pennsylvania. Additionally, the school of study chose to administer the Pennsylvania 4Sight Benchmark Assessments as a means of providing a baseline of how students will perform on the PSSA exam. The 4Sight Benchmark Assessment allowed the teachers to review their students' performance in reading and make the necessary adjustments to instruction and curriculum in order help student meet grade level expectations prior to the PSSA exams.

I was able to gather the archival data from the PDOE through archival records, most of which were accessed through PDOE's online records warehouse and the school districts' website. Permission was obtained from the principal/federal programs coordinator of the participating school to collect the data for this study (see Appendix I). Information included in the archival data was triangulated with observation and interview data in order to identify common themes. I reviewed and analyzed archival data for each grade separately.

Data Triangulation

I collected various data as a means to analyze various components of a highly effective Title I reading program. The data were collected and analyzed separately. However, I combined the various data to find commonalities amongst the findings. Lodico (2010) stated that qualitative data is most reliable when triangulation occurs and a research question is evaluated from multiple perspectives. The information gathered was compared as a means of utilizing various forms of data collection in order to find commonalities within the findings. As Schaap (2011) concluded, looking across various research methodologies to study a phenomenon provides triangulation. Reviewing data specific to interviews, observations, and archival data allowed me to identify themes across the various forums. Five teacher interviews, two administrator interviews, five classroom observations, and review of archival data in the form of standardized test scores were all conducted and used as part of the triangulation. Using triangulation of the data helped me to ensure the validity of all data collected.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Evaluation

The limitation in relation to this program evaluation might have included researcher bias, non-truthful responses from participants, interference from me that affected the participants' responses, and the accuracy of transcription. The scope of this study extended from one, but no more than five, classrooms of students from a highly effective Title I reading school within the northeastern U.S. A single classroom would have included students in a one particular grade (Grade 1 thru 4) with a class size of 5-25 for the observation component of triangulation. For the interview participants in the study, the program evaluation included a certified instructional reading specialist who was formally trained in the curricular and instructional development of a highly effective Title I remedial reading program, a school principal, the district's federal programs coordinator, and four regular education classroom teachers who collaborated with the reading specialist/Title I teacher. As 20 of the approximately 25 teachers in the observed school did not possess the necessary certification to deliver said Title I support services, they were not considered for participation in this study.

A delimitation of the study involved the review of only the instructional component of a highly effective Title I reading program. For the reasons of time limitation and overabundance of research content, the components of management, materials and equipment, professional development, and parental/community involvement were not included in this case study.

Outcomes

The data were collected and analyzed separately. However, through the use of triangulation, there were commonalities and differences, which contributed to the validity of the data. From the data analysis, there were themes that emerged: assessment, cooperative learning, reading specialist, "Reading Wonders" from McGraw-Hill, leveled readers, student grouping, and curriculum. All of the themes were utilized to address the research question of the project study. In order to determine the components of a highly effective Title I reading program, I wanted to know what the teachers and administrators associated with the Title I program as strengths which impacted students' achievement of state mandated standardized assessments.

Results of the Study

For this project study, data were collected from participant interviews, classroom observations, and review of archival data. I analyzed and compared the data and common themes were determined amongst the various information.

Interviews

Creswell (2012) stated that interviews allowed the participants in the study to express their feelings using their own words. I conducted one interview with a participant. For the teacher interviews, five interviews were conducted. Each interview consisted of six open-ended questions. For the administrator interviews, two interviews were conducted. Each interview consisted of 14 open-ended questions (see Appendix F). Each interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and member checked. The participants were e-mailed a copy of their transcriptions to check for accuracy, make corrections if

necessary, and provide additional information if desired. The participants were given 5 days to conduct the aforementioned tasks. Pseudonyms were created for each participant to assure confidentiality.

Once the participants validated all interviews, I read and analyzed the data. The transcripts of the interviews was included in Appendices G & H. Notes were taken to identify key concepts and commonalities amongst the interviews. By keeping such notes, I was able to identify various themes in the data.

Theme 1: Small groups. Three of the five teachers interviewed as well as both of the administrators who were interviewed stated that teaching reading to students in small groups was very advantageous to helping students meet expected grade-level proficiencies. With smaller numbers, teachers felt that it was a more accurate way to pinpoint students' weaknesses and provide the necessary remediation. Furthermore, the Title I reading specialist stated that in addition to having student in small groups, also having them for short periods of time is helpful so that she is better able to switch topics frequently during a single session without the fear of losing students' attention to over repetition. The Title I teacher also claimed that the smaller groups allowed her to present the exact regular classroom curriculum but in a manner that is slower paced and more geared to the specific learning needs of each student. The Title I coordinator added that grouping in small numbers, and by grade level, better allows the Title I teacher to determine the needs of the learners and develop the most advantageous program for each student during a 30-minute session 2 or 3 times during an instructional week.

Theme 2: Importance of the reading specialist. All of the teachers and administrators who were interviewed stressed the importance of the Title I Reading Specialist to the success of the reading program. The reading specialist was a certified elementary education teacher who held a Reading Specialist certification from the state. The reading specialist planned, implemented, and maintained instructional programs in literacy. The reading specialist conducted lessons in two formats: push-in and pull-out. The reading specialist pulled-out students to her classroom for small group instruction. This instruction mirrors the regular education classroom curriculum with specific skills targeting areas of students' specific reading deficiencies. The pull-out classes typically occur 2 or 3 times per week per grade level. For push-in instruction, the reading specialist worked with her Title I students in the regular education classroom 1 or 2 times per week. In addition to having a reading specialist work with Title I students, the building principal stated that the reading specialist needed to be knowledgeable of current research-based methodologies. Having a reading specialist with an in-depth understanding of the Title I program and giving students the necessary time, instruction, and resources is essential in helping them to read on grade level. In addition to routine responsibilities during the regular instructional day, the reading specialist also works with Title I students during an afterschool tutoring program. Tutoring occurs twice a week for an hour in each session. The reading specialist works with the students, whose parents have voluntarily enrolled them in the tutoring program. The work the reading specialist does with the students during afterschool tutoring is an extension of the work with them during the instructional day with an extra emphasis on students' individual DIBELS scores.

Theme 3: Curriculum. The current core reading program being used at the school of study is "Reading Wonders", published by McGraw-Hill Education, built on the Common Core Standards. With this program, the teachers provided a clear instructional path that is systematic in the presentation of material in terms of introduction, teaching, application, differentiation, integration, and assessment. The Title I coordinator stated that the selected curriculum is not required by the state; however, having it aligned to the PA Common Core Standards gives students an advantage of learning what is expected from the PA Department of Education via the annual state assessments. Furthermore, the school's principal claimed that the "Reading Wonder" program easily allowed for better individualization of instruction for students. Moreover, one teacher stated that the "Reading Wonders" program effectively allows for her to teach the necessary grade-level material that is needed for required proficiency in said grade level while also preparing students for what they will need in subsequent grade levels; all aligned with the expectations of the PA Common Core Standards.

Theme 4: Assessment. With the accountability for student achievement, and the corresponding relevance tied into educator effectiveness, assessment was a dominant part of the interviews with all of the participants. Specific assessment data including DIBELS, PSSA exams, and the 4Sight Benchmark Assessments were formal assessment teachers and administrators used to determine students' eligibility in the Title I reading program as well as the means to have the students demonstrate learned proficiencies in a standardized manner. Administrators and teachers used the aforementioned multiple assessment criteria as well as report card grades and teacher recommendations in order to

qualify students for Title I reading services. Students' progress was monitored through the various formative assessments as a means of adjusting intervention services based upon a student's reading performance. Specific to the PSSA and 4Sight exams, teachers looked at the data and reviewed the anchors that displayed students' weaknesses in reading. Having the students assessed at least three times a year was essential to having an appropriate sample size. Furthermore, this allowed the teachers to design their lessons based upon what the students needed to know in addition to what deficiencies already existed in their reading. The teachers utilized the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System (SAS) website to help them acquire additional resources for their classroom instruction and to ensure that what was being taught was aligned to the PA Common Core Standards.

Observations

I conducted one classroom observation for each of the five teacher participants. I completed an observation protocol form during each observation. Once all observations were completed, I read and analyzed the data. The completed observation protocol forms are provided (see Appendix D). Notes were taken to identify key concepts and commonalities amongst the observations. By keeping such notes, I was able to identify various themes in the data.

Theme 5: Cooperative learning. Slavin (2011) stated that cooperative learning referred to instructional methods that teachers used to organize students into small groups, in which students worked together to help one another learn academic content. All of the observed classes contained some form of cooperative learning. Three of the five observed teachers called cooperative learning by name. Students worked collectively

in small numbers to complete reading activities which required participation from each group member. Moreover, one teacher stressed how cooperative learning taught students how to read, how to question, and how to respond.

Theme 6: Differentiation/level readers/grouping. In differentiated classrooms, teachers respond to the specific needs of the learner. Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999) named content, processes, and products as components that are differentiated in a classroom. Thus, teachers have differentiated instruction by adjusting content, assessment, performance tasks, and instructional strategies. In the observed lessons, teachers differentiated the lesson through the use of leveled readers and assigned students to specific groups based upon the use of the leveled readers. In three of the five observed lessons, teachers had students assigned to a "low", "middle", or "high" group based upon demonstrate reading proficiencies. The stories, which were all part of the "Reading Wonders" series from McGraw-Hill, were similar in title and content. However, the depth of rigor of each leveled reader varied based upon the reading level of the students. Additionally, within the leveled grouping, the teacher established peer-reading activities in which all students participated. In the peer reading activities, students used repetition and guided practice to progress through the reading activities. They also utilized visual aides, hands-on learning materials that were monitored by the teachers who adjusted the activities accordingly; assisted by a paraprofessional in one of the observed classrooms.

Archival Data

I gained access to the student standardized test scores for the school of study. The student test scores for the PSSA exam and 4Sight Benchmark Assessment were reviewed

in order to determine trends in students' achievement throughout the school year, from local baseline tests at the beginning of the school year through the state assessments in the Spring. The data were presented and reviewed for a three-year period, which included the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school year. Students qualified for Title I services as socio-economically disadvantaged demographic given their participation in the school's free/reduced-price meal program. The Title I students made up a subgroup through this classification and were then compared to the overall number of students within the school as a whole. Additionally, the Title I students' test scores were presented in relation to the total percentage of students who scored at "Proficient" or "Advanced" and how that percentage related to a state-issued performance goal for the school overall. The criteria which made up the scores consisted of an overall composite reading percentage score which included the following percentage scores: reading open-ended, reading analysis and interpretation, reading critically, reading independently, interpretation and analysis of fiction and non-fiction. Once all archival data were collected, I read and analyzed the data. The archival data were provided (see Appendix J). Notes were taken to identify key concepts and commonalities amongst the data.

In all three years of the reviewed data, the Title I students outperformed the state-issued goals. Goals were specific to the data of Title I students who scored either "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the PSSA exams. The margin of difference (outperformance) was 10% in 2012-2013, 9% in 2013-2014, and 9% in 2014-2015. Additionally, the Title I subgroup also contributed to the overall school's outperformance

of state-issued goals similarly as follows: 5% in 2012-2013, 12% in 2013-2014, and 5% in 2014-2015.

In all three years of the reviewed data, the Title I students outperformed their peers at other schools within the district. Data were specific to the Title I students who scored either "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the PSSA exams. The margin of difference (outperformance) was 2% in 2012-2013, 5% in 2013-2014, and 7% in 2014-2015. Additionally, the Title I subgroup also contributed to the overall school's outperformance of their peers at other schools within the district similarly as follows: 1% in 2012-2013, 2% in 2013-2014, and 5% in 2014-2015. In all three years of the reviewed data, the composite reading percentage scores of the Title I students reflected an upward trend from baseline assessments given at the beginning and middle of the school year, in the form of the 4Sight Benchmark Assessment, to the year-end assessment, in the form of the state-issued PSSA exam. From the baseline scores to the final assessment, scores increased as follows: 7% in 2012-2013, 6% in 2013-2014, and 11% in 2014-2015. Data illustrated how school personnel adjusted the development of curriculum, delivery of instruction, management of resources, and other various educational components through data-driven decision-making.

Conclusion

Section 2 presented the qualitative research design and approach to be used for this study. The design of the project (i.e., intrinsic case study), the participants, the methods for ethical consideration of the participants, the data collection plan, the role of the researcher, the data analysis plan, the outcomes, and the limitations and delimitations

of the evaluation were all presented. Data collection results were provided. Interviews, observations, and archival data were implemented for the collection of data at the school of study. The details of facilitation of how data were collected were provided along with the corresponding documents for adherence to the data collection process. Following data collection, analysis of the data was conducted. Triangulation of the data was conducted. Through the triangulation process, six themes were evident throughout the data were provided. The themes included small groups, importance of the reading specialist, curriculum, assessment, cooperative learning, and differentiation and leveled readers. Explanations for each theme were provided along with how the themes led to recommendations for replication of a model on behalf of the district's Title I reading students.

Section 3 provided a detailed account of the research methodology and a review of the literature used in this study was presented; as was the project's implications on social change. Finally, in Section 4, my reflections and conclusions were presented in relation to the case study/program evaluation.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

For Section 3, I present the product of my study, which was a processed-based program evaluation summary of a highly effective Title I reading program in a Pennsylvania elementary school. Title I, enacted under ESEA, was a policy that was committed to closing the achievement gap between low-income students and other students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). The project study was completed to determine the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program. The objective of Title I was to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children met challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a). A program evaluation summary offered information and data to the principal, federal programs coordinator, regular education classroom teachers, and Title I teacher (i.e., reading specialists) in the local school of study. The summary contained the analyses of teacher interviews, classroom observations, and archival data. The data were used to determine the key instructional components of the highly effective Title I program. Section 3 included the rationale, goals, review of the literature, project description, and project implications for local stakeholders as well as for social change.

Program Description and Goals

For this project study, a program evaluation was completed to determine the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program. By conducting teacher

interviews, visiting classrooms, and reviewing archival data, information was gathered to determine the key components of a successful Title I reading program and to replicate the components in a local school setting. The Title I reading program that was reviewed was designed to have the students, who were struggling in reading, meet expected state reading proficiency levels for each grade level within the school of study. The value of the study is significant as the Title I student participants outperformed the state-issued goals. The average 3-year margin of difference (outperformance of non-Title I peers) was nearly 10% over a 3-year span from 2012-2015 (see Appendix J). For the project evaluation of a highly effective Title I reading program, triangulation was as follows: (a) conduct individual interviews with school and district administrator and classroom teachers to gather the pros and cons of the Title I reading program, (b) conduct classroom observations to witness the implementation of the Title I program directly with various grade levels of students, (c) review archival data of local and state standardized assessments that are used to determine student achievement of grade-level reading standards. By identifying key components of a highly effective Title I reading program, the study findings have strengthened the knowledge base on which decisions can be made to evaluate and to further improve the program. A more detailed discussion may be found in the Executive Summary (see Appendix A).

Rationale

For the project study, I chose a processed-based program evaluation in order to identify the components of a highly effective Title I reading program that had been successful over several years in helping Title I students read on expected grade-

proficiency levels. As Creswell (2012) concluded, program evaluations help determine the value of a program in order to share those findings with the stakeholders of the program. Using a program evaluation gave me information regarding the key components of the Title I reading program through qualitative interviews, classroom observations, and archival data. The interviews conducted with the various participants allowed me to gain what the participants' saw as pros and cons of the current Title I reading program. Additionally, I inquired further about how the participants could improve an already successful Title I reading program. Teacher perspective was important because it provided the instruction that led to improvement in student reading performance (Zhu, 2014).

The program evaluation allowed me to identify the differences in Title I students' local and state standardized assessments in both a comparison with their peers in the same school as well as with their counterparts in a neighboring school within the district. Through the triangulation of the data, I found that there were six themes that were evident. These themes were further studied as part of the literature review to determine their meaning and effect in the results of the study.

Review of the Professional Literature

The literature review revealed what was known about the instructional components in a successful Title I reading program and their influence on student achievement. Utilization of a project evaluation format was used for this study. A qualitative research design was employed for my project. The design used for the case study was an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). For this case study, key ideas and search

terms were used for the provision of research. These key ideas and search terms included the following: *theories of Title I teaching and learning, essential features of Title I programs, assessment indicators, instructional leadership, parental and community involvement, professional development,* and *leadership paradigms*. Additionally, the following ideas and search terms were included, as they became emerging themes during the analysis of data: *cooperative learning, reading specialist, leveled readers, student grouping,* and *curriculum.* Moreover, theoretical and research-based sources were used for the collection of research. Such sources included peer-reviewed journals, published dissertations, published national studies, and educational labs for research and study. Finally, databases such as ERIC, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, Education Research Complete, SAGE databases, and Google Scholar were utilized for the collection of scholarly reviewed resources, from 1965 through 2015, specific to the study of the problem. Queries for relevant articles were based on the title of the article and/or the digital object identifier number. After extensive reading and review of articles and abstracts, the resources for the literature review were organized by relevance.

Program Evaluation

A program evaluation is a systematic method that determines the success of a specific program using gathered data (Royce, Thayer, & Padgett, 2010). In education, a researcher may use program evaluations as a means to determine the effectiveness of existing instructional programs. Specifically, program evaluations should provide explicit information about programs (Yong-Lynn, 2011). Program evaluations examine data to see if program objectives are being met and then give sufficient feedback to influence

decision-making with regards to the program (Zohrabi, 2012). Creswell (2012) stated that there are three main reasons to conduct program evaluations: to gain knowledge, to make improvements, and for decision making purposes. For this study, the key components of a Title I reading program were reviewed and evaluated. Robinson, Cotabish, Wood, and O'Tuel (2014) concluded that evaluations could serve as a powerful tool to increase the knowledge of a practitioner and to effect programmatic improvements. Focusing on the relative immediate impact (and thus the intended use of results) is critical to evaluation, because one important goal of evaluation is use (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Such depth of analysis allows evaluations to establish a baseline for making decisions (Grigal, Dwyre, Emmett, & Emmett, 2012). The stakeholders in this study are the students and staff members associated with the Title I program in the local school. Through the results of the study, a replication model of the key instructional components was presented for implementation. In order to accurately evaluate the program, interactions were necessary with the participants in order to gather information and opinion. An evaluation of an educational program gives program stakeholders an overview of the program, how it is being implemented, and if the program is achieving its objectives (Tuckwiller & Childress, 2012).

In order to determine the type of program evaluation required, the goal of the evaluation must first be identified (Warren et al., 2013). McNamara (2002) stated that the researcher must determine the following when designing a program evaluation: establish a purpose, identify the audience, determine the sources, define the information to be collected, and create a timeline for the information to be collected. The Title I reading

program evaluation was process-evaluation based. McNamara (2002) concluded that process-based evaluations are geared to fully understand how a program works and how it produces the results that it does. McNamara also claimed that process-based evaluations are useful for accurately portraying to outside parties how a program truly operates (e.g., for replication elsewhere). The primary purpose of the project study from the very beginning was to offer recommendations for the replication of the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program within any school.

Program evaluation findings can be used as a meaningful catalyst when promoting the successes of a program as well as when recommending effective change. Nelsestuen, Autio, and Campbell-Ault (2013) stated that success is more likely to happen when multiple stakeholders have opportunities to discuss and apply the evaluation results to meaningful program decisions. Program evaluations also serve as a quality utility when making instructional decisions (Ball & Christ, 2012). Thus, the evaluation will serve the information needs of the intended users. Zohrabi (2012) determined that program evaluations typically provide direction in addition to closely examining every aspect of a program in detail. Miller and Dalton (2011) claimed that challenges, such as identifying the outcome and determining the impact, are encountered with program evaluations. Kushner (2015) concluded that the process of evaluation is an iterative one and results of program evaluations can help launch refinements to future programs. For further reaching impact of this program evaluation, a model of the key components of a Title I reading program could be developed for implementation in similar educational institutions around the country.

Student Grouping/Differentiated Instruction

Interviews with the participants, as well as observations of the Title I classrooms, revealed that teaching reading to students in small groups was very advantageous to helping students meet expected grade-level proficiencies. With smaller numbers, teachers felt that it was a more accurate way to pinpoint students' weaknesses and provide the necessary remediation. Watts-Taffe et al. (2012) stated that from kindergarten through third grade, students made greater gains in word reading and reading comprehension when their teachers differentiated instruction, using small, flexible learning groups during a center or station time, than did students whose teachers provided high-quality but primarily whole-class instruction. The Title I teacher also stated that through differentiated instruction, the smaller groups allowed her to present the exact regular classroom curriculum but in a manner that was slower paced and more geared to the specific learning needs of each student. According to Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, and Hardin (2014), differentiation is an approach to curriculum and instruction that systematically takes student differences into account in designing opportunities for each student to engage with information and ideas and to develop essential skills. Being able to recognize and teach according to different student talents and learning styles is an essential component of differentiated instruction (Morgan, 2014). Differentiation provides a framework for responding to differences in students' current and developing levels of readiness, their learning profiles, and their interests to optimize the match between students and learning opportunities (Dixon et al., 2014). Teachers need to create a variety of entry points to ensure that differing student abilities, strengths, and needs are

all taken into consideration (DeJesus, 2012). When educators implement differentiated instruction, educators are initiating a process that aids in addressing the needs of students, who may need extra instructional help or enrichment, and that permits the educators to assess the impact of the instructional lessons being taught (Cummings, 2011). In an interview with one of the participants, the classroom teacher stressed how cooperative learning taught students how to read, how to question, and how to respond. Correlational evidence suggested that instruction provided in small groups may be up to 4 times as effective as instruction delivered to the entire class (Connor, Morrison, & Slominski, 2006). Teachers may be more sensitive to students' response to what is being taught and can change instructional strategies and activities more flexibly to optimize learning (Connor, Morrison, Fishman, et al., 2011).

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is defined as an instructional method that teachers use to organize students into small groups, in which students work together to help one another learn academic content (Slavin, Lake, Chambers, et al., 2011). Puzio and Colby (2013) claimed that cooperative learning is viewed as structured, prescriptive, and directive about how students work together. In one of the participant's classroom, students worked collectively in cooperative learning groups to complete reading activities, which required participation from each group member. Russell et al. (2013) stated that students benefit greatly when readers stop frequently during the story to define unfamiliar words, to discuss events in the story, and after reading to engage students in conversations about the book through cooperative learning practices. One of the participant teachers stressed

how cooperative learning taught her students how to read, how to question, and how to respond. The teacher also stated that cooperative learning taught her students how to be good listeners and good citizens of the classroom. Khan and Ahmad (2014) claimed that the essential elements of cooperative learning include heterogeneous grouping, positive interdependence, individual accountability, social and collaborative skills, and group processing. As Safro and Elen (2011) concluded, cooperative learning is essential because higher mental functions such as reasoning, critical thinking, and reflection originate in social interactions and are then internalized by the individuals in the group. In addition, cooperative learning has the potential to socialize students to empathize with various points of view while also encouraging them to work together with classmates in a common cause of self-improvement despite differences that could otherwise divide them (Schul, 2011). For learners in a diverse classroom, cooperative learning can be effective for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and English learners because of the social context and opportunities to practice oral language skills (Bui & Fagan, 2013). Laverick (2014) claimed that such diversity encouraged academic and social growth that could be enhanced through the use of technology-based teaching strategies. Laverick concluded that such technology-based teaching strategies could encourage collaboration and innovation to provide instruction that was engaging for children that developed literacy and provided academic motivation.

Leveled Readers and Curriculum

In the participants' classrooms, teachers differentiated the lesson through the use of leveled readers and assigned students to specific groups based upon the use of these

instructional resources. Glasswell and Ford (2011) defined leveled readers as the practice of identifying the difficulty level of texts or assigning levels to texts. For the observed classrooms, the stories, which were all part of the "Reading Wonders" series from McGraw-Hill, were similar in title and content. However, the depth of rigor of each leveled reader varied based upon the reading level of the students. To identify a text's difficulty level, current systems of leveling take into account multiple criteria, including the structural characteristics of the text, the appearance and placement of print on the page, the use of illustrations, the complexity of concepts and students' familiarity with a topic, the language predictability, and the repetition of words or excerpts (Kontovourki, 2012). Glasswell and Ford (2011) claimed that diagnostic assessment, coupled with flexible needs-based grouping, is important when working to overcome the pervasive confusion between the right leveled reader and a reader's specific learning needs.

Teachers need to make careful decisions about which texts to use for which students, in which contexts, and for which purposes (Halladay, 2012). Halladay and Moses (2013) claimed that teachers need to strike a balance between providing all students with exposure to challenging, grade-level texts and the common elementary practice of using leveled reading materials aligned with individual students' reading levels. Students should be expected to read widely from texts that they want to read, building their background knowledge and vocabularies while developing morally, emotionally, and intellectually (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned, which provides a coherent vision for learning that fosters achievement in the intellectual, ethical, and social development of the learners (Jackson

& Lunenburg, 2010). An alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment is evident in the current core reading program, "Reading Wonders" by McGraw-Hill Education, which was implemented at the school of study. The "Reading Wonders" program was built on the Common Core Standards. With this program, the teachers provided a clear instructional path that was systematic in the presentation of material in terms of introduction, teaching, application, differentiation, integration, and assessment. The Title I coordinator stated that the selected curriculum was not required by the state; however, having it aligned to the Common Core Standards gave students an advantage of learning what was expected from the PA Department of Education via the annual state assessments.

Zacher-Pandya (2012) claimed that teachers must make conscious, informed decisions about which parts of the given curriculum they will use, and why, and which parts they will jettison, and why. An example of teacher discretion was evident when one participant stated that the "Reading Wonders" program effectively allowed for her to teach the necessary grade-level material that was needed for required proficiency in said grade level while also preparing students for what they would need in subsequent grade levels, all aligned with the expectations of the Common Core Standards.

Reading Specialist

In the local school, Title I funds were used directly for the staffing of certified reading specialists. This was also the case of for the school of study. All of the participants, who were interviewed for the project study, stressed the importance of the Title I Reading Specialist to the success of the reading program. Kern (2011) concluded

that today's reading specialists must demonstrate competency in the following six standards: (1) develop foundational knowledge, which examines theoretical and empirical research; (2) implement curriculum and instruction, which uses varied instructional approaches and the traditional, digital, and online resources to implement delivery of services; (3) encourage diversity, which uses literacy curriculum and instructional practices which advocate for equity; (4) establish a literate environment, to design physical and social environments to optimize students reading and writing learning opportunities; (5) integrate assessment and evaluation, to understand and utilize assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction; (6) develop professional learning and leadership; to demonstrate foundational knowledge and to design, facilitate and lead in the learning process for educational colleagues. Additionally, today's reading specialists appear to be doing much more that providing individualized support to struggling readers as they assume numerous roles including teacher support-oriented roles to managerial ones (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014). Kissel, Mraz, Algozzine, and Stover (2011) claimed that the high-priority roles of the reading specialist are to be the instructor of students, identifier of students' strengths and needs, and to be a coach to colleagues in the curricular and instructional process.

Scott, Cortina, & Carlisle (2012) stated that the role of the reading specialist is multi-faceted and can be categorized into four categories: a student-oriented role, a managerial role, a data-oriented role, and a teacher development-oriented role. The many responsibilities of the reading specialist was evident in the school of study as the reading specialist was expected to provide students with the necessary time, instruction, and

resources which were essential in helping them to read on grade level. The reading specialist's responsibilities included working with the regular education classroom teacher, in both push-in and pull-out formats, to target areas of students' specific reading deficiencies. Parrott & Keith (2015) stated that both push-in and pull-out options could benefit from the use of literacy stations. Literacy stations are areas within the classroom, which support students' critical thinking, problem solving, research skills, and collaborative abilities (Parrott & Keith, 2015). Through literacy stations, the reading specialist was able to work with small groups or individuals on vocabulary, phonics and decoding, comprehension, or writing.

At the school of study, the reading specialist was commissioned with working with Title I students during afterschool tutoring session. During tutor sessions, the reading specialist placed emphasis on students' individual DIBELS scores as a means of promoting their reading proficiency levels. When students' goals are based on assessment data, instruction is likely to be more directly aligned to target individual needs; thus, allowing the reading specialist to graph data and develop aimlines for on-course correction (Helf & Cooke, 2011). Helf and Cooke (2011) also claimed that such data can allow the reading specialist to work with progress monitoring and help to formatively evaluate how students are performing in relation to learning goals.

Project Description

The project was a presentation of the program evaluation findings of the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program. The findings of the project were presented in Section 2. The findings were presented in a qualitative format.

Subsequent analysis and validation of the data collection revealed important findings from the school of study. Transcripts of the participants' interviews, notes from the classroom observations, and charts presenting standardized assessment results were reported in a manner that were easy to understand by interested stakeholders. I then analyzed and compared the data to determine common themes.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The resources found at the local school of study were the primary means in the development and implementation of key components of a highly effective Title I reading program. Key components of the researched Title I reading program included the availability of particular curricular resources, the implementation and delivery of certain instructional techniques, and the placement of state-certified personnel. The curricular resources were aligned with instruction and assessment that allowed the classroom teacher to use diagnostic information when developing and implementing educational programs. Such educational programs were built on the Common Core Standards, which provided necessary grade-level material for both current-grade level development and for preparation of ensuing grade-level reading proficiencies. Instructional techniques determined at the research site encouraged student grouping that focused on smaller class sizes. The participating teachers stated that being able to develop flexible needs-based groups, via smaller class sizes, allowed them to best meet the individual reading needs of each student in a manner that was manageable and effective in terms of targeting individual student discrepancies in reading proficiencies. Additionally, the emphasis placed on differentiated instruction allowed the teachers to address specific learning

needs and to design opportunities for individual student engagement without the apprehension of students feeling spotlighted for distinct reading deficiencies within the regular education classroom. The participants stated that, through differentiated instruction, more flexibility was developed, which led to more optimized learning for their students.

Within the school of study, the use of cooperative learning demonstrated how all students were better engaged in the learning process. According to the participants observed and interviewed, cooperative learning activities helped students to build interdependence, develop social and collaborative skills, and encourage innovation needed for the various needs of 21st century society. Of all the needed potential resources, the participants unanimously concluded that the need for a state-certified reading specialist, who worked with the Title I reading students in both push-in and pull-out learning environments, was essential in helping students to meet expected reading proficiencies at every grade level. The reading specialist, who was also given the title of Title I teacher in the school of study, was an individual who expected to have multiple roles within the Title I reading program. The reading specialist was expected to develop and implement instructional programs that were specific to the development of each student's reading needs, utilized various data-oriented information to drive said programming, and provided needed teacher support to colleagues throughout the school's learning environment. Such supports included time both during the regular instructional day as well as during specific Title I funded activities such as afterschool tutoring. In summary, it was my recommendation to support and encourage the replication of the

potential resources in the local school's Title I reading program. The need for all of the aforementioned potential resources was highlighted and confirmed in the professional literature provided.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers to the implementation of the key components of a highly effective reading program would include costs, class size, teacher planning and implementation, and time. Cost would be the greatest barrier as the local school would have to hire more reading specialists through local funding as Title I financial resources are a finite amount determined by a federal formula based on the number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. As recommended by the participants, the need for more reading specialists/Title I teachers within individual buildings was the single greatest influence for having students close gaps in grade-level reading proficiencies. Cost to employ reading specialists, beyond the availability of federal funds, would fall directly upon the local district on a perennial basis. The fiscal concern is also compounded due to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's inability to pass a 2015-2016 budget, which contains provisions specific to educational funding (Pennsylvania School Boards Association, 2015). Participants voiced concerns regarding the need for smaller class size and time for implementation of needed curricular and instructional resources. The curricular and instructional resources included the necessity for keeping pace with educational technology. Staying current with such technologies was a daunting task as teachers need to be able to teach students how to use the technology, specific to curricular needs and how they transcend to the individual learning necessities of students. Time for

teachers to meet with students in small groups, in order to differentiate instruction and develop flexible-learning opportunities, was always a challenge according to the participants. However, recognizing and discussing this barrier, including information about them, and focusing on what can be done current resources, could assist in minimizing the obstacles teacher face with implementing the components of a highly effective Title I reading program. Additionally, it would also be the responsibility of the building principal, along with central office curricular administrators, to understand the benefit of hiring the needed personnel, purchasing curricular and instructional resources, and allotting for teacher collaboration through meaningful professional development in helping every student meet state required grade level reading proficiencies.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Upon acceptance of my completed doctoral study, I will immediately share the research findings with the district's Director of Elementary Instruction, the district's Director of Secondary Instruction, and with fellow principals in the district's other Title I school buildings. The offer will include a presentation of the statistical findings as well as the qualitative results. The presentation will consist of a verbal overview accompanied with the necessary documentation from the research study. If the two Directors of Instruction deem necessary, I would eagerly present the research findings to the district Superintendent and School Board of Directors and answer questions at their convenience.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

The responsibilities associated with the implementation of the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program will rest with the stakeholders. The Federal

Programs coordinator and Title I school principals will be responsible for the continuation of Title I reading services throughout the district as well as for implementing the changes I have recommended for the program. The school principals, the individual classroom teachers, and the various Title I reading specialists throughout the district need to oversee the daily program operations and for monitoring any changes to the Title I reading program within their respective schools. My responsibility as the school principal is to keep the proposed Title I program current and relevant through research, input, and professional literature. If there are any needed changes, additions, deletions, or modifications to the Title I program, I would seek approval from the district's central office administration as to adhere to all district policies, collective bargaining agreements, and routines specific to implementation of all educational programming. For students, regular participation in the Title I reading classes, along with a desire to meet state required grade-level reading proficiency expectations, was the responsibility associated with every learner within the program.

Project Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

This project study was important to the local school community as it addressed an educational programming need for students within the Title I reading program. A program evaluation, which encouraged social change by evaluating the validity of a nationally recognized school of excellence's Title I program designed to increase the reading level of students. This project would also impact the local school community by possibly impacting the Title I reading program at other buildings in the district. The

students targeted for the Title I reading program need to improve their reading proficiencies, and it is in the best interest of the entire school community to offer them with the best instructional program possible. Examination of the findings of a neighboring nationally recognized Title I program should help to improve the Title I program at the local school. Thus, the local community should have greater confidence in the Title I reading program of all its schools' Title I reading programs.

Students

Throughout this project study, students at the local site can benefit from the expertise of certified staff, curricular design, instructional delivery, and presentation of educational resources, including current technologies. These experiences can provide students with the needed skills not only to meet state expected proficiency levels, but also to help promote literacy skills and practices needed to be productive 21st Century citizens in a world driven by constant scripted, digital information. Social change implications should transpire as more students improve their literacy skills and are able to comprehend on-level reading expectations though Grade 12 and beyond. Students, who read on expected developmental levels, even into adulthood, will benefit from being able to contribute positively to society and less likely to become dependent on social services.

Teachers and Administrators

This project could benefit teachers who teach Title I student, in both a pull-out and push-in settings, by providing them with current, research-based, peer-approved measures of the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program that can be replicated within their local school. Additionally, for those teachers who do not work

directly on the literacy skills of Title I students, they could also benefit, as the students would possess a higher level of literacy skills that could be integrated into the reading and critical-thinking skills in every subject of study for a student. For administrators, this project could provide them with a tool for providing the needed educational programming to replicate the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program within their local school. The school principal will review the current Title I reading program being offered within his school, find similarities in what has proven successful in this study as a means of continuation, and make recommendations to implement absent or deficient components through the appropriate curricular and instructional planning processes.

Far-Reaching

Hobbs (2011) stated that literacy in the 21st century extends well beyond reading, writing, speaking, and listening. That is why all students, including children who are included in Title I remedial reading support services, need to be ready for the expectations that await them post-high school and well into the 21st century. This project can provide a framework for districts around the country, and possibly abroad, to implement a locally researched approach that provides Title I students in striving for grade-level proficiency on a continuous basis. If other schools could benefit from the findings in this study, the achievement gap between Title I reading students and their non-Title I counterparts would begin to shrink at a faster rate causing disproportion to be reduced and potentially eliminated. The effects of making programmatic changes at the earliest stages are likely to have a lifelong impact, as students need the necessary literacy skills, in all forms of prose, to maximize their impact on the world for both personal and

professional success. The evaluation of this project is recommended as a model for future evaluation of the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program. The findings may also lead other researchers to evaluate other programs as a means of making further developments in the delivery of Title I reading services in a manner that is meaningful and timely to the needs of the current-day learner.

Conclusion

Section 3 presented the project description, goals, rationale, review of supporting literature, implementation, and implications including social change. The project presented the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program and how replication of the program can benefit the students of a Title I reading program in the local community and beyond. The data generated from the study provided direction and meaning towards the goals of the project. Input from the participants' interviews and observations, along with a thorough review of the archival data, provided a solid rationale for the selection of the project to identify how a program evaluation of a successful Title I reading program can benefit students and staff in the local school setting.

In Section 4, I will present the project's strengths and limitations. An analysis of my Walden doctoral experience specific to scholarship, project development, leadership, and change will also be presented. I will also focus on his reflections of the importance of his work as well as the implications and directions for future research.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose for conducting my research study was to improve the current Title I reading instruction for students at a local school. I wanted to research, analyze, and implement programmatic entities that were existent in a neighboring district where similar students were performing at a high level. A process-based program evaluation was conducted to examine the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program.

In Section 4 I present the project's strengths and limitations. Attention is given to scholarship, project development, leadership, and change. I also reflect on the importance of my work as well as the implications and directions for future research and social change.

Project Strengths

The strength of my program evaluation was found in the qualitative data and how the findings of the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program could be utilized at the local school. The interviews, classroom observation, and archival data provided me with the necessary information to share with fellow school leaders in my organization for the betterment of the entire district's remedial reading Title I program. Through discussions with the participants and observations of their classrooms, information was collected that presented the key components of the Title I program through the presence of certified staff, curricular design, instructional delivery, and various educational resources. Data collected highlighted the importance of instructional

components including the establishment of cooperative learning, the staffing of a state-certified reading specialist, the availability of leveled readers, the management of student grouping within both the push-in and pull-out learning environments, and the delivery of curriculum aligned with the Common Core Standards. The information collected in the project study will allow school leaders at the local school to make informed decisions on the future of Title I program in ways to best meet the needs of each struggling reader. The broader hope of the study is that the results will not only support the local school entity but will also benefit schools throughout the state and nation in replicating the findings to improve the reading proficiencies of every Title I student.

Project Limitations

A limitation of my project was that the implementation of the key components of a Title I reading program was specific to the local school given its current financial and educational resources. School leaders in other districts that would like to replicate the finding of the project study may find themselves limited due to not having the fiscal resources to provide the necessary staffing and instructional materials needed to implement all of the researched components. As most schools receive Title I monies from the federal government, school officials must carefully manage the utilization of such resources. In most districts, a school administrator (i.e., Title I coordinator) is responsible for making programmatic recommendations to central office administrators and the school board of directors. Recommendations include, but are not limited to, the necessary personnel staffing of the Title I program in each of the district's school buildings that qualify under the conditions of being deemed a Title I school, the adoption of a

meaningful and researched-based curriculum (which is aligned to the Common Core Standards), the needed classroom materials to provide effective remedial reading instruction including current technology, and time to conduct the necessary professional development for all staff members who are commissioned with the delivery of Title I reading services to assure that the programming is comprehensive and congruent across all Title I buildings.

Another limitation of this project was that the implementation of the program recommendations was the responsibility of the district's superintendent and the two directors of instruction. Contractual language in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement allowed for the union to revise and develop curriculum in collaboration with district administration. If the teachers rejected the recommendations, it would be the discretion of the superintendent to veto the teachers' rejection and make recommendations to the school board of directors for approval of the Title I programmatic changes without the consent of the teachers' union. Additionally, a limitation could be found in the school board of directors' inability to implement all of the recommended components of the Title I reading program due to financial and/or human resources constraints.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

Methods for remediating the aforementioned limitations are provided in this section. To address the limitation of potential fiscal restraint by districts to implement the finding of the project study, the individual(s) responsible for making recommendation for the Title I program would need to develop a plan for the incorporation of the components

in a manner that is fiscally feasible and educationally sound. Such decisions would include the prioritizing of resources given allotted Title I funding. For the individual(s) involved in the decision-making process, he or she will have to make programming judgements that best meet the needs of the struggling readers. This could be accomplished through the prioritizing of resources; meaning that some recommended components of the project study is forfeited so that other may be implemented. Another remediation may involve a similar thought process and include all key components of the study but on a limited basis. For example, a school may choose to staff the Title I reading program with a state-certified reading specialist during the instructional day as a means of providing remedial services to all students. However, the same school may choose to forgo an afterschool tutoring program, due to cost restraints, and utilize remaining Title I dollars for the adoption of a curricular materials, which would be available to all learners in both the push-in and pull-out learning environments. This similar philosophy of selective servicing would be applicable to all personnel, curricular, and instructional planning completed by the Title I coordinator and district administration.

The second limitation of teachers' collective bargaining rights for the adoption of the recommended key components presented in the project study could be remediated through the collaborative committee process. In my school district, the administration and teachers' union have outlined, in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement, a protocol for curriculum adoption. When changes are requested to the curriculum, by either the teachers' union or district administration, members of each entity select individuals to represent their respective parties on a formal, districtwide committee.

Specific to this project study, the superintendent (or the superintendent's designee) would select those staff members with a vested interest in promoting the needed changes to the Title I program. Such individuals could include, but not be limited to, the following: the district's Title I coordinator, the district's business manager, the reading department facilitator, a Title I reading specialist, and a building principal who is strongly versed in current, research-based reading instruction. Having such knowledgeable individuals with a vested interest in the Title I reading program serving on the committee, the recommendation of this project study are more likely to be adopted as the findings are based on the success of a neighboring school district where student reading proficiencies are so significant, state and federal recognition has been achieved. Wanting to replicate such programming would benefit all of the stakeholders within the local school community, especially the struggling readers.

Scholarship

Through my Walden doctoral journey, I learned that scholarship is an arduous, reverent, and rewarding experience unlike any that I have had before in my life. McLay (2013) stated that scholarship is an intricate process that combines critical thinking and involves listening, teaching, discovering, integrating, and applying. When I have been asked about what is the most difficult part of the doctoral process, I have stated that the ability to think scholarly was most wearing. I have told colleagues that being able to think abstractly is a necessity in the process of developing scholarly research. On many occurrences throughout my doctoral program, I had to convince myself that in order to achieve a scholarly voice, I had to trust in myself to read and write in a manner I had

never experienced as either a teacher or a learner. I also learned to disregard my hesitation and trust while learning on the expertise of my Walden professors to guide me in the understanding of what it means to think scholarly then transpose such thoughts into my writing. I have also come to better understand the process of searching for peer-reviewed literature as well as how to triangulate data as a means to interpret, analyze, and apply the results for scholarly presentation. Kriner, Coffman, Adkisson, Putman, and Monaghan (2015) stated that scholarship helps one to become an independent thinker, researcher, and writer. From the development of the purpose of the project, to the review of the literature, through the analysis of data, my transformation into a scholar was achieved. In subsequent years, I will use this knowledge of scholarship as a means of continuing my contribution of research to the educational community.

Project Development and Evaluation

Project development was an intricate process that required significant time and consideration. My first true experience with project development during my Walden journey was in the Research Approaches course. During that time when I participated in the Walden residency, I met various university personnel who helped me choose a program in need of evaluation. These same individuals also helped to shape my goal of the project study. Through careful planning and thoughtful discussions with scholarly experts from Walden, I began to develop an understanding of the process of developing a project in a manner that was scholarly in content for my local problem. I chose to conduct a project study that would have a definitive, positive impact on students at the local level. The method of choosing a topic for study, providing supporting evidence of the problem,

establishing a worthy research question, conducting current literature reviews, preparing proposals for approval, and collecting, analyzing and presenting the data was a significant example of project development and evaluation. Being able to establish a goal then relating every research effort and moment to its advancement, all the while paying special consideration to ethical standards, confidentiality, scholarly voice, and doctoral protocols, was a challenging, yet rewarding, endeavor in every facet of the project's completion. Strict adherence was given to the details set forth by the IRB and the importance it places on the validity of findings and the guarantee of confidentiality to all involved. Using formative evaluation provided merit- and research-based validation to the findings.

Choosing the project of reviewing the key components of a Title I reading program enabled me to express the needs of students who labor with not reading on grade-level and share my findings through data analysis with those responsible for the management of the local school's remedial reading program. Replication of all the key components, which were found in the high-performing school of study, may not be immediately feasible for implementation in the local school. However, the program evaluation provided data and analysis that can be implemented by a local school on an instantaneous basis given the needs of a particular reading program. The experience gathered throughout my project study has increased my knowledge and confidence in the project development process for similar future scholarly endeavors.

Leadership and Change

As a school administrator, I have been commissioned with the purpose of leadership on a continuous basis. The utilization of my years of experience combined

with the knowledge, which I both possess and continue to seek, provide legitimacy to the many responsibilities associated with my job definition. In the capacity of being a leader, Braxton and Luckey (2010) stated that it is the leader's responsibility for making decisions that will bring forth change to the benefits of the needs of the stakeholders being served. A leader embraces change when change is essential. The leader also understands the purpose for his decisions by developing and maintaining the process with the goal at the forefront of every decision. Leadership empowers an individual to guide stakeholders through the process of positive change in a way that is understandable and meaningful. As most leaders in education have learned throughout the years, change is a difficult process that takes significant time, patience, and persistence. Within the process of change, providing stakeholders with researched-based, peer-reviewed literature, analysis and coherent data results, and the means and direction to implement needed resolutions is the most likely manner to achieve success. Through my doctoral experience at Walden, I now consider myself a scholar. Through this newfound experience, I look to continue my work, many times alongside other practitioners, to bring about needed change through the scholarly process.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

Scholarly research and writing was something I came to appreciate during my tenure at Walden University. On a consistent basis, my doctoral study required me to think, and specifically use parts of my mind, in a manner that I felt I have never done before during all of my prior collegiate educational experiences. As I began to understand the scholarly process, I started to develop the qualities of a more complex level of

understanding in terms of constructing meaning for the purpose of problem solving, researching peer-reviewed literature with complex levels of understanding, producing analytical tools, and presenting conclusions all with the conviction and voice of a scholar. My belief in now possessing the qualities of a scholar rest in my confidence that I can apply the aforementioned qualities in furthering my knowledge through the study and writing of educational matters in a manner which garners the interest and respect of fellow educators while also satisfying my own aspirations to grow professionally as well as personally.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Throughout the doctoral process, I worked diligently to put forth my best effort in every facet of my life. As a principal, husband, father, homeowner, doctoral student, etc., I worried that I may lose quality in my performances at I took on more responsibilities. On many occasions, I questioned the reality of being able to manage all of the responsibilities and even questioned if I had overindulged myself. However, the doctoral process reinvigorated me on multiple occasions as it encouraged me to renew my purpose to those I serve in a leadership capacity. Qualities such as problem-solving, reviewing research with depth and rigor, and developing meaningful solutions brought a reaffirmed sense of purpose in every facet of my life, both within and extraneous of the school setting. I have also felt confident in my abilities as a communicator, but the doctoral process at Walden University has enriched my abilities, and confidence, as an organizer, researcher, communicator, leader, and universal citizen. In my role as a practitioner in the field of education, I have always believed that it is my responsibility to garner as much

knowledge of research-based data and use said information in promoting the best educational programming for student achievement. The knowledge gained from my Walden University experience has certainly improved my role as a practitioner, and I look to continue utilizing these newfound skills in future collaborations with all of the stakeholders vested with me in the educational process of my school community.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Throughout my career, I have developed projects all in the name of betterment for the education of the students under my authority. However, even though the development of the practicum of my master's degree, nothing compared to the planning, organization, and implementation of my doctoral study in terms of design and content. A definitive benefit to my project was the knowledge I possess, as my district's Federal Programs coordinator, and the practicality the research had on the daily workings of my professional responsibilities. Being able to apply what was learned through the review of the literature, visitations to the school of study, discussions with the participants, and analysis of the data has given me valuable insight into not only the research results, but also, how to develop a project in a manner that is scholarly in its presentation as well as purpose. Through the development of the project, I also learned how to become a better researcher not only by understanding how to research in a scholarly manner, but also, by how to incorporate the guidance and assistance of those who are experts in the process. Specifically, my committee chair and second committee member were instrumental in their continuous guidance and encouragement. As their gift of support was evident throughout the entire doctoral process, it was never more valued than during the IRB

stage. Trusting the committee's suggestions, acting upon their direction, and adhering to their recommendation to always maintain scholarly etiquette solidified my understanding of what it means to develop a project worthy of scholarly acceptance.

Reflection and Impact on Social Change

This project study provided me with a greater insight into the programming needs of the Title I reading program in the local school setting as well as with an understanding of the scholarly process of doctoral studies. Through the collection of data and the review of literature, I gained an understanding of current instructional methodologies that can best serve students who are underperforming in a remedial reading program. The doctoral study process was a challenging, yet rewarding, experience. Simply stated, it was the hardest thing I have ever completed both professionally and personally. My time at Walden University is an experience that I will cherish for the remainder of my life. For through my doctoral study, I learned to become a better researcher in terms of depth of scholarly knowledge needed and the processes required for its implementation.

The project study was a program evaluation, which encouraged social change by evaluating the validity of a nationally recognized school of excellence's Title I program, designed to increase the reading levels of students. By gaining this information about the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program and how they can be replicated in a local school district, student academic performance changed for the better. This led to positive social change for all members of the school community. The school will continue to implement the recommendations of the project study and will improve upon them as necessary. The evidence from the literature suggested that an

emphasis on quality instruction brought about social change to both local schools and Title I reading programs in other communities. Social change transpired as more students improved their literacy skills and were able to comprehend on-level reading expectations though Grade 12 and beyond. Students, who read on expected developmental levels, even into adulthood, benefited from being able to contribute positively to society and were less likely to depend on social services.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The results of the project study had an instant effect on the Title I reading program in the local setting. Utilization of particular curriculum, instructional practices, and educational resources has been implemented into the remedial reading services offered by teachers and administrators for the betterment of the current Title I program. The literature review provides a significant amount of peer-reviewed, research-based information on the importance of how the implementation of various key instructional components can significantly increase the reading proficiency of struggling readers. This doctoral study will help other schools implement the best educational programming for struggling readers through the replication of the instructional components researched in the study. If other schools could benefit from the findings in this study, the achievement gap between Title I reading students and their non-Title I counterparts would begin to shrink at a faster rate causing disproportion to be reduced and potentially eliminated. Schools can utilize the findings of the project study to tailor it to the specific literacy needs of its population. The effects of making programmatic changes at the earliest stages are likely to have a lifelong impact, as students need the necessary literacy skills, in all

forms of prose, to maximize their impact on the world for both personal and professional success.

The results of this project study were implemented in the Title I reading program of the local school district. With Title I reading services prevalent in schools throughout the nation, others could benefit from this program evaluation and tailor their programs based on the findings of the research. Future research would be necessary for the timeliness and effectiveness of the key instructional components presented in the study. To stay current, future research would detect modern curricular design, instructional strategies, technologies, and other educational practices and resources that are suited to best meet the reading proficiency needs of the current-day learner.

Following the completion of my doctoral program, I would be interested in sharing my findings with other educators throughout the region via workshops and other consulting means. Being able to network with fellow educators would allow me to support their efforts to implement the results while also allowing me to gain further insight into what needs may still exist in the improvement of Title I reading services. Finding such needs will allow me to utilize my newfound scholarly research understanding to further advancement in the development of programmatic needs on a continuous basis. Additionally, I look to publish an article or two on the results of my study as a means of bringing attention to the programming successes at the local school and how they may be replicated for other administrators facing similar challenges with the performance of their Title I reading population.

Conclusion

Section 4 presented the project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, leadership and change, reflection on the importance of the work, implications, applications, and directions for future research, and its impact on social change. In summary, my doctoral project study originated out of the necessity to determine the key components of a highly effective Title I reading program and to offer the instructional components for replication given the feasibility of resources of a local school. With the knowledge I have acquired through my Walden University doctoral program, combined with my professional experiences as a school principal and Federal Programs coordinator, I believe that I possess the necessary skills and confidence to improve the Title I reading services afforded to the students under my tutelage. I also believe that the results of the study can exceed the site of the local school and expand to other learning institutions with Title I remedial reading supports.

The results of this project study have proven effective and meaningful as evident in the implementation of the researched key instructional components. The results are an entity, which can further progress through continued expansion and research. With the literacy needs of students ever-changing, combined with the plethora of digital technologies that deliver said information, determining the most effective ways to assure that students possess the needed reading aptitudes for the current day, as well as for the ever changing landscape of 21st century society, is more important than ever.

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Appendix A: The Project

An Evaluation of the Key Instructional Components of a

Highly-effective Title I Reading Program

Prepared by George Spalaris, Doctoral Candidate

April, 2016

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Students enrolled in the district's Title I reading program are performing at a lower level than their non-Title I peers on standardized state assessments (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDOE], 2012a). It is our responsibility as educators to end this disparity by providing every Title I student with the educational programming and instructional resources that will help Title I students to perform at grade-level by achieving proficiency status on state exams on a perennial basis. To achieve the desired result, I examined the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in a neighboring school district, which has been recognized the United States Department of Education as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Collection of evidence for determining the key instructional components included classroom observations, interviews with teachers who implemented the Title I program, and a review of archival data that verifies the students' achievement on state reading exams. The findings of the project study have provided the basis for our school district to adopt a replication model of a highly-effective Title I reading program. The replication model should include the following six essential components: research-based assessments, delivery of instruction through cooperative learning, the provision of leveled readers, teacher management of student grouping and differentiated instruction, the employment of a state-certified reading specialist, and the adoption of a reading curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core Standards. This effective program reading model could be used to lead to higher state achievement test scores annually while also helping to foster a love of reading for even the most reluctant of readers.

Introduction

This executive summary has been developed for the school district's superintendent, two directors of instruction, the district's Title I coordinator, building principals, Title I reading teachers, and the school board. The executive summary provides an evaluation of the key instructional components of a highly-effective Title I reading program. The Title I school that was studied for this project has been recognized as a school of high achievement through its achievement of being named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This executive summary is offered with recommendations for replication of a model on behalf of the district's Title I reading students. Highlights include the findings and recommendations from the *Key Components of a Highly-Effective Title I Reading Program*—a project study completed by George Spalaris in pursuit of his doctoral degree from Walden University between August 2008 and March 2016.

Program Description

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to complete a process-based evaluation that examined the key instructional components of a high performing Title I reading program. A process-based evaluation was used to understand fully how the program worked and how it achieved its results (McNamara, 2002). Doing so led to the replication of a model of an effective reading program that could be utilized in Title I schools locally, statewide, and nationally. In a large, suburban school in the northeast, Title I students were not performing as well as non-Title I students in reading on the state standardized assessment (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2013). The rationale

for choosing this as a local problem was found within the expectation of a local school to meet required federal mandates of reading proficiency levels. Title I students did not perform as well as non-Title I students on the state reading assessments. The focus of the study was to determine what the high-achieving school of study was doing instructionally which resulted in the academic success of its Title I student population.

By conducting teacher interviews, visiting classrooms, and reviewing archival data, information was gathered to determine the key components of a successful Title I reading program and to replicate the components in a local school setting. The Title I reading program that was reviewed was designed to have the students, who were struggling in reading, meet expected state reading proficiency levels for each grade level within the school of study. The value of the study is significant as the Title I student participants outperformed the state-issued goals.

Evaluation Methodology

For this study, a program evaluation was completed. A program evaluation is a systematic method that determines the success of a specific program using gathered data (Royce et al., 2010). For the project evaluation of a highly-effective Title I reading program, triangulation for data collection were as follows: (a) conduct individual interviews with school and district administrator and classroom teachers to gather the pros and cons of the Title I reading program, (b) to conduct classroom observations to witness the implementation of the Title I program directly with various grade levels of students, (c) review archival data of local and state standardized assessments that are used to determine student achievement of grade-level reading standards. The participants for

the study included the school's principal, the district's federal programs coordinator, one Title I program teacher (who was also the school's reading specialist for grades 1 thru 4) and four regular education classroom teachers, one from each grade level (1-4). The sampling of participants led to a transparent view of the participants' perceptions of their reality (Hatch, 2002). These participants were chosen for their extensive knowledge of the Title I reading program as well as for their willingness to share their insights and perspectives about the high-performing program.

The qualitative analysis of reading interview scripts, observation notes, or other documents gathered in the data collection process allowed an educator to determine strengths and impediments through the use of such data (Maxwell, 1996). Additionally, the data collection plan focused on answering the research question: What are the key instructional components of a highly effective Title I reading program in which students were consistently scoring in the 90^{th} percentile (or higher) on standardized state assessments? Interviews and observations were used as appropriate, firsthand data collection for the case study (Merriam, 2002). The research process started by observing the Title I reading classroom and identifying the curricular and instructional components used in the delivery of Title I services. In-depth interviews were then conducted with the Title I teachers, the school's principal, and the district's federal programs coordinator in order to gain insight into their perspectives on Title I program outcomes. During the analysis stage, archival data was reviewed to determine the areas of strength, through standardized student achievement measures, which validated the curricular and instructional design of a highly effective Title I reading program. At the end of the data

collection process, transcripts of the participants' interviews, notes from the classroom observations, and charts presenting standardized assessment results were reported in a manner that were easy to understand by interested stakeholders.

Findings

I collected various data through interviews, observations, and review of archival data as a means to analyze various components of a highly-effective Title I reading program. Reviewing data allowed me to identify themes across the various forums in determining the key instructional components of a highly-effective Title I reading program. These themes became recommendations in the replication of a model of an effective reading program that could be utilized in any Title I school nationally. The results emphasized the management of student grouping and differentiated instruction, the availability of leveled readers, the delivery of curriculum aligned with the Common Core Standards, the importance of cooperative learning, and the staffing of a state-certified reading specialist.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Student Grouping/Differentiated Instruction**.** In differentiated classrooms, teachers respond to the specific needs of the learner. Teachers should have differentiated instruction by adjusting content, assessment, performance tasks, and instructional strategies. Additionally, differentiated instructional strategies should focus on alphabetic and phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary building, and writing skills. By using small, flexible learning groups during a center or station time, teachers are able to present the exact regular classroom curriculum

but in a manner that was slower paced and more geared to the specific learning needs of each student. The small student learning groups are advantageous as they are a more accurate way to pinpoint students' weaknesses and provide the necessary remediation.

Recommendation 2: Leveled Readers and Curriculum. Teachers should differentiate a lesson through the use of leveled readers and assigned students to specific groups based upon the use of the leveled readers. The depth of rigor of each leveled reader varied based upon the reading level of the students. Teachers should assign students to a "low", "middle", or "high" group based upon demonstrate reading proficiencies. Teachers need to strike a balance between providing all students with exposure to challenging, grade-level texts and the common elementary practice of using leveled reading materials aligned with individual students' reading levels. Students should be expected to read widely from texts that they want to read, building their background knowledge and vocabularies while developing morally, emotionally, and intellectually (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). The recommended reading curriculum used at the school of study was the "Reading Wonders" series from McGraw-Hill Education. The "Reading Wonders" program was built on the Common Core Standards. Having a reading series aligned to the Common Core Standards gave students an advantage of learning what was expected from the PA Department of Education via the annual state reading assessments. Also with this reading curriculum, teachers provided a clear instructional path that was systematic in the presentation of material in terms of introduction, teaching, application, differentiation, integration, and assessment.

Recommendation 3: Cooperative Learning**.** All of the participants' classes contained some form of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is defined as an instructional method that teachers use to organize students into small groups, in which students work together to help one another learn academic content (Slavin, Lake, Chambers et al., 2011). According to the participants observed and interviewed, cooperative learning activities taught students how to read, how to question, how to respond, how to be good listeners, and good citizens of the classroom. Additionally, the participants stated that cooperative learning helps students to build interdependence, develop social and collaborative skills, and encourage innovation needed for the various needs of 21st Century society. As Safro and Elen (2011) concluded, cooperative learning is essential because higher mental functions such as reasoning, critical thinking, and reflection originate in social interactions and are then internalized by the individuals in the group.

Recommendation 4: Reading Specialist. Of all the recommendations, the participants unanimously concluded that the need for a state-certified reading specialist, who worked with the Title I reading students in both push-in and pull-out learning environments, was essential in helping students to meet expected reading proficiencies at every grade level. The reading specialist was a certified elementary education teacher who held a Reading Specialist certification from the state. The reading specialist was expected to develop and implement instructional programs that were specific to the development of each student's reading needs, utilized various data-oriented information to drive said programming, and provided needed teacher support to colleagues throughout

the school's learning environment. The reading specialist planned, implemented, and maintained instructional programs in literacy. Such support from the reading specialist included time both during the regular instructional day as well as during specific Title I funded activities such as afterschool tutoring.

Conclusion

This project study focused on the key instructional components of a highly-effective Title I reading program. The purpose of the program evaluation was to offer recommendations for replication of a model on behalf of the district's Title I reading students. The local school district is encouraged to continue with its current Title I reading program and to implement the recommendations of this project study as a means of strengthening the program. The recommends include the following: emphasizing the management of student grouping and differentiated instruction, providing leveled readers, the utilization of cooperative learning, establishing a curriculum aligned with the Common Core Standards, and staffing a state-certified reading specialist in each Title I school building. Potential obstacles to the implementation of the key components of a highly-effective reading program would include costs, class size, teacher planning and implementation, and time. Cost would likely be the greatest barrier as the local school would have to hire more reading specialists through local funding as Title I financial resources are a finite amount determined by a federal formula based on the number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. To address the limitation of potential fiscal restraint by districts to implement the recommendations in this project study, the school officials responsible for making recommendation for the Title I program would

need to develop a plan for the incorporation of the components in a manner that is fiscally feasible and educationally sound. Such decisions would include the prioritizing of resources given allotted Title I funding. Allocating available funds effectively could be accomplished through the prioritizing of resources; meaning that some recommended components of the project study is forfeited so that other may be implemented. Another remediation may involve a similar thought process and include all key components of the study but on a limited basis. This philosophy of selective servicing would be applicable to all personnel, curricular, and instructional planning completed by the Title I coordinator and district administration. Wanting to replicate such programming would benefit all of the stakeholders within the local school community, especially the struggling readers. The broader hope of the study is to use the results of the study to not only support the local school entity, but to also benefit schools throughout the state and nation in replicating of the findings to improve the reading proficiencies of every Title I student. The results of this project study are an entity, which can further progress through continued expansion and research.

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Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Teacher #1
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 8:04AM/11minutes, 35 seconds
Interview #1

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Teacher #2
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 8:33AM/9 minutes, 38 seconds
Interview #2

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Teacher #3
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 9:14AM/8 minutes, 4 seconds
Interview #3

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Teacher #4
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 10:11AM/9 minutes, 22 seconds
Interview #4

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Teacher #5
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 12:38PM/11 minutes, 16 seconds
Interview #5

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Administrator #1
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 2:56PM/14 minutes, 28 seconds
Interview #6

Date: September 27, 2015
Participant: Administrator #2
Participant's Name: [redacted]
Time/Length of interview: 4:05PM/16 minutes, 46 seconds
Interview #7

Appendix C: Observation Protocol Form

Participant observation will focus on how the Title I reading program is being conducted. Classroom observation will provide awareness of how the instructional, materials, and equipment components are utilized within the Title I reading program.

Date of Observation: _____ Duration of Observation: _____

Study Participant: _____ Observation #: _____

Learning Activity Observed: _____

Teachers' Interactions with Students

What are the student grouping patterns?

What curriculum is being presented?

What are the methods and techniques used?

What is the program and delivery of instruction?

What is the scope and sequence of instruction?

What instructional materials and media resources are being used?

What type of differentiated instruction is occurring?

Appendix D: Observation Protocol Form (Participant Responses)

Teachers' Interactions with Students

What are the student grouping patterns?

Participant	Response
P1	•Students are seated in three groups of four or five desks each. The students' desks face one another.
P2	•The students are seated in five vertical rows with five students in each row.
P3	•The students are seated in four vertical rows. Each row consists of six students sitting at individual seats. •The students worked in reading groups of three to seven. The teacher gave each group directives on what (types of) question they needed to answer through cooperative learning.
P4	•Students are seated in five groups with five desks in each group. The desks are arranged so that the students face one another.
P5	•There are four students in the observed lesson. •There are various eligibility requirements for the students who receive services from the reading specialist. They include: °Reading screening at the beginning of the school year. °DIBELS. °Reading specialist recommendation. °Current classroom teacher's recommendation. °Previous classroom teacher's recommendation. °(On occasion) Parent recommendation. •Students are seated at a crescent-shaped table which faces the teacher's chair on the other side.

What curriculum is being presented?

Participant	Response
P1	•Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill).
P2	•Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill).
P3	•Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill; the story studied was "The Special Meal").
P4	•Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill).
P5	•"Fundations" based on the Wilson Reading System. •Components of word-building (aligned with the "Wonders" McGraw-Hill reading program).

What are the methods and techniques used?

Participant	Response
P1	•Unison (group) speaking activities which also involving clapping. •Voice modulation by the teacher during vocabulary activities. •Students read a story orally. Each student takes a turn reading aloud. •Partner reading.
P2	•Students need to find the "essential question" and why it so popular with students. •Oral reading (in unison). •Question and answer with individual students. •Show of hands for informal surveying. •For the "Words to Know" (vocabulary) activity, the teacher displays all vocabulary words on the screen. Following an explanation of each vocabulary word from the teacher, she then plays a short video to enhance her explanation. •The teacher claps and the students clap in return. The classroom becomes quiet.
P3	•Direct instruction (Q&A) at the beginning of the lesson. •Cooperative learning groups. °The teacher stated that she spent the first two weeks of the school year teaching her students "how to be a group". This includes how they should read, how to question, how to responded, etc.
P4	•Partner reading. Cooperative learning reading activity.
P5	•Choral response. •The teacher utilizes repetition for the combined letter sounds when necessary. •The teacher checks for understanding by having the students move letters from one side of the magnetic letter to the other. •The teacher uses the "tap out" method when asking students to sound out the letters of a work (ex: sick). The students use their fingers as the letters and their thumbs as the combination point where they pronounce the individual sounds. When the students combine all of their fingers to their thumb, they pronounce the entire word. At a later time, the teacher has the students write the words in their journals. She reminds them that they can tap out the

words and sound them out before writing them if is help them to spell.

What is the program and delivery of instruction?

Participant	Response
P1	•Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill; the specific story was "Nat and Sam"). •Direct instruction (Q/A). •Demonstrated student understanding utilizing online supplements (from McGraw-Hill).
P2	•Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill; the specific story was "Our Pet Friends"). •Direct instruction (Q/A).
P3	•Cooperative learning groups (shared reading activity amongst the students). •The teacher worked with students (while in cooperative learning groups) both as a whole group and individually.
P4	•Paired reading activity (comparison of two stories). •Reading/Writing Workshop ("Wonders" textbook from McGraw-Hill; the specific book was "Rosa's Garden"). •Direct instruction (Q/A) from teacher to student within cooperative learning groups.
P5	•Teacher introduces sound of the week /ck/. °Students review all sounds individually by using "fun"dations method. °Students will repeat teacher by saying letter-keyword-sound or the teacher can call on individual students to come up and pick a letter to review with echo. •Students build words and blend words using manipulative and kinesthetic activities. •Students will blend words with /ck/sound. •Students will be introduced to the spelling of /ck/ and reminded the spelling rule. •Students will use teacher prompts to blend and decode words on magnetic boards. Students will tap out words. •Students encode and decode words using word building game. °This game will be used as a monitor to make sure students know the sounds and how to encode them. °Students will be given a word they will have to spell the word as quickly as possible.

- °The student who spells it the quickest can come up and make the word on the board.
- °This gives the teacher a good insight before the next activity.

•Students read decodable text and use phonemic awareness skills to blend words and play decoding game.

- °Students will read the text “Sock” as a class, each taking a turn.
- °Teacher will assess students’ knowledge of /ck / blending, all blending, and recognition of sight words when reading.

•Review sound taught for the week.
•Give take home books to students who have returned their folders.
•The book will be their independent practice of the skill taught.
•Give stickers for reading and good work.

What is the scope and sequence of instruction?

Participant	Response
P1	•Focusing on short a sounds. •Reading fluency with a new story. •Building words through sounds. •Three weeks of the previous grade. This is the first week of unit 1 in the current grade.
P2	•Each unit is five weeks of instruction and one additional week of assessment. The observed lesson was the start of the third week.
P3	•Finishing the first unit of week 2.
P4	•Unit 1 Week 2.
P5	•In relation to the curriculum, the teacher is in Lesson #4 of McGraw-Hill and using Fundations along with the curriculum.

What instructional materials and media resources are being used?

Participant	Response
P1	•The teacher utilized a Smartboard (with sound). The teacher also accesses the Internet via the Smartboard. The teacher also allows student volunteers to utilize the Smartboard to demonstrate understanding.
P2	•Reading/Writing Workshop textbook ("Wonders" from McGraw-Hill). •The teacher utilizes a LCD projector (with sound) that displays the story in the textbook as well as mpeg videos. •Individual vocabulary cards with pictures and text.
P3	•Smartboard. •Leveled readers.
P4	•Smartboard. •Leveled readers.
P5	•Flashcards with letter sounds ("ck"). •The teacher uses a ruler, with a stuffed animal on it. She refers to the stuffed animal as "Echo". She states that when she holds up Echo, the students are to respond in unison. •The teacher uses an alphabet chart for having the students respond to letter sounds. •The students use a magnetic letter board. •Each student has his/her own book to use. •Each student is given a journal (i.e., lined notebook). The teacher tells them that they will use the journal for the spelling words.

What type of differentiated instruction is occurring?

Participant	Response
P1	•Leveled readers (for the same story). •Peer reading established by varied levels of reading.
P2	•A paraprofessional/aide is seated near students along one side of the classroom. The paraprofessional/aide provides information to the class to supplement information/directions given by the teacher.
P3	•Leveled readers were used amongst the various cooperative learning groups.
P4	•The teacher arranges students into groups based upon students' reading levels.
P5	•Teacher can tell by the students' reading level. •Use of leveled readers. •Small group, repetition, guided. •Reading, visuals. •Hands-on materials. •Monitoring and adjusting lesson and materials.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol Questions (Teacher Participants)

The overall research question being asked is: What are the key components of a highly-effective Title I reading program in which students are consistently scoring in the 90th percentile (or higher) on standardized state assessments?

Subsequent questions include (for Teacher Participants):

1. Describe the qualities of the highly-effective Title I reading program at your school.
2. What are the reasons students in your Title I reading program are outperforming their peers (in relation to expected state proficiency levels) in Title I reading programs at other schools?
3. Explain how the design of your Title I instruction components is based on the content standards established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
4. What achievable changes can be made to the instructional components in order to have 100% of your Title I reading students perform at mandated state proficiency levels?
5. For the Title I students in your school who are currently struggling to meet expected reading proficiency levels, what are the main obstacles to their achievement? What can you do to resolve these obstacles?
6. If you had complete autonomy to change any component or components of your Title I reading program, for the betterment of student achievement, what, specifically, would you change? Have you been able to make any changes to

your Title I reading program? If so, what were those changes, and why did you make them?

Appendix F: Interview Protocol Questions (Administrator Participants)

The overall research question being asked is: What are the key components of a highly-effective Title I reading program in which students are consistently scoring in the 90th percentile (or higher) on standardized state assessments?

Subsequent questions include (for Administrator Participants):

1. Describe the qualities of the highly-effective Title I reading program at your school.
2. What curriculum (and materials) is used regarding your Title I reading program?
    a. Is it purchased? If so, what is it called?
        i. Was it developed locally? If so, by whom?
        ii. Is the curriculum state-required?
3. What assessments (local, state, etc.) are used in your Title I reading program?
4. What staffing/personnel is necessary for your Title I reading program?
5. What is the grouping of students?
6. What is the need of instructional time for the delivery of the program? (on a daily basis)
7. What additional supports are available for students?
    a. Afterschool/before school/summer programs?
    b. Technology
8. What are the components of leadership necessary for a successful Title I reading program?
9. What is the role of parents/family involvement which contributes to the success?

10. What are the reasons students in your Title I reading program are outperforming their peers (in relation to expected state proficiency levels) in Title I reading programs at other schools?
11. Explain how the design of your Title I instruction components is based on the content standards established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
12. What achievable changes can be made to the instructional components in order to have 100% of your Title I reading students perform at mandated state proficiency levels?
13. For the Title I students in your school who are currently struggling to meet expected reading proficiency levels, what are the main obstacles to their achievement? What can you do to resolve these obstacles?
14. If you had complete autonomy to change any component or components of your Title I reading program, for the betterment of student achievement, what, specifically, would you change? Have you been able to make any changes to your Title I reading program? If so, what were those changes, and why did you make them?

Appendix G: Transcripts of Participant Interviews (Administrators)

Interview Question #1. Describe the qualities of the highly-effective Title I reading program at your school.

Participant	Response
P1	Students are selected to enter Title I based on multiple criteria. Data team meetings are held multiple times during the school year. All students in grade 3-4-5 who score Basic or Below Basic on the ELA section of the PSSA test are reviewed first. The Title I teacher then reviews their report card grades, past standardized achievement tests, DIBELS testing, 4Sight Tests, and any other data collected. Classroom teachers must complete a data review form for students they refer during the course of the school year and must demonstrate appropriate differentiated strategies that were implemented with the student. Stanford Achievement test scores are utilized for students in grade 1 and 2. Students who score 45% or lower on the comprehension section of the test are given priority. Once students meet the criteria for the program, parents are sent a permission form for their child to enter the program. Title I support consists of a combination of pull out and push in instruction. The level of intervention is decided between the Title I and classroom teachers. Students are progress monitored by DIBELS assessments and interventions can change depending on the child's success.
P2	It's based off of data for students to enter the program. They have clear-cut entrance into the program of why these kids are in there. They also have to have clear-cut exit scores for them as well. You have to have the program where the teacher is building on the skills that those students need which they have learning barriers in. So, it has to be customized. You have to have a good reading specialist who is current with the research in using researched-back strategies as well. They really have to work hand-in-hand with the classroom teacher as well to see where the classroom teacher is going, to see how they can support the classroom teacher in helping those kids. They also have to, like a special ed. classroom, have to work with the students like, "Here's where the student's weakness in reading is," and build on those weaknesses to turn them into strengths; and, constantly reevaluating where they're going using formative assessments, benchmark assessments with the students, constantly looking at the data, evaluating the data, and seeing where they need to go next. Offering support in the

classroom as well for the teacher like push-in, but really working with those students that are at-risk and working with them to provide the supports that they can.

Interview Question #2. What curriculum (and materials) is used regarding your Title I reading program?

a. Is it purchased? If so, what is it called?
    i. Was it developed locally? If so, by whom?
    ii. Is the curriculum state-required?

Participant	Response
P1	Classroom teachers utilize the core reading program by McGraw-Hill called, "Reading Wonders". Title I teachers utilize the intervention kits from the series as well as other recommended strategies for various skills throughout the textbook. Title I teachers also provide various other supplemental resources to help each child succeed. The curriculum is not necessarily required by the state. However, the district has selected a reading program which is aligned to the PA Common Core Standards.
P2	Right now, they're using the "Reading Wonders" program from McGraw-Hill as well as a lot of other materials they have gathered over the years. We currently have a new Director of Curriculum, so that going to be something that's changing, so they're not going to be really using the reading program so much because they used to kind of just reinforce what the classroom teacher did and retaught the lessons. We're moving away from that and really trying to individualize instruction for the students so be it with the "Reading Wonders" program that we have. So, if they need to, they can use the different levels that they have or even the different grade level materials to get that kid the support that they need and develop their lessons for that. So, it's not state required or developed locally. It's a regular textbook publisher for that.

Interview Question #3. What assessments (local, state, etc.) are used in your Title I reading program?

Participant	Response
P1	As stated in the first question, our district uses the DIBELS, 4Sight Benchmark test, Stanford Achievement Tests, and the PSSA. What tests students receive vary on their grade level, and sometimes, their current reading level.
P2	DIBELS and 4Sight is what they use, and you have the PSSA exams that they look at near the end of the year. We used Stanford (tests) but got away from Stanford this year. We're not giving those anymore.

Interview Question #4. What staffing/personnel is necessary for your Title I reading program?

Participant	Response
P1	Having a Title I coordinator, like myself, who also oversees the selection and implementation of the reading curriculum for grades K-12 helps bring a sense of continuity that the program is being delivered with effectiveness and fidelity. Also important is to make sure that the building principals, the classroom teachers, and the Title I reading specialists have a deep-rooted understanding in the Title I program and what needs to be established to ensure that those students' needs are being met in order to make certain that every child has the opportunity to be given time and resources which will help them meet grade level reading proficiency on a yearly basis. Like they say, the right people can make the right difference.
P2	Director of Curriculum because that's whose running the program. You need them to fill out the paperwork, you know, to make sure all the money is coming in, and you need a reading specialist as well.

Interview Question #5. What is the grouping of students?

Participant	Response
P1	Students are typically grouped by grade level or sometimes by the level of need. The Title I teacher meet with the students 2-3 times a week. Most times in a pull-out setting. However, there is also push-in when the Title I teacher is collaborating with the classroom teacher.
P2	The grouping of students right now typically is based off of grade level and maybe the individual classroom teacher. If it's first grade, which students met the cut-off to get into the program, and then, the reading specialist will look at their reading times and see if she can pull them out during their reading time, provide them some extra reading instruction. So, it's a small group depending on second grade which only has one classroom, they're only pulled out one time. For first grade, it would depend usually on the numbers. If it's too large of a number, then they would work out a system where maybe first period reading one class is pulled out, and later on, the other group gets pulled out. Usually, it's just trying to do it by grade level all pulled out at one time.

Interview Question #6. What is the need of instructional time for the delivery of the program? (on a daily basis)

Participant	Response
P1	Again, the Title I teacher works with a given student 2-3 times per week in pull-out and push-in opportunities. If, for some reason, the classroom teacher and the Title I teacher feel that a student could you some extra help here or there, that can be arranged between them. However, in order for the time of the Title I teacher to be used to meet all Title I students' needs, a routine schedule has been established by the building principal.
P2	Right now, the reading specialist is here two-and-a-half days a week. So, she works with the students, as of right now. The way it was done last year, because I just got the new list right now, she worked with them one period a day whenever she was here as much as she could. So, depending on the needs of the students as well, we have third grade students that tested into the program that were seeming to be doing OK, but we seemed to have a greater need at a lower level and she would take those kids longer and see them more often based off of their needs. Typically, it's one period for those grade levels.

Interview Question #7. What additional supports are available for students?

a. Afterschool/before school/summer programs?
b. Technology

Participant	Response
P1	a. An afterschool reading program is also available for the students demonstrating the most need. Parents must commit to the two-day week program that is focused on specific reading strategies. Students are in groups of 3-7. Student needs drive intense reading instruction for the hour-long sessions. b. The district has a subscription to an online reading program, I-Station. This is an online prescriptive reading intervention program that assesses students and provides opportunities for skill development at the individual levels. Study Island is also utilized to target specific skill development for students. Also, all 5th grade students have the opportunity to participate in Battle of the Books. Students form teams and all read the designated books then work as a team at the Battle to answer questions about the books. Students are all required to earn Accelerated Reader points as part of their reading grades. A building wide incentive was added to encourage reading in all grades. Some of the incentives include a movie theme day, school pool party, and school beach party.
P2	a. We have an afterschool tutoring program that will run from October until about March twice a week for an hour afterschool. In the past, it has typically been for reading. So, for an hour with the reading specialist, I will look at their DIBELS scores and see what students need to be placed into that afterschool program. We'll get the parents' permission and we'll have them attend that program. b. For technology, we didn't have a lot in place technology wise. So, we're looking to do STAR Reader and get that up and running for this year hopefully. We also use the DIBELS, I-station, Accelerated Reader, Rosetta Stone, BrainPop, Build a Book, and Study Island.

Interview Question #8. What are the components of leadership necessary for a successful Title I reading program?

Participant	Response
P1	The leader must believe in increasing student achievement and making decisions based on the best interest of students. The leader needs to understand data and make sure all students who truly need services are targeted for instruction. Data needs to be reviewed throughout the year and discussions need to be held with teachers as to the type of interventions that are being utilized. The leader must be organized and understand the federal guidelines that guide the program.
P2	I think for components of leadership you need to be able to plan and be detailed oriented and also a little flexible in there as well. You have to be student-centered and have student-centered people working around you and realize that the ultimate goal is to get those students to achieve and reach their maximum potential. Whatever it takes so some students can be seen a little bit more so you can try to get those students in there a little bit more. You have to set clear and concise expectations to the reading specialist so that they know what they're doing, and then they can pass that along to students. I also think having a leader communicate to parents as well, with the goals and expectations of what the program is. Maybe have a reading professional's night titled, "Reading Night" so that parents know when coming into the program. I think you have to communicate with all of the stakeholders and even to the students to explain why they are in there. For example, "Here is what we are going to do," and "Here's what I need from you to help out in this process," so the kids can be invested as well. I think, if I haven't said it already, the leader needs to have a strong background on reading, keep current on the current trends, and have a good grasp of what's going on whether it's my school or a different school and being able to realize that there are different trends in different schools. One school's needs might be different than other school's needs and you can't have a program that's the same. So, sometimes that be-all-end-all and all of the school have to fit this model, and all schools have to do the same exact thing. What's good for one school might not be good for another school because they might have greater needs that a different building. They need to have some flexibility in there to make some changes. I think to be realistic as well with the expectations. You set high goals but you

know that sometimes they may not be reached, and you understand that given the fact that some of these students are in these groups.

Interview Question #9. What is the role of parents/family involvement which contributes to the success?

Participant	Response
P1	It takes a village to raise a child. Children are only in school 35 hours a week so there is a limited time for instruction. It is critical that parents are involved in their child's education. Many parents struggled in school and find coming to school for events threatening. It is important to make Title I parent events fun for the parents and children. We also found that parents are very busy so offering a meal helps bring them to the events. A light dinner (pizza, sandwiches) are served. The Title I teachers share simple strategies for parents to help their children at home. Students are all given books, bookmarks, and gift cards to bookstores. We find making parent involvement nights convenient, fun, and educational build those relationships needed to build success for the students.
P2	I think the parents have to play an active role. They have to know what the expectations are for their children. Lots of times, communicate to the parents, "Here's different ways to help your child out," and, "If you can't help your child out, here are different assignments you can do with your child." I think parents play a very important role, and with the afterschool tutoring, it's up to the parents to get the kids home after the tutoring program. They have to be willing to make that sacrifice whether it's leaving work early or finding another ride home for their child. They may lose time with their child afterschool, but they need to say, "Hey, my child is going to be staying afterschool." I feel lots of times that parents make-or-break it because there is so much that can be done here during the school day, but then you can reinforce it at home as well. If you have a very proactive parent, I think that helps out lots of times. You know, who's willing to sit down with their child and look over their work with them and really instill learning in their child at home, and letting them know that school and home is a partnership in that they are onboard with teachers to working together to help them out.

Interview Question #10. What are the reasons students in your Title I reading program are outperforming their peers (in relation to expected state proficiency levels) in Title I reading programs at other schools?

Participant	Response
P1	There are many factors that contribute to success. Dedicated teachers who truly want to improve student achievement are number one. Looking at data and determining what will work for the students. Creating almost an individualized learning plan for the students. Administrative support beginning with the school board and superintendent. Also, after school programs for extended learning. Strong parent involvement.
P2	I think that just having the kids realize that this stuff is important in getting the kids to buy in to wanting to stay afterschool and participate in Title I reading programs, as well as having strong family support outside that is willing to have their child in a Title I reading program. I think that having teachers who really care about their students and wanting them to be successful, especially with the younger students, and really reaching them at younger grade levels so they can get caught up if they're behind by time they get to third grade. So, I think it's caring teachers who are hardworking, parents that are supportive and have vested interest in their child's education, want their children to succeed, and also, setting high expectations for the students. Saying, "Here's what we expect," and "Here's what we want," and helping a child reach their goals.

Interview Question #11. Explain how the design of your Title I instruction components is based on the content standards established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Participant	Response
P1	The reading series is aligned to PA Standards. The teachers review data from the PSSA tests and review the anchors that the students display weaknesses. The students take the 4Sight assessments at least 3 times per year and this data is reviewed as compared to what is expected on the PSSA test. The teachers utilize the SAS {Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System} website for additional resources to help with classroom instruction.
P2	Well, the lesson that they're instructing should be based off of the Common Core. So when teachers design their lessons, they should look at the grade level and what it is they are supposed to be teaching, and what those students need to know like assessment anchors, and design their lessons based off of that. Kind of like working backwards and developing the activities for their students. And also looking at their assessments and making sure they are aligned to the Common Core as well so that they're just not teaching something and then assessing on something that is totally different that's not assessing the Core. The assessments need to be based off of the Common Core.

Interview Question #12. What achievable changes can be made to the instructional components in order to have 100% of your Title I reading students perform at mandated state proficiency levels?

Participant	Response
P1	The biggest impact on student achievement is more instructional time. If every Title I student was able to attend the after school reading program that focuses on intense reading instruction based on student needs, there would be more students reaching proficiency.
P2	Regarding the instructional components, having the teachers on board that are supportive, have background knowledge in reading, also, keeping current with reading materials as well. This includes what you're using in the classroom as well as in the Title I classroom. Making sure that it is based off of the Common Core, so that you know what your teaching is aligned as well as to drive the lessons for those students.

Interview Question #13. For the Title I students in your school who are currently struggling to meet expected reading proficiency levels, what are the main obstacles to their achievement? What can you do to resolve these obstacles?

Participant	Response
P1	Typically, these are the students who have attendance issues, and parents who are not supportive in helping their children with homework and school preparedness. The Title I staff is stretched to meet with all of the students who qualify and this becomes a scheduling nightmare. More staff to meet with students more often could have a positive impact on learning.
P2	I think time would be the biggest thing. You know, give them more time. That's hard because you would have to increase the school day. I think another thing we could do is more reading in more content areas. So, getting teachers to realize that the skill you taught in reading can also be used in social studies or you can use it in science. This would include the special areas as well. Sometimes, in the special areas, they're reading out of a book, and they could do comprehension questions. I think working with staff and having them develop higher-level questions for the students and high-level writing assignments, not just one or two word answers. Making sure students know how to write completely and put some thought into their writing like outlining and taking notes on what they're reading. I think that just finding the time, and if you don't have the time to pull them out or give them additional help, how can you get those skills taught in other areas as well.

Interview Question #14. If you had complete autonomy to change any component or components of your Title I reading program, for the betterment of student achievement, what, specifically, would you change? Have you been able to make any changes to your Title I reading program? If so, what were those changes, and why did you make them?

Participant	Response
P1	One major change I made to the program was the review of data for students to enter the program. When I first took over the program, it was a "dumping ground" for ESL, ADHD, and special education students. With the development of entrance criteria and forms and administrators reviewing this process closely, the students who need specific reading assistance are in the program. I have also had the opportunity to select resources to help support the students in the program. Ideally, students with reading difficulties should be meeting with the reading specialists every day, but with staff and scheduling, that cannot happen.
P2	I haven't really been able to make any changes. However, for next school year, we're looking at changing the schedules so we share traveling teachers and specialists a little bit better. It will be more streamlined so we can get more time with them. I think if I could change anything it would be getting more specialists in here and give them more time if I could. So, instead of having one person working with a group, I would try to have one person specialize K-2 and the other one in grades 3-5 because they are looking for different things. One year, you're teaching kids how to read and in the other one, you're trying to pull meaning out of reading. I would think, hopefully, ideally I would like if I had more people, especially for the primary kids because I think if you get the kids the help as soon as you can, at the earlier grade levels, then that's less help and less specialists you need at the higher grade levels. They could focus earlier and teach those kids how to read and give them that help and support by the time that they hit third grade, fourth grade and they're on their own. So, I would think that just having more personnel, having people specialize a little bit more in grade levels would help because sometimes it's a little more difficult for K-5, and sometimes you may have some people that are better with the older kids and some who are better with the younger kids. This way, they could really focus on a certain couple of grade levels, get to know those students, and get to know what the classroom teachers really need with the Common Core standards for those grade levels.

Appendix H: Transcripts of Participant Interviews (Teachers)

Interview Question #1. Describe the qualities of the highly-effective Title I reading program at your school.

Participant	Response
P1	I think that it's important that the reading resource teacher tailors her teaching to each student and helps them with each of their weaknesses. Also, they're in small groups which is beneficial to the kids and meeting each of their needs.
P2	Some of the qualities are our new reading program. Our reading series is very intense and is very rigorous, and it has high expectations. It teaches children how to site examples and find the evidence in their text which I think is fabulous. It also has a good phonics component, especially at the primary level. There is a strong base on the phonics. There is also our reading specialist in the building who offers support along with our learning support teacher and our ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. They help to make our program effective.
P3	We have both push-in and pull-out. The reading specialist will push-in to my classroom once a week. She pulls children out twice a week, and the rest of the program is done across the district with the "Reading Wonders" program.
P4	What it has right now in our school is it is a pull-out program. It usually twice a week, it could only be once a week. It depends on the classroom teacher's schedule and the reading resource teacher's schedule. My students this year have it twice a week for 40 minutes at the end of the day. As far as the structure of it, it's kind of the reading resource teacher doing what she feels the students need based on how they scored in third grade based on the PSSAs in third grade. We don't have an actual, for lack of a term, curriculum. It's kind of what the reading resource teacher feels they need.
P5	There are many qualities of a highly-effective Title I reading program. I would say one of the qualities of our highly-effective Title I reading program would be flexibility and collaboration between all of the reading specialists in the district. This program was developed as a reading specialist department and a department leader. They chose the curriculum, assessments, and some

activities that would be performed through-out the school year. As a group, we discuss and meet throughout the year on ideas for each grade level. Another quality I would also say are the assessments we perform. Not only do we have formal assessments, we also take informal assessments to understand a specific reading struggle(s) for each student. Also, we work with the classroom teachers. I think it all helps that we all meet several times a year and go over the program and fix what we need to fix. So, overall, I would say that it is highly-effective because the program is growing and changing because of the collaboration between the elementary reading specialists.

Interview Question #2. What are the reasons students in your Title I reading program are outperforming their peers (in relation to expected state proficiency levels) in Title I reading programs at other schools?

Participant	Response
P1	This one I wasn't sure I could answer because I don't know what the expected levels at other schools, so I am not sure I can answer this question.
P2	Well, I think that historically at our school low class size has had a huge impact. Obviously, that is not the fact for second and third grade this year, but typically, you're looking at know more than 16 to 18 children in a classroom which I think is going to be the most effective way to reach as many children as possible historically. We'll see what happens this year.
P3	I can't speak for other schools but I can speak here that we are very consistent, we have high expectations. The children know what they are to do. We teach and reteach them until they're able to perform.
P4	I would say for my students last year, I think it was kind of, honestly, statistically, it was a balance of having some really high students last year, and I had some kids who had an IEP who were reading at least a year below grade level. They were working with the reading resource teacher, so she was giving them back-up on the things that they needed, and I think it kind of statistically kind of balanced things out with why the school scored where it did. As far as last year, my kids didn't necessarily, all of them, outperform their peers. They showed grow for themselves but they didn't necessarily outperform their peers.
P5	I think probably the small group instruction helps the students the most. Whenever it's time for testing, they're tested in a small group. They have small group instruction throughout the week. They are working on specific reading skills that they might be struggling in. There's a lot of preparation that starts from the beginning of the school year for the 3rd and 4th grade students for the testing. We are also trying to have the 2nd grade students ready for the state-performance testing as well. So, I would say that starting early and small group instruction. We also have our small groups for short periods of time, so that can be helpful for kids to

kind of switch topics so that they're not drained after a long period of time.

Interview Question #3. Explain how the design of your Title I instruction components is based on the content standards established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Participant	Response
P1	We just got a new reading program and this is either our second or third year with it. It is aligned with the Common Core. So, the reading resource teacher will usually do something similar to what the teacher is doing in class but just modify it to the students' reading level. So, the teacher is doing things with the Common Core Standards and the same with what is being done in the regular class.
P2	Well, one of the things that is easy for us is the reading series itself is very much aligned to the PA Common Core. The reading series is McGraw Hill's "Wonders." I, just being the teacher that I am, I do constantly compare to make sure that I am teaching the things that are the second grade skills and things that they are going to be needing to be successful when they get to the third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade to make sure that when they are taking the PSSAs that they will have that basic knowledge that they need.
P3	Our reading series matches the Common Core and everything else that we do matches up with the standards. We have to list them, so I know that I am teaching what is expected of the children.
P4	I'm not sure 100% of what they're doing in the reading resource room. That's based on what our reading resource teacher feels the children who are going there need. So, what she's doing with them may not be exactly what I am doing with my students. Similar concepts, like when I was going over the Focus wall today, I'm making sure I'm touching on realistic fiction, and all of the strategies and skills that we're doing. I may be doing it through a leveled reader, and she may be doing it a selective passage that she found somewhere like from a workbook or something. So, I guess in a way we are doing similar things. It just how we are presenting it to the kids that might be different.
P5	Some of the instruction that we do in the Title I reading program is based on the curriculum in the regular classroom. We follow the lessons but in small group and at a slower pace. The curriculum within the classroom is specifically based on the Pennsylvania standards. We also use other supplemental materials to help with

specific reading weaknesses and strengths of the students that are aligned with the standards as well.

Interview Question #4. What achievable changes can be made to the instructional components in order to have 100% of your Title I reading students perform at mandated state proficiency levels?

Participant	Response
P1	The only thing I can think of is that maybe more time with the reading resource teacher. She pulls them twice a week for one period each. We only have one teacher and she travels between buildings, so that's difficult to manage.
P2	Changes that can be made? These are things I would love to see. I would love to see a reading specialist who is in our building all the time, and I would love to see a reading specialist for K-1, a reading specialist for 2-3, a reading specialist for 4-5 to be that person who is pulling kids out who need that extra support. One or two periods a week isn't going to give them everything that they need, especially if you're going to have this new trend we're seeing in our building of larger class sizes. I would like to see more support, not bigger class sizes and less support. That would make us way more effective. I don't think we'll ever get to 100% proficiency. I don't think that anybody ever could, but it could definitely get us a lot closer.
P3	I would love to see them have support every day. That would be a fabulous thing. I think we just need to continue working with them. The more that they can get at a younger age, the easier it will be for them as they get older. We can hit their grade level younger. To keep them on grade level would be better.
P4	Honestly, if we're going to have a wish list here, I would like to see students as far as who qualify for our reading resource, if their LA (language arts) was with the reading specialist. It so difficult because, like today, I feel like they may be missing something that I am doing. So, in a perfect world, it would be great if the kids who go to the reading resource room were with her for their LA instruction. That way, I know that they're getting everything. Like yesterday, they missed 15 minutes of a grammar lesson. So, I have to get those kids caught up sometime throughout the next couple of days. Is that possible? I'm not sure, but in a perfect world, we'd hire more resource teachers. That would be awesome. That would be great, or at least if the students were with their reading resource teacher for the block in the morning and with me

	for that period in the afternoon. We usually have blocks in the morning Monday through Friday for Periods 3 and 4. Then, three days a week there's that extra period in the afternoon. So, if I could kind of flip-flop my schedule, that would be perfect.
P5	I would say, probably, consistency with the reading specialist materials and consistency with the time we see the students. Sometimes, I pull different supplemental materials, whether it be from certain websites or use a book. I am sure others are doing the same. We sometimes get moments to share those materials but not always. If we could have more time to meet throughout the year that would be helpful. I also think that having more available time with the students would help to reach that goal. Some schools have more time with students than others. It would nice to be consistent on time with the students.

Interview Question #5. For the Title I students in your school who are currently struggling to meet expected reading proficiency levels, what are the main obstacles to their achievement? What can you do to resolve these obstacles?

Participant	Response
P1	In my grade, I think the biggest problem is recognizing letters and their sounds. Some of the students who are weaker in reading don't know those sounds, and they have to have a lot of practice with it. This year, I have started a new program where I call it the RED Folder (Read Every Day) where the students get sent home a paper practicing the skills that we're doing in class. Also, another little book where I would like them to read more. I think helping continuing reading and things at home with things we are doing at school will really help out a student also. Just trying to get them to read more and help with their letter sounds and fluency kind of helps.
P2	The main obstacles are just the things we can't control; the time and the class size. I wish, and I've had this conversation with three different teachers. I need a way to figure out to do effective groups and centers, so that I can be doing that 20 minutes of intensive with those few kids who really, really need it every single day. So, it's me trying to figure out and establish this routine and establish this practice that they become good at it, but, that's the huge obstacle, the time. We also have a new math series that requires a lot of time, and we're supposed to do ASSET science and we're supposed to do social studies and we're supposed to get X, Y, and Z in. There are only so many hours in a day.
P3	Children that I have that struggle the most have a hard time with just sounding out words, their basic phonic skills. Their phonemic awareness is lacking which makes it hard by the time that they get to third grade where they need to read to learn versus learning to read. They're struggling already, so we have to backup and work a grade level below, sometimes two, just to help them get to where they need to be.
P4	It depends on the student. For some students, there's not the desire to learn. It just that there are other things on their mind. I mean, there are things going on at home, so learning ELA is not a priority

	for them. That was a student I had. For other students, I think just realizing what accommodations and modifications they need in trying to meet those needs helps to make them successful. I know just a year ago that wasn't possible because school just wasn't a priority. It wasn't because of the things that were going on at home. But I think for your average student, just trying to accommodate them, modify things for them, to give them success that helps in their self-esteem. Hopefully, that helps them have that desire to push themselves more. Definitely, that's what I do in my room.
P5	I think it depends on the grade level. I would say my two biggest obstacles for me specifically are time within the school day with the reading specialist and support at home. Home support is sometimes lacking for students. They aren't always getting the home support and time they need. I think there are specific reading obstacles for each student. Some struggle in fluency, while others have trouble with comprehension. The problems should be addressed and given time to address them.

Interview Question #6. If you had complete autonomy to change any component or components of your Title I reading program, for the betterment of student achievement, what, specifically, would you change? Have you been able to make any changes to your Title I reading program? If so, what were those changes, and why did you make them?

Participant	Response
P1	Like I said before, the only change that I would make is maybe having more pull-out or push-in time with the reading resource teacher to help give the students a little more assistance. But again, we only have one teacher and she travels between buildings and that's very difficult to do. Other than that, we do the DIBELS initial testing at the beginning of the year, and the reading resource teacher really modifies or builds her teaching based on what those students need which is based on the DIBELS test. So, maybe having another assessment also to see some of the weaker skills in the students.
P2	What I would do is what I said earlier, I wish we had more reading specialist in the building, just flat out all the time assigned to specific grade levels. Here's the really funny thing, our reading specialist doesn't even have all of the curriculum. They don't order her a set. That's absolutely ridiculous because she should have a set of everything if she is going to be teaching everything. She should have them all. I personally have not been able to make any changes. In the past, last year, we were able to, with my reading partner, who has since retired, and the reading specialist, we were able to group kids differently instead of just the kids who are lower going into the reading specialist. We actually had a high, middle, and low group and the other second grade teacher, who was doing tutoring after school, had the lower group, who she was tutoring after school too, so that it was consistent. I had the high group and the reading specialist had the middle group. That way, we had a little bit more of that homogenous grouping two periods a week. I don't know how effective it was. I would like to think that they did OK, but I don't know.
P3	I would get them more time with the reading resource teacher. If I could do anything, that's what I think would be great.
P4	I think with reading, and actually, with any subject, I think if we were departmentalized and I could focus on teaching, you know, in elementary reading, math, for everything. If you could just focus on ELA, I feel like, as a teacher you could master it more. Like

	today, the kids were like, "We need to do spelling." I said, "We'll do it tomorrow guys." I think I need more time with just that specific subject. If I were teaching like a block one of ELA and then a block two of ELA, kind of like what is in middle school and high school, but I don't know how it would be possible at the elementary level. I guess you'd almost have to have four or five teachers, and the kids maybe flip-flopping back and forth among the teachers. I think if I could change something, if I were just teaching just reading or if I were just teaching two blocks of math, I could really put all of my energy into that. It's just so hard at the elementary level because you're teaching just a little bit of everything, and I feel like you can't really get into it because you don't have the time. That would be my wish list. To be able to do that.
P5	We do make changes quite often in the Title I reading program as a group of reading specialists. One of the changes we've made this year was the assessments for 3rd and 4th grade. So, we give assessments to our students specifically at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. We changed them to find better assessments which gives us more information on the students; specifically, what reading problems they might be struggling with. So, I would say the assessments is definitely one change we made. Last year, we also added a couple writing components that we were able to change quickly. I would also say that a big change would definitely be back to Question #4 which would be having more time with the students. I think, looking at the whole picture that would be the biggest change necessary.

Appendix I: Data Use Agreement

This Data Use Agreement ("Agreement"), effective as of March 23, 2014 ("Effective Date"), is entered into by and between George Spalaris ("Data Recipient") and Title I Elementary School {alias} ("Data Provider"). The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set ("LDS") for use in research in accord with the HIPAA and FERPA Regulations.

Definitions. Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the "HIPAA Regulations" codified at Title 45 parts 160 through 164 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.

Preparation of the LDS. Data Provider shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient a LDS in accord with any applicable HIPAA or FERPA Regulations

Data Fields in the LDS. No direct identifiers such as names may be included in the Limited Data Set (LDS). In preparing the LDS, Data Provider shall include the **data fields specified as follows**, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the research: 2013 PSSA Reading Scores and 2013 4Sight Benchmark Reading Scores.

Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:

Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;

Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and

Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the LDS for its research activities only.

Term and Termination.

Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.

Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the LDS.

Termination by Data Provider. Data Provider may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.

For Breach. Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Data Provider.

Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e) and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.

Miscellaneous.

Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.

Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.

No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

DATA PROVIDER	DATA RECIPIENT
Signed: Name	Signed: George Spalaris
Print Name: Name	Print Name: George Spalaris
Print Title: Principal/Federal Programs coordinator	Print Title: Researcher

Appendix J: Presentation of Archival Data

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 & 4 Test: PSSA

Testing Year: 2014-2015 Publisher: Pennsylvania Department of Education

	Grade 4	Grade 3
SCHOOL SCORES		
Proficient	37%	59.3%
Advanced	41.3%	10.2%
Number of students tested	46	59
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%
SUBGROUP SCORES		
Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students		
Proficient	54%	52%
Advanced	21%	22%
Number of students tested	21	25

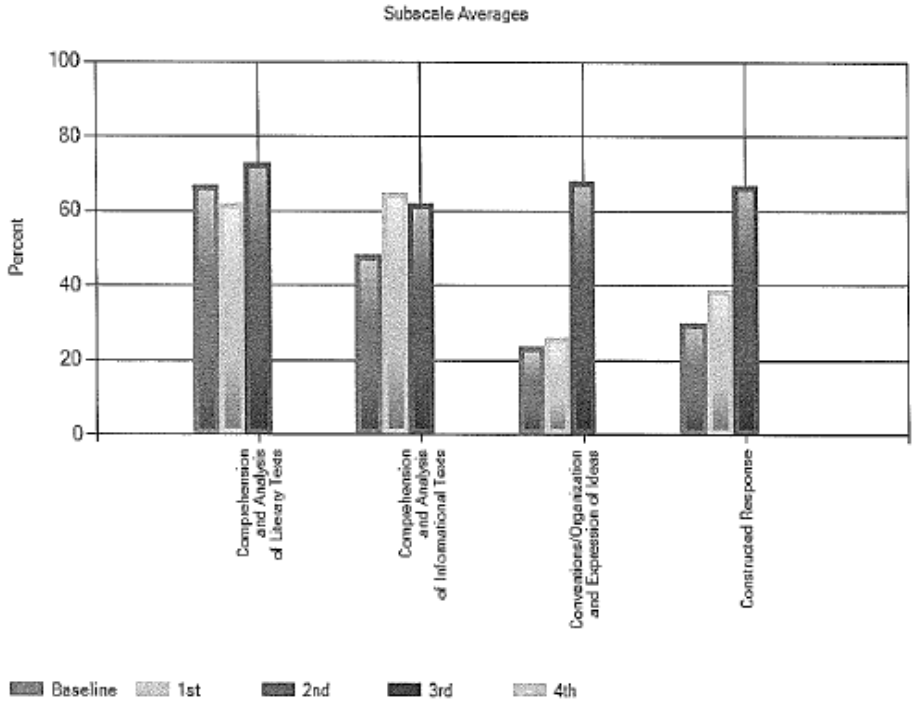
4Sight Benchmark Assessment 2014-2015

Anywhere Elementary School

Grades 3 & 4

Reading

Subscale	Baseline	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Student Count	38.00	36.00	38.00		
Students with Zero Score	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Texts	66.75	62.12	72.98		
Comprehension and Analysis of Informational Texts	48.33	64.65	61.87		
Conventions/Organization and Expression of Ideas	23.68	25.93	68.06		
Constructed Response	29.82	38.89	66.67		



STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 & 4 Test: PSSA

Testing Year: 2013-2014 Publisher: Pennsylvania Department of Education

School Overall Results in Reading/Literature

This table captures the participation and performance results of students overall and by disaggregated group who took the PSSA in grades 3-5.

All Student Groups[1]	Participation[3]			Performance[4]				
	Tested #[2]	Enrolled #	Assessed %	Percentage of students in each Performance Level				Percentage of students Proficient and above
				Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	0 20 40 60 80 100
All Students	**155**	**158**	**99%**	**5%**	**14%**	**48%**	**34%**	82% Goal 76%
Historically Underperforming	74	76	99%	7%	19%	53%	22%	74% Goal 64%
IEP	22	23	96%	5%	27%	59%	9%	68% Goal 59%
English Language Learner [5]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Economically Disadvantaged	65	66	100%	6%	20%	51%	23%	74% Goal 65%
Male	80	83	99%	6%	11%	56%	26%	83% Goal 74%
Female	75	75	100%	3%	16%	40%	41%	81% Goal 79%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Asian (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Hispanic (any race)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
White (not Hispanic)	136	139	99%	3%	14%	47%	36%	83% Goal 79%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

NOTE:

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

— Indicates 10 or fewer students in a group. To provide meaningful results and to protect the privacy of individual students, data are printed only when the total number of students in a group is greater than 10.

[1] There can be overlap among the groups since a student may belong to more than one of these groups.

[2] Includes the number of students who have received a score on the test taken.

[3] The participation rate is based on the total number of tests scored divided by the total number of students enrolled on the last day of testing. Students with Medical Emergency are excluded from the calculations.

[4] The performance of students scoring proficient and above includes those who took the PASA, although the number of proficient and advanced scores based on the PASA will not exceed 1% of all assessed students.

[5] There was 1 student who opted to be excluded from the Reading test because they were English Language Learners in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school.

School PSSA Results in Grade 4 Reading

Student Group[1]	Academic Year	Participation Rate	Percentage of students in each Performance Level				Percentage of students Proficient and above		
							School	District	State
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	0 20 40 60 80 100		
All Students	2013–2014	100%	5%	11%	44%	40%	84%	81%	68%
	2012–2013	100%	4%	11%	51%	34%	85%	81%	66%
Historically Underperforming	2013–2014	100%	8%	20%	48%	24%	72%	65%	52%
IEP	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
English Language Learner	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Economically Disadvantaged	2013–2014	100%	9%	22%	48%	22%	70%	63%	52%
Male	2013–2014	100%	6%	9%	51%	34%	86%	82%	64%
Female	2013–2014	100%	4%	15%	33%	48%	81%	80%	73%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Asian (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Hispanic (any race)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
White (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	100%	2%	13%	43%	43%	86%	82%	76%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Migrant	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—

School PSSA Results in Grade 3 Reading

Student Group[1]	Academic Year	Participation Rate	Percentage of students in each Performance Level				Percentage of students Proficient and above		
							School	District	State
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	0 20 40 60 80 100		
All Students	2013–2014	100%	5%	7%	58%	30%	88%	85%	70%
	2012–2013	100%	14%	13%	51%	22%	72%	75%	73%
Historically Underperforming	2013–2014	100%	4%	8%	71%	17%	88%	78%	54%
IEP	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
English Language Learner	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Economically Disadvantaged	2013–2014	100%	5%	10%	67%	19%	86%	83%	55%
Male	2013–2014	100%	5%	5%	71%	19%	90%	77%	66%
Female	2013–2014	100%	5%	9%	45%	41%	86%	93%	74%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Asian (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Hispanic (any race)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
White (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	100%	5%	8%	55%	32%	87%	85%	79%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Migrant	2013–2014	—	—	—	—	—		—	—

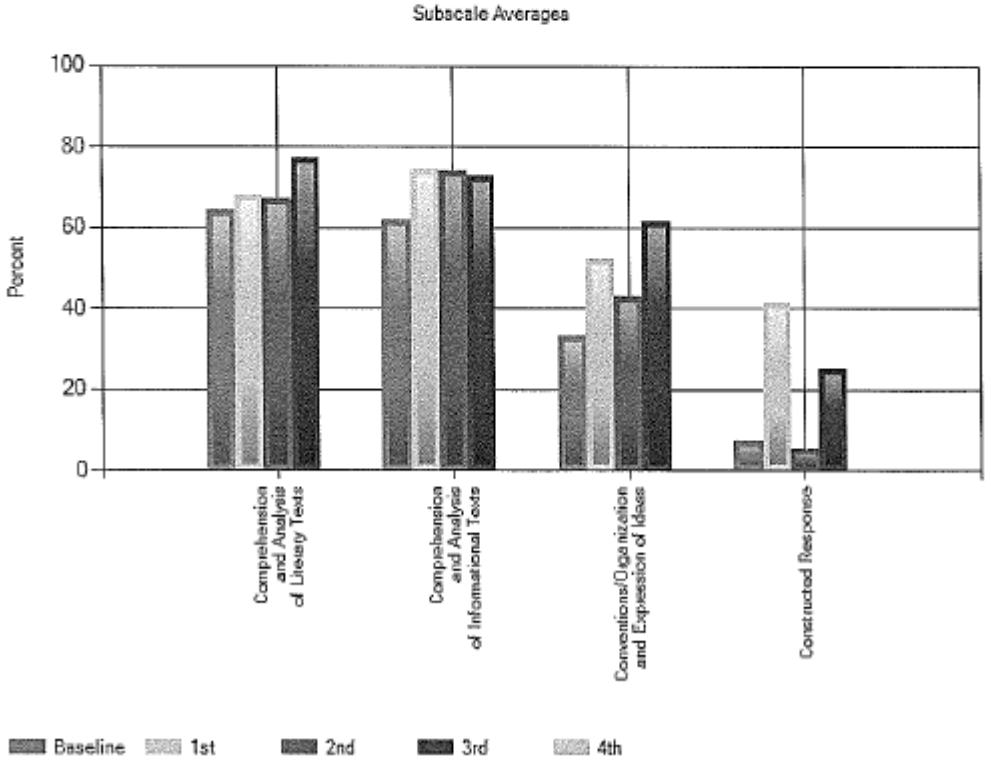
4Sight Benchmark Assessment 2013-2014

Anywhere Elementary School

Grades 3 & 4

Reading

Subscale	Baseline	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Student Count	31.00	29.00	31.00	16.00	
Students with Zero Score	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Texts	64.22	68.03	67.16	77.27	
Comprehension and Analysis of Informational Texts	61.88	74.61	74.19	72.73	
Conventions/Organization and Expression of Ideas	33.18	52.22	42.86	61.61	
Constructed Response	7.53	41.38	5.38	25.00	



STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 & 4 Test: PSSA
Testing Year: 2012-2013 Publisher: Pennsylvania Department of Education

School Overall Results in Reading

This table captures the participation and performance results of students overall and by disaggregated group who took the PSSA in grades 3-5.

All Student Groups[1]	Participation[3]			Performance[4]				
	Tested #[2]	Enrolled #	Assessed %	Percentage of students in each Performance Level				Percentage of students Proficient and above
				Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	0 20 40 60 80 100
All Students	**174**	**175**	**100%**	**11%**	**14%**	**52%**	**23%**	75% Goal 70%
Historically Underperforming	86	87	100%	17%	21%	49%	13%	62% Goal 52%
IEP	25	26	100%	20%	24%	44%	12%	56% Goal 32%
English Language Learner	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Economically Disadvantaged	71	71	100%	17%	21%	49%	13%	62% Goal 53%
Male	95	96	100%	11%	17%	47%	25%	73% Goal 65%
Female	79	79	100%	11%	11%	57%	20%	77% Goal 75%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Asian (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Hispanic (any race)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
White (not Hispanic)	155	156	100%	8%	14%	52%	25%	77% Goal 77%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Migrant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

School PSSA Results in Grade 4 Reading

Student Group[1]	Academic Year	Participation Rate	Percentage of students in each Performance Level				Percentage of students Proficient and above		
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	School (0 20 40 60 80 100)	District	State
All Students	2012–2013	100%	4%	11%	51%	34%	85%	81%	66%
	2011–2012	98%	4%	9%	55%	33%	87%	88%	72%
Historically Underperforming	2012–2013	100%	9%	13%	61%	17%	78%	67%	49%
IEP	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
English Language Learner	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Economically Disadvantaged	2012–2013	100%	10%	14%	57%	19%	76%	68%	49%
Male	2012–2013	100%	8%	13%	46%	33%	79%	82%	62%
Female	2012–2013	100%	0%	9%	57%	35%	91%	81%	71%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Asian (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Hispanic (any race)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
White (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	100%	3%	10%	48%	40%	88%	82%	74%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Migrant	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—

School PSSA Results in Grade 3 Reading

Student Group[1]	Academic Year	Participation Rate	Percentage of students in each Performance Level				Percentage of students Proficient and above		
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	School (0 20 40 60 80 100)	District	State
All Students	2012–2013	100%	14%	13%	51%	22%	72%	75%	73%
	2011–2012	98%	4%	6%	48%	42%	90%	89%	74%
Historically Underperforming	2012–2013	100%	24%	26%	38%	12%	50%	53%	58%
IEP	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
English Language Learner	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Economically Disadvantaged	2012–2013	100%	22%	26%	44%	7%	52%	56%	58%
Male	2012–2013	100%	11%	14%	43%	31%	74%	73%	70%
Female	2012–2013	100%	18%	12%	59%	12%	71%	77%	77%
American Indian/Alaskan Native (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Asian (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Black or African American (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Hispanic (any race)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
White (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	100%	11%	13%	52%	24%	76%	76%	81%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic)	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—
Migrant	2012–2013	—	—	—	—	—		—	—

4Sight Benchmark Assessment 2012-2013

Anywhere Elementary School

Grades 3 & 4

Reading

Subscale	Baseline	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Student Count	29.00	29.00	29.00	16.00	
Students with Zero Score	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Texts	69.91	71.47	79.22	75.57	
Comprehension and Analysis of Informational Texts	55.17	64.26	68.83	80.68	
Conventions/Organization and Expression of Ideas	39.41	63.55	58.16	61.61	
Constructed Response	40.23	64.37	58.33	41.67