

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: The Impact of Response to Intervention on Reading Achievement and Special Education Student Population in an Urban Midwestern School District

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The purpose of this study was to detail the implementation of a Response to Intervention program in an urban school district and to measure the impact of the program on the reading achievement and special education population at the elementary school level. The study followed the process used by the district to introduce the RtI philosophy in ten selected elementary schools and then to expand the program to all of the 33 elementary schools within the school district. The author details the methods used and the support provided to teachers and school leaders during the implementation.

The reading achievement data was taken from school district records of the DIBELS assessments given at the End of Year (EOY) for the school years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012. This data was analyzed for overall growth following the full RtI implementation as well as the resulting EOY 2012 performance. Data was compiled at the school and district level. Title One and non-Title One school performance was compared and placed in rank order of performance. Four schools were identified as strong performers and those principals were interviewed to determine successful strategies for supporting the RtI implementation. The successful schools were found to have stressed fidelity to the district literacy curriculum model for strong Tier

One instruction for all students, as well as maintaining fidelity to the selection of students and the intervention program design for those students in Tier Two intervention.

Special education student population was analyzed using annual state department of education reports. Consistent decline of identified students at the elementary school level was noted following the RtI implementation. An overall decrease of 824 students receiving special education services was noted across the school district. There was a correlation of an increase in student reading achievement and a decrease in special education population following the RtI implementation.