

INDIANA READING EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION (IREAD-
3) ASSESSMENT AND THIRD GRADE RETENTION: FINDINGS FROM
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

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This study is first dedicated to my Lord and Savior; without Him, nothing is possible. Second, this study is dedicated to Treyten, Truman, Thaddeus, and Tytus.

I hope I have instilled in you that all things are possible with prayer and hard work. My love for all of you is never-ending.

To my parents and husband: Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, love, and support. I could not have done this without each of you!

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Abstract

DISSERTATION PROJECT: INDIANA READING EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION (IREAD-3) ASSESSMENT AND THIRD GRADE RETENTION: FINDINGS FROM SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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The importance of reading and reading instruction in the United States has been documented for centuries. Specifically, students are expected to be able to read by the end of third grade. As accountability, assessments, and the importance of reading by the third grade has expanded some states measure a students' reading ability by one high-stakes assessment. As a result of federal legislation, the House Enrolled Act (HES) 1367, also known as Public Law 109, required reading evaluation in third grade and was passed in Indiana. This study examined the perceptions of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary principals concerning their current knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment, instructional reading strategies being utilized, and the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment on retention among gender and minority groups. The study also examined the perceptions of superintendents, directors of special education, assistant directors and/or program coordinators, and elementary principals in relationship to the impact the IREAD-3 assessment had on their respective district/school. Significant findings were found among the respondents concerning their perception of knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment, the Indiana standards that are assessed on the IREAD-3, Indiana Public Law 109, IDOE requirement for districts schools to provide third grade reading

instruction again to “Do Not Pass” (DNP) students, DOE requirement to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum, and the history of the Reading First Grant. Significant findings were also found in respondents’ beliefs concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment providing valuable information on a students’ reading level, data specific to a students’ reading concerns, and information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved in grades K-3. Recommendations for practice and future research are provided.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

Importance of Reading

Knowing how to read is considered one of the most important foundational skills that students need to acquire before progressing in academics. The ability to read has been a valued skill in America since colonial times. However, the best instructional practice to teach reading has been debated among researchers for decades (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Good & Kaminski, 2002; Goodman, 2006; Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002; Monaghan & Barry, 1999). The first law that was passed regarding reading instruction occurred in 1642 in Massachusetts and required any parent or master of education to teach their child to read. The first reading assessment was documented in the early 1910's because of the work from of John Broadus Watson and Edward Lee Thorndike (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002). As time progressed in the United States so did access to public education, educational practices, reading assessments, and federal involvement in reading instruction. Historically not all children were educated; only Caucasian boys from affluent families were provided an education. Gradually, girls and other ethnic groups were included in public education (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002).

Reading Instruction and Assessments

Reading instructional practices and reading assessments vary in the United States. One of the largest debates in history involving the best educational practices began in the late 19th century and still exists today; the debate centered on reading instruction, and involved whole language advocates versus phonics instruction advocates. In the late 19th century, Edward Shelton trained teachers to use word methods, sight word memorization (Monaghan & Barry,

1999). Clarence Stone's research in the 1930s emphasized whole word and sentence recognition versus phonics (Chall, 1967). William S. Gray advocated for word to part reading instruction and worked with the Scott Foresman publishing company to develop their basal readers in the 1940s (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002).

In the middle of the 1900s, phonics instruction resurfaced as the best way to teach reading to children. In 1955, Rudolph Flesch published a book titled *Why Johnny Can't Read: And What You Can Do about it* that supported phonics instruction over whole language practices (Flesch, 1966). Jeanne Chall, a researcher, was commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation in the early sixties to study the methods that were being used to teach reading in the United States (Chall, 1967). Chall's research concluded that children would learn to read if teachers focused their reading instruction on phonics instead of whole language.

The "reading war" erupted in the 1980s and 1990s between supporters of whole language practices such as Kenneth Goodman, Marie Clay, and Frank Smith and supporters of phonics instruction such as Louisa Moats, Ruth Kaminski, and Roland Good. An enormous amount of federally funded research supports phonics instruction but the debate still remains active in sections of the United States today (Good & Kaminski, 2002; Goodman, 2006; Moats, 1999).

Onset of Reading Assessments and Accountability

Reading assessments were created in the early 1900's, but have evolved in the last century. The first reading assessments were a result of the research and work of John Broadus Watson and Edward Lee Thorndike. Watson and Thorndike both believed in teaching children the whole word versus teaching children the alphabet and phonics. Watson studied students' eye movements while reading and used his research to support the word method. Thorndike developed achievement scales in various subject areas (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002).

Many states believe a student needs to have foundational reading skills by grade three before progressing to texts that are more difficult as an older student. Because of this belief, some states require a third grade student to pass a reading proficiency exam before promotion to the fourth grade. Specifically, D.C. and 16 states (17 in the school year 2017-18/South Carolina), including Indiana, Texas, and Florida, now have the ability to retain students based on a lack of reading proficiency (Robelen, 2012; Stipek & Lombardo, 2014; Workman 2014). Grade retention is a widely debated issue in education, and the majority of the research conducted on grade retention does not support this practice as an intervention (Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson, Carlson, Rotert, Egeland, & Sroufe, 1997; Shepard & Smith, 1990). Due to the margin of error that could occur in an assessment, researchers and instructional leaders should use data from more than one assessment to determine if a student should be retained in a specific grade level. Research conducted in 2010 by Robert Marzano indicated that even with a high level of reliability and validity, scores ranged by 20% (Marzano, 2010). Assessments of various types can provide useful data to guide instruction, but test scores are being valued presently at the local, state, and national levels in ways that fall outside the purpose and legitimacy of those tests (Fuhrken, 2009).

Beliefs on Retention from NASP and Intervention Research

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) argues that students with academic, emotional, or behavioral difficulties do not benefit from either repeating a grade or social promotion. In 2007, the NASP released a position paper to families outlying the effects of grade retention as an “ineffective and possibly harmful intervention” (Jimerson, Woehr, & Kaufman, 2007, p. 1). In 2011, the NASP released an additional position paper recommending

school districts implement models of service delivery to students instead of grade retention that ensure:

Multitiered problem-solving models to provide early and intensive evidence-based instruction and intervention to meet the needs of all students across academic, behavioral, and social–emotional domains, equitable opportunities to learn for students from diverse backgrounds, universal screening for academic, behavioral, and social–emotional difficulties, and frequently progress monitor students and evaluate interventions to ensure they are meeting the academic needs of the students. (p. 5)

In the age of school and teacher accountability, many see grade retention as a reasonable approach, even an intervention, for a struggling student. In 2002, an article published by Anderson, Whipple, and Jimerson reviewed 17 different research articles concerning high dropout rates and grade level retention. All reviewed studies included grade retention as a potential predictor of dropping out of high school. “In addition, several studies reported that grade retention was found to be the strongest predictor of later dropout status” (Anderson, Jimerson, & Whipple, 2002, p. 443). Two of the studies reviewed by Anderson, Jimerson, and Whipple were conducted in the 1970’s. Stroup and Robins conducted the first study in 1972 which identified grade retention as the most powerful predictor of future dropout of African American males followed by excessive absences, and then frequent school changes (Stroup & Robbins, 1972). The second study, conducted by Lloyd in 1978, examined characteristics of third-grade students who later became high school dropouts and concluded that the dropouts were more likely to have been retained in the earlier grades (Lloyd, 1978). In 2007, Jimerson, Woehr, and Kaufman released a position paper to parents from the NASP, which indicated a century of research has failed to demonstrate any benefits to grade retention for any groups or

individual students (NASP, 2007). Retention rates in the United States are higher among boys than among girls, are higher among Black and Hispanic students, and are higher among children who are born outside of the United States (Warren, Hoffman, & Andrew, 2014).

The NASP recommends schools should intervene in a child's academics early with an intervention if there is a concern the child is not making adequate progress. Academic screenings (DIBELS) and interventions, such as Read Well, REWARDS, Early Reading Intervention (ERI), and Scientific Based Reading Research (SBRR) Lessons are supported by educational research, as well as monitoring a student's progress towards academic goals (Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O'Connor, 2014; Fuchs et al., 2012; Simmons, Kame'enui, Good, Harn, Cole, & Braun, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

The National Reading Panel, which was convened by Congress in 1997 to research various aspects of reading, indicated that in order to develop proficient readers, a teacher will need to teach the five reading essentials which include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, guided oral reading, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction. The 14-member Panel included members from different backgrounds, including school administrators, working teachers, and scientists involved in reading research. On April 13, 2000, the National Reading Panel concluded its work and submitted its final reports. The Panel found the following combinations of instructional components (contained in this conceptual framework) are important to effectively teach children to read.

Phonemic awareness is the first skill necessary in reading and requires that students have the ability to manipulate sounds in spoken words. Research states that "phonemic awareness can be taught and learned" (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human

Development, 2001, p. 4). Teachers can instruct their students in phonemic awareness by using phoneme isolation, phoneme identity, phoneme categorization, phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation, phoneme deletion, phoneme addition, and phoneme substitution. Phonemic awareness will help a child learn how to read and spell words. Phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are the two best predictors of how children will learn to read in the first two years of school (Ehri, 2003; Ehri, Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Zadeh, & Shanahan, 2001; Ehri, et. al. 2001).

Phonics instruction is the next essential reading component and entails teaching students to understand the relationship between letters and sounds. The National Institute for Literacy pointed to scientific research on phonics that states, “systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics instruction” (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2001, p. 12). Explicit phonics instruction refers to lesson delivery of the phonics. If a lesson is explicit, then the teacher tells children directly what she or he is trying to teach. Phonics instruction is considered explicit phonics instruction when it involves students making words, sorting words, and doing independent practice all under the guidance of a teacher. Lessons must include direct teaching, high-level student engagement, and individual accountability. It is a necessity for teachers to understand that students apply the phonetic skills learned in their reading and writing (Adams, 2001; Ehri et al., 2001; Messmer & Griffith, 2005)

Once students have developed the alphabetic principle and understand the relationship sounds have with letters (phonemes/morphemes) then students are ready to develop reading fluency. Fluency is the ability to read words both accurately and quickly. Students who are unable to read text fluently often struggle with reading comprehension (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler,

2002; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Research has found that “repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement” (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2001, p. 21).

Guided oral reading provides the student the opportunity to read and reread a text using one-to-one instruction, tutors, audiotapes, peer guidance, or another means. Students who had an opportunity to practice a passage found improvements in fluency from the first read to the final read (Faulkner & Levy, 1999; Levy, Nicholls & Kohen, 1993; VanWagenen, Williams, & McLaughlin, 1994). Oral reading has been essential to reading instruction in the United States since colonial times. In early classrooms, oral reading was not viewed as a means to an end (fluency) but was viewed as the desired outcome. The use of oral reading in classrooms is moving away from traditional round robin practices toward more literature-based (e.g., shared reading, Readers Theatre) and strategy-focused instructional models (e.g., guided reading) (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003).

Vocabulary instruction is a critical component of reading instruction that allows readers to comprehend what has been read. Children from rich literacy backgrounds often learn vocabulary indirectly, but many students need explicit vocabulary instruction. Students from all cultures have a basic understanding of Tier I words, but Tier II and Tier III words often have to be taught. Tier I words refer to vocabulary that is common to almost every child (house, mom, etc.). Tier II words are academic (compare, solve, etc.); and Tier III words are specific to content literacy (photosynthesis, metaphor, etc.). Students should acquire approximately 3,000 words in a school year (Archer & Hughes, 2004; Baumann & Kame’enui, 2003; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013; Nagy & Herman, 1987).

The last component of reading instruction is textual comprehension. According to the National Reading Panel (2000, 2002), teachers should teach specific comprehension strategies to allow students to make sense of what they are reading. Students who struggle with reading need to have teachers scaffold strategies for them in order to be successful. The specific strategies found to be beneficial were monitoring comprehension, using graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions, generating questions, recognizing story structure, and summarizing. Skilled readers are good at comprehension and are able to draw inferences from texts (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Graves, Jule, & Graves 1998; Griffin, Burns, & Snow 1998; McNamara, 2012). The importance of teaching these five essential components of reading was for all students to be reading on grade level by grade three.

Federal Legislation

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 was enacted to address the gap in achievement between students who were high-performing and those who were low-performing, including students who were disadvantaged and/or from a minority background. One of the goals of NCLB (2001) was to ensure teachers were implementing research-based reading instruction to assist with reducing the number of students who were not reading at grade level. To date, 36 states require a reading assessment in at least one grade (preK-3) with the primary purpose to identify reading deficiencies (Workman, 2014).

Reading First Grant

Reading First was established because of NCLB, identifying multiple commitments to assist in closing the achievement gap in reading. The purpose of Reading First, as outlined in NCLB, was to provide assistance to state and local educational agencies in instituting reading

programs grounded in scientific based reading research. Another goal of the Reading First initiative was to provide professional development to general and special education teachers to assist in identifying obstacles that prevent success in reading. The federal government allotted 900 million dollars collectively to states who participated in the Reading First grant to select and administer reading assessments, provide resources that would allow teachers to implement the five essential components of a reading program (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension instruction) and strengthen early literacy and family literacy programs (NCLB, 2001). The central goal of the Reading First Program is to ensure that all students read well by the end of grade three, thereby setting the stage for students to reach their full academic potential in subsequent grades. Research studies indicate the Reading First grant made an impact on some, but not all, of the Reading First schools (Gamse, Bloom, Kemple, & Jacob, 2008; Moss, Boulay, Horst, Rodger, & Brown-Lyons, 2008). Moss et al. (2008) reported,

The primary goal of Reading First is to improve student reading achievement such that all students are reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade. There is limited evidence that third- and fourth-grade students in Reading First schools improved their reading performance over time more quickly than did their counterparts in non-Reading First Title I schools (p.31).

NCLB and Implications for Indiana

The state of Indiana (IDOE) has aligned reading expectations with that of NCLB through the IREAD- 3 assessment and its recently developed reading framework (Indiana Department of Education, 2011). As a result of federal legislation, in 2010 in Indiana, the House Enrolled Act (HES) 1367, also known as Public Law 109, required reading evaluation in third grade was

passed. In 2011, the state of Indiana developed the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework, which was designed around the Reading First initiative and the National Reading Panel's theory of reading to include the five essential elements of reading instruction to ensure that all children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade. The components of the framework include Reading Goals, Assessment, Instruction, Leadership, Professional Development, and Commitment. The framework states that "until all Indiana students acquire the sophisticated reading skills they need to be prepared for college and careers, reading must become and remain a high priority for every school" (The Indiana K-6 Reading Framework, 2011, p. 3).

Problem

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

There is a concern from the literature that despite federal legislation concerning the best reading instructional practices, there are many children who are unable to read. The concern is widened when the ability to read is connected to reading assessments that determine a student's promotion to a higher grade. National retention data suggests there are many states that retain minority students at a much higher rate than Caucasian students when they do not achieve the benchmark for reading (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Hernandez, 2001; Meisels & Liaw, 1993; The Children's Reading Foundation, n.d.). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) did not show significant reading achievement gains in 2013 for fourth grade students in comparison to 2011. In the past ten years, NAEP data indicates fourth grade students have increased by four points on the assessment, and fourth grade students in Indiana have seen a five-point increase. National NAEP data have indicated significant achievement gaps across racial and ethnic lines. For example, about half of African American and Hispanic students scored below the "basic" level in 4th grade reading, based on the 2011 NAEP assessment,

compared with 22 percent of Caucasian students (Adams, Robelen, & Shaw, 2012). According to NAEP data, Indiana maintains similar fourth grade reading achievement gaps in 2013 between African American and Caucasian students as it did in 2003. The reading achievement gap among fourth grade Hispanic students and Caucasian students also remains unchanged, but is smaller than the gap between African American and Caucasian students. The data from the NAEP assessment indicates some, but not all, states are making progress in reading achievement scores but there remain significant achievement gaps among minorities. The NAEP assessed 376,000 fourth-graders in 2013 (The Nation's Report Card, n.d.). Despite federal legislation and state retention laws, the national NAEP data from 2013 indicates we still are not teaching all children, including minorities, how to read.

Reading First

National data continues to reflect a national reading concern even after the Federal Government funded the Reading First Initiative with 900 million dollars as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. The money available to states was based on their commitment to provide professional development to all teachers in reading to ensure students become literate (NCTE, 2002). The Reading First Initiative was part of the NCLB Act but also was a result of the several studies conducted in the late 20th century. An example of research conducted resulted in a report that was published in 1998 by the National Research Council. In this report, the authors identify national issues concerning reading. Griffin, Burns, and Snow (1998) stated,

Academic success as defined by high school graduation can be predicted by reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a moderately skilled reader by the end of third grade is quite unlikely to graduate from high school (p. 21).

Civil Rights Data

Despite the federal and state mandates, many students in the United States are still not learning to read by the third grade. Students who live in poverty, have cultural differences, and have learning difficulties are placed at a substantial academic disadvantage compared to their peers. Data from the Office of Civil Rights proves that retention is disproportionately based on the color of a student's skin. "Data collected by the US Department of Civil Rights reveal stark racial and ethnic disparities in student retentions, with black and Hispanic students far more likely than white students to repeat a grade, especially in elementary and middle school" (Adams, Robelen, & Shaw, 2012, para. 1). The retention data for African American students is higher than the retention data for Hispanic students. In the 2009-2010 academic year, more than half (56%) of all fourth graders retained were African American, according to the data, which accounted for about 85 percent of the nation's public school population. In comparison, 49 percent of students who were retained in third grade were African American (Adams et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Education).

Due to federal mandates that place a strict importance on accountability for schools and teachers, many schools have begun to retain students who do not pass their state assessments. Students who are typically retained are minority students from low socio-economic backgrounds. A student who is retained is more likely to be referred to special education and to drop out of high school (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1992; Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002; Lorence & Dworkin, 2006; Mc-Gill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig, 2006). The state of Indiana created the IREAD-3 assessment in 2010 to ensure students are reading at the third grade level before promoting them to the fourth grade despite the research against retention. Indiana provided little support to schools on how best to remediate students who failed to pass

the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts. Remediation of students who did not pass IREAD-3 was a local district decision. The decision to retain a student in a third grade classroom was a determination of the local school district, yet the IDOE required the student to be registered by the schools as a third grader and repeat third grade reading instruction (Indiana Department of Education). The state of Indiana has mandated the IREAD-3 assessment for all third graders without providing the schools with research that supports best reading instructional practices. Furthermore, there is not research that supports the retention of third grade students as an intervention to improve later academic outcomes.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of school district superintendents, special education administration, and elementary school principals concerning their current knowledge and beliefs on the IREAD-3 assessment. A survey was distributed to schools in Indiana to determine the level of knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment, perceptions of the effectiveness of the IREAD-3 assessment, effective reading instructional strategies, pass rates in regards to ethnic background, and pass rates in relationship to gender differences. School district superintendents, special education administration, and elementary school principals completed the survey concerning their knowledge and implications of the IREAD-3 assessment on their school environment and student retention. The intent of this research was to investigate the Indiana IREAD-3 assessment process and inform the field of education concerning state assessments and grade level retention.

Research Questions

The major research questions in this study focused on the perceptions and knowledge of the effectiveness of IREAD-3 assessments, effective reading instructional strategies, and gender

and minority retention disparity. School district superintendents, special education administration, and third grade teachers reported if their school district chose to retain students who did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment in a third grade classroom or if they chose to socially promote students to the fourth grade while providing third grade reading remediation as required by the IDOE.

Research questions included the following:

1. Are there differences in the level of knowledge of superintendents, special education administration, and principals regarding the IREAD-3 assessment?
2. Are there differences in the perceptions of the level of effectiveness of the IREAD-3 assessment among superintendents, special education administration, and principals?
3. Are there differences in what schools in Indiana utilize for effective reading instructional strategies as perceived by superintendents, special education administration, and principals?
4. Are there differences in the level of impact retention have had on gender as perceived by superintendents, special education administration, and principals?
5. Are there differences in the level of impact retention have had on minorities as perceived by superintendents, special education administration, and principals?
6. What is the difference in the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment?
7. What is the difference in the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning gender differences and retention?
8. What is the difference in the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning minority differences and retention?

Significance of Study

National retention data, reports from national professional associations, and multiple research studies do not favor student retention. Retention data indicates that school districts are retaining minority students from a low socio-economic background (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson et al., 1997; Shepard & Smith, 1990). Despite the data, states across the United States are choosing retention as a way to intervene with struggling learners. The state of Indiana began the IREAD-3 assessment in 2010 as a benchmark for readers at the third grade level. If students did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment, they were registered as third graders with the State of Indiana.

Reading is a critical foundational skill that is required for any adult to lead a successful life. For centuries, we have researched and debated the best instructional practices to teach children to read, nevertheless poverty, cultural differences, and cognitive disabilities place many schools at a disadvantage to teaching all children to read by the third grade. This study addresses significant national and state challenges that face education concerning the best way to teach children to read and if schools should retain students who do not pass state and federal benchmark assessments.

Glossary of Terms

The glossary of terms provided by the researcher provides the reader the necessary vocabulary to understand the context of the literature and study.

Balanced Literacy: A balanced literacy program combines both whole language and phonics. The strongest elements are incorporated into a literacy program that aims to guide students toward proficient and lifelong reading. There are five different

components of balanced literacy: the read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and word study (Bitter, O'Day, Gubbins, & Socias, 2009).

Educational Reform: Whole system change that is sustainable. Superintendents, district administrators, principals, and teachers are the agents of educational change and societal improvement (Fullan, 1993 & 2007).

Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA): Passed as part of Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act launched a comprehensive set of programs, including the Title I program of federal aid, to disadvantaged children to address the problems of poor urban and rural areas (Ed HOMEROOM The Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education).

Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment: In 2010 in the state of Indiana, the House Enrolled Act (HES) 1367, also known as Public Law 109, required reading evaluation in third grade was passed. In the state of Indiana, during the 2011-2012 school year, third grade students were required to take the new IREAD-3 assessment (Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)).

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An IEP is provided to students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Current law dictates that all students who are eligible for educational supports and specialized services have an IEP. The IEP is a legal document outlining the necessary services and supports for children with disabilities ages 3 years through 22 years (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2004).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Federal legislation enacted in 2001 which stated that schools are to make adequate yearly progress toward developing students proficient in

reading, math, and science. The ultimate goal is to have all students on grade level in reading, math, and science by the year 2014 (NCLB, 2001).

Reading: Reading is the act of constructing meaning from a text. We use skills, strategies, and prior knowledge to understand what we read. The act of reading is supported by reader motivation and positive reader affect. We read to help us achieve our goals, both inside and outside of school (Afflerbach, 2011).

Retention: Grade level retention is defined as requiring a student who has been in a given grade level instruction for a full year to remain in that same level for an additional year (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1994).

Reading Proficiency: Meeting the states' academic achievement standards in reading (NCLB, 2001). In Indiana, reading proficiency is determined by passing the IREAD-3 assessment for students who are in the third grade.

Response to Intervention (RTI): RTI is a comprehensive early detection and prevention system that allows teachers to identify and support struggling readers early, before they fail. A key component of RTI is the implementation of evidence-based reading practices within a multitier framework (Bursuck & Blanks, 2010).

Socioeconomic Status (SES). Variables that include employment, family income, and education (D'Angiulli et al., 2004). Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities to resources, privileges, education, and control (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Basic Assumptions

The assumptions are school districts in Indiana have a variety of knowledge and perceptions pertaining to research for the best instructional strategies to teach reading. School

districts in Indiana may have various perceptions on grade level retention as a way to support students who do not meet the reading benchmark assessment IREAD-3. In fact, schools likely faced many issues in response to the IREAD-3 assessment. Schools that have students from low-socio economic backgrounds or from multiple cultures may have found they were faced with the decision to retain a significant number of students. Schools also faced the challenge to communicate to families and the community the ramifications of the IREAD-3 assessment. Schools that chose to retain students in third grade classrooms faced issues surrounding instructional practices, allocations, and additional financial responsibilities.

It was assumed that survey respondents chose to complete the survey and provided honest responses to survey items. Surveys were delivered electronically using BSU Qualtrics without problems with school corporation filters and/or spam blocking software. Moreover, it was assumed that electronic survey information material would be deliverable. It was assumed the administrators took the survey voluntarily. In relationship to the survey questions, it was assumed the administrators involved with the survey were knowledgeable in the IREAD-3 assessment, reading instructional practices, and grade-level retention.

Summary

The importance of teaching children to read by the third grade will remain a critical focus of school districts across the state of Indiana. The decision of the state to pass House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1367, also known as Public Law 109 in 2010, which requires all third grade students to pass the Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment, has yet to be deemed effective or beneficial to the students or schools in the state of Indiana. National research and data does not support retention of students based on assessment data. The state of Indiana has yet to see the academic outcomes of students who have been retained because of the IREAD-

3 assessment. If the state of Indiana's data reflects national norms detailed in research, the state may have a disproportionate retention rate based on gender and minority status and see a later increase in high school dropout rates. Federal and state accountability place schools in the precarious position to choose retention as a form of remediation despite research and the belief system of the National Association of School Psychologists and data from the Office of Civil Rights.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The History of Reading Instruction

1640-1826

The importance of reading and reading instruction in the United States has been documented for centuries. The colonists of the Middle and New England colonies were primarily Protestants who valued education and made it a priority that their children would learn to read, write, and gain vocational skills (Quimby, 1985). During the colonial times, reading instruction was less complicated than it is today; teach children the alphabet method and then reading development will follow. The alphabet method proceeded from part to whole. Children were taught to spell aloud each letter of a word, syllable by syllable, and then pronounce the entire word orally. After a child mastered the alphabet code in the hornbook (single page alphabet tablet), he or she then completed the primer (book of prayers), the book of Psalms, and then concluded with the entire Bible. Children were expected to memorize the material. The colony of Massachusetts believed that salvation required the ability to read the Bible; therefore, the Bible was considered the climax of the reading curriculum. Massachusetts passed the earliest law concerning reading in 1642, requiring all parents and master of educations to teach their children how to read. The first law concerning schooling was passed in 1647 and required townships that had over fifty families acquire a teacher to teach reading and writing. Prior to 1647, most children were home schooled (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002).

During the colonial times, not all children were provided access to an education. Many of the colonists had indentured servants who received vocational training but were never taught to read. Indentured servants were people who did not have the money to make the trip to America so they pledged service to a colony in place of the cost of the trip. Historical records indicate a

possibility that approximately two-thirds of indentured servants in Philadelphia were provided some level of education (Quimby, 1985). As apprenticeship grew in economic significance between the 1740s and the 1770s, the colonial economy created a demand for skilled craftsmen that surpassed the supply of skilled free and indentured servants. Near the end of the century, demands for educational requirements for all children began to minimize the apprenticeship system. Increasingly, masters began to accept the cost of having the apprentice taught in a school. Prior to the apprenticeship, education was primarily for economically advantaged children (Morgan, 2001).

During the colonial period, various textbooks were used to teach children how to read. The first documented textbook, *The New England Primer*, was published in late 1680s and contained the alphabet, vowels, consonants, double letters and words that contained two letters to six letter syllables. In the absence of copyright laws, *The New England Primer* was freely reproduced on American presses after 1730 (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002). The purpose of the early texts was to teach reading using the alphabet method; spelling was a secondary goal. It was believed that children would learn parts of reading and then apply the knowledge to the whole text. Another text printed during the colonial times was a spelling book by antislavery activist and Quaker, Anthony Benezet in 1779. African American slaves were typically not provided an education in the southern colonies (Morgan, 2001). Many people during the colonial times, including the religious Quakers, did not regard African Americans and Caucasian people as equal. In 1750, Quaker Anthony Benezet started to offer evening classes to black people, mostly in his own home (Straub, 1968; Woodson, 1917). This was the first time African American children in the southern states were provided an education.

African American slaves were not the only group who did not receive an education during colonial times. Caucasian girls often did not receive a formal education in the colonies. Educating a woman for any profession was unheard of during this time period. The primary purpose of teaching girls to read in the colonial times was to promote religious instruction. Women were predominantly those responsible for teaching children to read and write, so it was necessary for them to have basic literacy. Girls from wealthier families might attend schools where they learned social etiquettes to become a good host (Mays, 2004). In 1754, Quaker Anthony Benezet started the first Philadelphia secondary school for girls. Benezet had many achievements as an educator but many believe his greatest achievement was with children who did not have access to traditional schools (Straub, 1968; Woodson, 1917).

During the colonial times, a few instructional books were created for the purpose of teaching children to read. The first literary text written by American Noah Webster was titled *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, and consisted of three parts: a speller, a grammar, and an advanced reader for students who could already read (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002). Webster's grammar and reader fell in popularity when authors Caleb Bingham and Lindley Murray produced similar works. In spite of the creation of multiple readers and spellers, some educators believed little consideration was given for how best to teach children to read or how to assess reading comprehension (Monaghan & Barry, 1999).

1826-1883

During the 19th Century, students were placed in age-related grade levels, with grade promotion being contingent upon mastery of the subject matter of the designated grade (Owings & Magliaro, 1998). Students who did not master content, such as reading, were required to repeat the grade level. Educational reform in reading instruction began in the early 1820's by

Horace Mann and Henry Barnard. Mann and Barnard were two educators in the United States who began to look at the work of European educational reformers Johann Pestalozzi and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Pestalozzi and Rousseau stressed the importance of making education meaningful to a child. Johann Pestalozzi was opposed to rote learning and harsh discipline and believed that learning proceeded from concrete experiences and from whole to part. Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed there were definite periods of development in a child's life and the instruction should correspond appropriately with the development of the child (Rousseau, 2002). Horace Mann was a senator for the state of Massachusetts and was invited to take an advisory position in education for the state government (Baines, 2006). Horace Mann began to advocate changes in reading instructional methods. Mann believed the public school was created to educate all students, not just the males or the richest and brightest. Mann utilized his advisory position in education to communicate that all Americans, especially the most affluent, had a shared social responsibility for the future of the country. He believed,

If one class possesses all the wealth and the education, while the residue of society is ignorant and poor, it matters not by what name the relation between them may be called: the latter, in fact and in truth, will be the servile dependents and subjects of the former” (Mann , 1965, p.124).

Mann observed that children were bored and disengaged at school and that instruction needed to occupy children's interest in the reading material by teaching them to read whole words.

In 1843, Henry Barnard was appointed by the governor of Rhode Island to examine the public schools of the state and recommend improvements. Barnard recommended an increase in teacher wages, buildings to be repaired, and improvement in teaching and supervision. In 1845 he became the state's first commissioner of education for Rhode Island and became the first U.S.

commissioner of education in 1867 (Steiner, 1919). As a result of their observations, Mann and Barnard published in the American Journal of Education in 1826 that children need to read texts that were meaningful to them. Mann and Barnard criticized the Webster's speller and Murray's readers due to the large multi-syllabic words; and as a result, educators began to create readers that were interesting to children. Reformers believed long incomprehensible multi-syllabic words, centered on adult themes, did not teach children to read (Monaghan & Barry, 1999).

During this time period, many educators held opposing views concerning how students learn to read. Some educators had a strong belief that students learn to read whole words, not parts of words. This practice was termed word methods, or sight word memorization (Monaghan & Barry, 1999). According to Edmund Burke Huey, the word method "was very little used in America until 1870, when progressive teachers began using it in various parts of the country" because of training from Edward Austin Shelton (Huey, 1908, p. 272). Another group had become interested in the scientific analysis of learning the English language. They recognized the potential this analysis had in teaching reading and the relationship between phonemes and letters and began to experiment with various "phonic" approaches. The goal was to lead the learner, step by step, to a mastery of reading (Monaghan & Barry, 1999). Edmund Huey also believed reading to be the noblest of arts, the medium by which there still comes to us the loftiest inspirations, the highest ideals, the purest feelings, that have been allowed humankind (Huey, 1908). The public school movement and the growth of academics spurred the evolution of textbooks into grade progressive content (graded series).

1870-1940

The end of the 19th century brought further educational reform, the birth of reading research and the first reading assessment. Two large educational reformists during this period

were Edward Austin Sheldon and John Dewey. Edward Austin Sheldon began as an educator and then was the founding president of Oswego Primary Teachers' Training School. Sheldon's main achievement was adapting the principles and teachings of Johann Pestalozzi into American education. Sheldon advocated teaching reading by showing children pictures of familiar objects alongside the name of the object. Sheldon's ideas concerning reading instruction were spread throughout the United States by both his book *Lesson on Objects* (1870) and the graduates of his school. The object-method/whole-word approach correlated nicely with the child-centered philosophy that began in the late 19th century (Guzzetti, Alverman, & Johns, 2002). John Dewey believed that schools should reflect society and be child-centered. Dewey argued for the importance of education not only as a place to gain content knowledge, but also as a place to learn how to live. Dewey's philosophy was the purpose of education should not simply be an acquisition of skills, but rather the realization of one's full potential. He notes that "to prepare him for the future life means to give him command of himself; it means so to train him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities" (Dewey, 1897). The word method regained in popularity during this period and changed reading instruction drastically. Instead of teaching the alphabet method (principle) first, part to whole, there was an educational initiative to teach whole words first. Educational reformists believed students could learn to read by teaching them the most commonly used words, sight words. Earlier word approaches were used in reading instruction as a means to prepare students for discussions on letter-sound correspondence. The word approach during this time period taught students the word and then its meaning; letter-sound correspondence did not happen until a much later date (Guzzetti et al., 2002).

Research in reading instruction began near the end of the 19th century. Francis Wayland Parker, Charles W. Eliot, G. Stanley Hall, Clarence Stone, and William S. Gray were educational

reformists who conducted research for the purpose of influencing reading instruction. Francis Wayland Parker encouraged reading for meaning versus the previous thought that reading led children to salvation, “Reading is getting thought by means of written or printed words arranged in sentences” (Parker & Partridge, 1893). Charles W. Eliot believed higher-level readers needed more literature. Eliot also advocated to the education of the urban child, “Organized education must supply in urban communities a good part of manual and moral training.... the great importance in any urban population is to teach children forethought, good judgment and patience in productive labor” (Eliot, 1901, p.405). G. Stanley Hall believed myths, fables, and fairy tales are stories of primitive people and they should be included in readers. G. Stanley Hall also conducted and published research comparing and contrasting the learning differences between boys and girls (Hall, 1891).

Instructional practices in reading changed as the result of the research completed by Clarence Stone. Teachers who had been trained in the 1930s emphasized whole word and sentence recognition as well as silent reading. These methods were effective in teaching some children to read, but not all (Chall, 1967). Silent reading gained in popularity during the 1920’s, and even was included in several reading series. Prior to silent reading children were often expected to read orally. One of the findings based on research by Clarence Stone was teachers almost entirely used oral reading in schools. Students would take turns reading a paragraph or two at various paces and the teacher would correct any mispronounced words. Stone’s research addressed the distance between the eye fixations on print, the point of articulation varies from reader to reader, and students may orally read at a slower pace. It was found in Stone’s research that silent reading is the most important task beyond the first two years of reading instruction and should be introduced in the first or second grade. Clarence Stone also advocated for literature to

be available to the community, and especially homes that were disadvantaged (Stone, 1922). Research in best instructional practices during the late 19th century and early 20th century created the foundation for the importance of research on best instructional practices in reading.

William S. Gray was well known for taking his research in reading instruction and applying it to best instructional practices that influenced the field of reading. Gray advocated for whole to part reading instruction and believed phonics instruction should be inferred from known sight words (Guzzetti, Alverman & Johns, 2002). Gray was from the University of Chicago, worked with Scott Foresman publishing company, and co-authored their second basal reader. Basal Readers are a set of graded passages in book sets that students read and are the most common method to introducing and practicing reading. Gray continued to work with Scott Foresman and became the senior author from 1940-48 of the basal series *Basic Readers*. *Basic Readers* was the most commonly used basal reader in the United States for more than three decades (Monaghan & Barry, 1999). William S. Gray authored more than 500 publications that examined the common characteristics of all ages of readers in addition to the teaching procedures appropriate for the characteristics. William S. Gray also served as the first president of the International Reading Association.

In the early 1910's reading assessments were created because of the work of John Broadus Watson and Edward Lee Thorndike. Thorndike and Watson both believed and accepted the word method as the basic unit of reading instruction rather than the letter. Watson studied students' eye movements and documented those movements to support the word method as the appropriate instruction for reading. Thorndike interpreted the research conducted by Watson and created vocabulary and word count recommendations that were used by publishers when creating

reading textbooks. Thorndike continued to develop achievement scales in various subject areas (Guzzetti et al., 2002).

In 1914, Edward Lee Thorndike of Teachers College at Columbia University published his reading scale. Thorndike was the first to provide a reading scale to support specific levels of reading at different grade levels. Thorndike began to write other articles on the psychology and measurement of reading, and had an enormous influence on reading instruction (Monaghan & Barry, 1999). In addition, Thorndike published three different books for teachers concerning reading instruction and frequently used vocabulary: *The Teacher's Word Book* (1921), *A Teacher's Word Book of the Twenty Thousand Words Found Most Frequently and Widely in General Reading for Children and Young People* (1932), and *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words*, was published in 1944.

William S. Gray also created reading assessments during this time period. For his master's thesis, William Gray developed a scale for reading. The test, Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs, Grades 1–8, was published in 1915. This test continued to be used with only minor revisions until 1963; in 2001, the fourth edition of the Gray Oral Reading Test was issued as a diagnostic/remedial approach for students with reading difficulties (Gray, 1919).

1940-1967

During the 1930's-1950's, sight words (word recognition) were the basic unit of reading instruction. In 1955, phonics instruction (part to whole) regained in popularity sparked by the book published by Rudolph Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It*. Flesch claimed that reading professionals ignored their own research and were in cahoots with the publishing companies. Families who had children who struggled with reading wondered if the Basal Reader was the best instructional practice schools should use to teach children how to

read. Flesch also attacked the word method and argued that phonics reading instruction was superior to the whole-word method (Flesch, 1966). The book was on the bestseller list for over 30 weeks and caught the attention of many American families. American families began to question how public schools were teaching reading. During this time, other companies began to create reading instructional materials that were not affiliated with either the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction or the National Association of Remedial Teachers. In response to Flesch's book, the reading establishments remained strongly opposed to systematic phonics and any reading programs based solely on such an approach (Monaghan, 1973).

The International Reading Association (IRA) was formed in 1956 because of the merge between the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction and the National Association of Remedial Teachers (Jerrolds, 1977). The International Reading Association is the largest organization in the field of reading with a wide-ranging publication history of both journals and books (International Reading Association [IRA], 2000). The International Reading Association was created to improve reading instruction, facilitate dialogue about research on reading, and encourage the habit of reading. IRA is a nonprofit, international network of individuals and institutions devoted to literacy. The IRA is important because it supports literacy professionals and professional development activities based on current research. High levels of literacy are promoted by the IRA and its members by improving the quality of reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and by encouraging the lifetime reading habit (International Reading Association, n.d.).

In 1964, American families again questioned and criticized reading instruction. The Soviet Union had successfully launched *Sputnik* in 1957 and many Americans felt the United States was not adequately educating students to compete with other countries. There were

children in public and private schools who were not proficient readers and families were concerned that the education in the United States needed improvement. As a result, the federal government funded twenty-seven individual research studies across the United States. One of the most well-known research studies that was conducted during this time period was the Coleman Report. The Coleman Report was led by researcher and sociologist James S. Coleman and is often referred to as the most important research in education in the 20th century. The Coleman report studied racial segregation and inadequacies of school resources across the United States. One of the findings of the research was a “pupil’s achievement is strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students in the school.” The achievement of minority students seemed to depend more on the schools they attend than the achievement of the majority students (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, & York, 1966). As a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United States began “bussing” black students into predominantly white schools. The goal of “bussing” was to desegregate public schools and provide a similar education to all students.

1965-present

Prior to 1960, the federal government played a small role in development of educational policy. As part of the New Frontier and Great Society social agenda, between 1960 and 1970 the federal government began a large number of new initiatives that increased federal aid to elementary and secondary schools from about a half a billion dollars to \$3.5 billion. Federal education programs expanded from 20 to 130 and many of these programs were designed to equalize educational opportunities for socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged students (Kantor, 1991). In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), giving billions of dollars to private and public schools to

support remedial reading positions in schools. President Johnson made education a top priority of the Great Society, with an emphasis on helping poor children. In the 1960's disadvantaged black children scored far below their white peers on achievement tests, and approximately 60% of non-white students dropped out of school before graduating (Jeffrey, 1972). ESEA meant helping all public school districts, with additional money going to districts that had large proportions of students from low socio-economic families (Title I). For the first time private schools (most of them Catholic schools in the inner cities) received services, which consisted of about 12 percent of the ESEA budget. Early studies suggested initial improvements in educational services for economically disadvantaged children in the content areas of reading and math, but later assessments indicated that benefits from additional services were not sustained (Jeffrey, 1978).

The Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965 demanded evaluation and accountability be tied to federal funding to schools that received Title I funding. Section 172 of ESEA included a reporting requirement for schools to “make periodic reports . . . evaluating the effectiveness of the program” (Title I, Section 172, cited in Merkel-Keller, 1986, p. 8) to the Secretary of Education ensuring that Title I students were making academic progress. The challenge came when local school agencies had no consistent way to assess students, collect data, or report the findings (Popham, 2008). As a result of the evaluation and accountability demands from ESEA, there was a need in the schools for norm-referenced tests (Guzzetti et al., 2002).

In 1974, the ESEA was reauthorized, and assessment became more of a focus by the United States Congress. The 1974 amendments included funding requirements for the Secretary of Education to develop an independent and systematic evaluation and reporting system to determine the educational effectiveness of ESEA with “objective criteria . . . utilized in the

evaluation of all programs . . . producing data which are comparable on a statewide and nationwide basis” (Borman & D’Agostino, 2001, p. 41). The Title I Evaluation and Reporting System (TIERS) was developed after 1974 and was implemented in 1979.

At the first level, TIER I, the local education agency collected student achievement data and reported this information to the state education agency. In TIER 2, the SEA aggregated the LEA data and reported these results to the commissioner of education. For TIER 3, the U.S. Office of Education aggregated the nationwide data and reported on the effectiveness of Title I programs in meeting the needs of the identified disadvantaged population (Popham, 2008, p.8).

Methodological issues arose from the data collected by TIERS. Schools and local education agencies were responsible for the creation and administration of the tests, which resulted in very different assessments. Questions also arose concerning the administration and timing of the tests. States had different assessment administration guidelines, and the states administered tests at different times of the school year. If an assessment is meant to be cumulative, it should be given near the end of a school year to determine if the student is measured on the learning for that school year(s).

Federal Government Studies

In order to learn about the effectiveness of various approaches in reading instruction, the federal government commissioned several studies. Some of the studies compared traditional basal reading instruction (Scott Foresman) with different reading instructional practices across first grade classrooms. One of the studies collected data from fifteen projects that evaluated six types of instructional materials or methods used as experimental treatments. These six groupings were labeled Initial Teaching Alphabet, Basal plus Phonics, Language Experience, Linguistic,

Phonic/Linguistic, and Basal (Bond & Dyskra, 1967). Five separate analyses were then performed, with each analysis using the basal reader as a control against which to compare progress in other instructional programs. There were five treatment groups studied. In the first group, teachers use basal reader (Scott Foresman) in a gradual phonics approach. In the gradual phonics approach, vocabulary is introduced slowly and frequently repeated, phonics is introduced gradually and after some sight words have been taught, reading skills are introduced and developed systematically, and silent reading and comprehension are also emphasized.

For the second group, teachers utilized the instructional method of learning to read by introducing a novel 44 character alphabet with which to encode the approximately 40 sounds in the English language. The third group was labeled basal plus phonics; teachers used a combination of the basal reading series with supplementary phonics materials.

In the fourth treatment group, teachers utilized the whole language approach of reading instruction. During this instructional method, the student's own writing serves as the underlying basis for instruction. The student's first stories are dictated to the teacher and eventually the student writes his own stories and shares them with the teacher. During the individual conferences between the student and teacher, he or she is guided to recognize the commonality between the words he or she writes and speaks to develop the skills necessary for reading. This approach utilizes far fewer highly structured instructional materials, such as the basal. In addition, vocabulary acquisition is viewed as being specific to each child as he or she read the words necessary for use in writing.

The fifth group was labeled linguistic, and teachers used various materials. Teachers would introduce students early to letters, knowledge of letter names, and the ability to recognize letters as the prerequisite skills for reading instruction. Students were taught that each alphabet

symbol represents a sound. Words that contain high sound-symbol expectedness are taught first and the student is led to notice the sound-symbol relationships that exist in other words. Pictures may be withheld from the child until he or she understands sound-symbol relationships. In this group, there is less of an emphasis on understanding and comprehension. Reading is considered a process of translating graphic symbols into sounds, and primary attention is paid to helping the child learn the decoding system.

Guy Bond and Robert Dyskra analyzed the data and found no one method of reading instruction was superior to another when comparing Basals to non-Basals. There was limited evidence in the analysis of the Basal versus Language Experience comparison. The Linguistic group tended to out-perform the Basal group on tests of word recognition, while the Basal group exhibited somewhat greater speed and accuracy in reading. The whole language approach was superior for average and above-average pupils, while the Basal approach was better for students who were struggling readers. Another conclusion of this study involved vocabulary, stating that word study skills must be emphasized and taught systematically regardless of what approach to initial reading instruction is used. A combination of programs, such as a basal program with supplementary materials, often is superior to single approaches. The reading instruction delivered by teachers who use the whole language approach indicates that the addition of language experiences to any type of reading instruction will ultimately benefit the student (Bond & Dyskra, 1967).

Gender Study

An interesting finding in the research conducted by Bond and Dyskra concerned a student's gender and readiness to read. Girls tended to have a greater degree of readiness for reading at the beginning of first grade and tended to read at a higher level at the end of the first

grade. None of the instructional materials or methods treatment groups had a unique effect on the achievement of boys and girls; girls tended to be better readers in all programs. The data collected in this study provided valuable information for future research studies to further examine the best reading instruction. Research published in the *Reading Research Quarterly* in 1977 noted that boys may take slightly longer to identify letters, words, and words in context than girls (Biedmiller, 1977). Research in the 21st century has highlighted why boys need extra attention when it comes to literacy development. Specifically, boys take longer to learn to read than girls, boys tend to underestimate their reading abilities, boys read less than girls, and boys tend to be less enthusiastic about reading (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). Teachers can encourage boys to read by appealing to the reading interests of boys, making literacy relevant, giving boys a choice in reading, and inviting male role models into our classroom (Senn, 2012). Teachers also need to be aware of stereotypes that exist within a culture that can serve as a social norm for behavior towards the group. Recent research indicates that gender stereotypes can have short-term effects on academics and explain the long-term development of boys' reading self-concept (Retelsdorf, Schartz, & Asbrock, 2015).

Jeanne S. Chall, a researcher, was commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation to conduct a three-year study on the methods used to teach reading across the country. Between 1962 and 1965, Chall visited many schools and talked to teachers and administrators about reading instruction. Chall also analyzed reading series being used in the schools she visited and took anecdotal notes on how teachers were using the reading series (Chall, 1967). Chall concluded that a change to a code emphasis (phonics) over a meaning emphasis (whole language) would enhance a child's attainment of reading (Guzzetti, 2002). Jeanne Chall published *Learning to Read the Great Debate* in 1967 that incited the phonics versus whole language debate. As a

result of Chall's research, publishing companies added additional phonics instruction to existing basal readers.

The DOE requested additional research studies during the 1960's that were specific to the best approach to teach reading to students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Mary Ann Hall was one of the researchers, who published her dissertation in 1965 and went on to publish multiple articles concerning language experiences for culturally disadvantaged children. The language experience approach can be defined as a method of teaching reading that involves recording a student's spoken language. This approach was not extensively researched but was used with children who were considered disadvantaged due to a cultural reason. Many studies were conducted across the United States during the 1960's that used this approach to teach reading in comparison to basal instruction and whole language instruction (Hall, 1965, 1972). Specific cultural groups that were studied during this time period involved black children in Washington D.C., Spanish-speaking children in Colorado, children from three socio-economic areas in Pennsylvania, and children from other cultures across the United States. Results from the research done by Hall in Washington D.C. in two classes in 1965 indicated that teachers rated the language experience approach as significantly more effective than the basal approach (Hall, 1965). Results from the studies with Spanish speaking children in Colorado concluded the basal reading approach developed the best achievement in reading skills (McCanne, 1966). Results from the studies in Pennsylvania indicated the experience group scored significantly higher on word meaning, paragraph meaning, vocabulary and word study, attitude, and on creative writing (Vilseck, Morgan, & Cleland, 1966). In 1972 and 1977, Hall summarized the results of 42 studies regarding the effects of language experience approaches. Hall determined there is evidence "to support that the overall reading achievement of students who receive language

experience instruction is satisfactory, and, in some cases, it is superior to the achievement of children instructed by other approaches” (Hall, 1977, p. 24).

Phonics Instruction vs. Whole Language

Whole Language

In the 1980s and 1990s, a “reading war” erupted between advocates of both the phonics instruction and whole language instruction. The whole language movement began in the United States in the early 1970s, advocated by Kenneth Goodman, Marie Clay, and Frank Smith. Based on the assumption that learning to read is a natural process, like learning to talk, whole language advocates argued that children immersed in personally meaningful literacy activities will figure out for themselves how to read and spell (Richards & Rogers, 1986). Dorothy Watson, an advocate of the whole language approach, discussed three reasons that whole language is difficult to define. The first is that "advocates reject a dictionary-type definition" and each teacher evolves his or her own version of whole language instruction, leading to "significant and important differences.” Second, the passion and emotion of the whole language debate "keep advocates from providing non-defensive answers and an unambiguous definition" (Watson, 1989, p. 131). Third, knowledgeable teachers are the experts of whole language instruction and should be the ones consulted on what it means to have a whole language classroom (Watson, 1989).

Whole language advocates proposed that basal readers be abandoned for authentic literature and reading instruction should be altered. Instruction in reading begins where children are academically, and language development is stimulated with the ultimate goal as reading the writings of others. Whole language instructional approaches involve an increased use of quality children's literature and ensuring skills are applied within the context of reading rather than

isolated skills (Stahl & Miller, 1989). Phonics lessons are conducted in whole language instructional approaches unscrupulously in the context of meaningful reading and writing. The teacher is often the facilitator of the learning, and instruction is not necessarily explicit. Teachers who advocate for whole language reading instruction often have students show mastery of a skill through authentic performance-based assessments (National Research Council, 1998).

Many educators across the United States initially embraced whole language as a worthwhile alternative to instruction based on the basal reader, which has dominated reading instruction since colonial times. Whole language instruction is appealing to educators because of its emphases on whole pieces of literature and functional language as opposed to segmented texts (whole to part), students' choice as opposed to teacher-sponsored whole-class assignments, and integrated language experiences as opposed to direct instruction in isolated skill sequences. Whole-language teachers observe their students closely, and based on what they learn about their observations, they develop the curriculum with their students' instructional needs in mind. Whole language involves teachers who are classroom researchers, participants, coaches, learners, resource persons, and perhaps most important, listeners (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). Whole language advocates believe that phonics is intrinsically learned when children learn whole words and literacy instruction is child centered. Children are encouraged to become language users, and skills are taught within the context of reading and writing. Teachers help students make connections between reading and writing (Laney, 1992). Advocates of whole language also argue that students tend to over rely on phonics and lose the skills necessary for making text predictions and reading comprehension (Meyer, 2002). Children who are successful in whole-language programs tend to be visual and tactile learners. Whole-language programs usually emphasize fun, literature, hands-on learning, and peer interactions (Carbo, 1995). The curriculum

teachers use for whole language relies heavily on literature and encourages the child to read and write about whatever their interests are to complete the tasks in the curriculum. Whole language instruction also uses a thematic approach to lessons that integrate multiple content areas and disciplines for a complete body of knowledge (Stanek, 1993).

Studies conducted at the end of the 20th century continued to compare the phonics instruction in basal readers and whole language instruction. In 1987, Miller and Milligan completed a study to determine if children learn phonic skills by reading without direct phonics instruction. This study contained an experimental group of 33 low socioeconomic first grade students in two classrooms who completed the yearlong program and a control group of 33 low socioeconomic students in two other elementary schools matched by gender and reading readiness skills. The control group used the Scott Foresman basal series, and the experimental group used the whole language approach to reading. Students completed a Nonsense Word Test to assess decoding ability and a Deletion test to assess their ability to comprehend increasingly more difficult prose. Results of this study favored the whole language approach to instruction. Students in the whole language classrooms scored as well in decoding ability as those students who received direct phonics instruction, and collectively students in the whole language classrooms scored higher on the Deletion Test than the control group (Miller & Milligan, 1989). In summation, the studies conducted in 1989 for first grade reading were limited to only 46 studies comparing whole language (WL) and the earlier language experience approaches (LEA) with traditional, basal reader instruction. The results of these studies failed to find an overall difference between WL/LEA and basal reader instruction, with WL/LEA producing somewhat lower effects on comprehension measures and in studies that are more recent. Specifically, whole language/language experience approaches may be more effective in kindergarten than in first

grade and may produce stronger effects on measures of word recognition than on measures of reading comprehension. Whole language/language experience approaches have been found to produce weaker effects with populations labeled specifically as disadvantaged than they do with those not specifically labeled (Stahl & Miller, 1989). A study published in 1993 by Stahl, McKenna, and Pagnucco used several different types of reading comprehension measures in their study as opposed to relying solely on results from standardized comprehension tests. Whole language advocates have criticized the use of standardized assessments, especially the multiple-choice questions, as they view these assessments as not authentic literacy practices. “On the standardized reading comprehension test, the study found four effect sizes -- -.54, .38, -.11, and .58 -- an average effect size of .08, a small effect size favoring the whole language approaches” (Stahl, McKenna, & Pagnucco, 1993, p. 8).

In the late 1980’s research indicated opposing views on the effectiveness of whole language instruction versus phonics instruction. Marilyn Adams, a whole language advocate who published a book in 1990 titled *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, stated “... children that enter school with weak literacy preparation, basic phonics instruction can only proceed quite slowly, and would require months of classroom instruction.”

Phonics Instruction

According to an article published in 1990, “Direct instruction in words analysis skills is critical” (Adams, Robelen, & Shaw, 1990, p.16). Research conducted in low socio-economic status (SES) schools in Chicago (2000) by William Jeynes and Stephen Littell indicated the opposite to be true; primary grade students in low SES schools who used the basal approach performed better on standardized assessments. Results from this study indicated low-SES

children receiving basal instruction did consistently better on the various literacy measures than their counterparts who received whole language instruction.

The total effect size was - 0.65, with a 95% confidence interval of -.61 to -.69. This result was significant at the .0004 level. The basal advantage proved even more substantial when considering only standardized tests. Among standardized tests, the total effect size was - 0.70, with a 95% confidence interval of -.74 to -.66 ($p < .001$) (Jeynes & Littell, 2000, p.26).

A synthesis of research in 1989 conducted by Stahl and Miller on whole language instruction showed no advantage for whole language approaches at the first grade. As a result, their research raised questions concerning the instructional shifts away from the basal readers and skill (phonetic) instruction without convincing evidence (Stahl & Miller, 1989). An argument followed in the Review of Educational Research, *The Elementary School Journal* (1989), and the *Reading Teacher* (1992), which devoted entire issues to whole language (Jeynes & Littell, 2000). The whole language issue also arose in a formal debate forum at the National Reading Conference in San Antonio, Texas in 1991 (Smith, 1994). “In recent years, however, declining reading achievement test scores, especially in some states where whole language instruction has been implemented most thoroughly, have raised questions about the efficacy of this approach” (Jeynes & Littell, 2000, p. 21).

California fourth grade students scored the lowest in the country on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1992. Many believe the decline in reading scores was a direct result of the state of California fully implementing the whole language approach to reading instruction in 1987. Jeff Maquillan examined California’s reading comprehension scores from 1984 to 1990 and found no clear pattern of increases or decreases during those years

(Krashen, 2002). Louisa Moats, a renowned reading expert, described how a school district in Birmingham, Alabama adopted an SBRR program and trained its teachers thoroughly in how to best instruct students. This school district has seen significant improvement not only in reading, but also in other subjects as well (Moats, 2007).

In 1985, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, a report of the Commission on Reading, examined the teaching of reading and reading problems. Research conducted for this report recommended that teachers create well-designed phonics lessons that present the letters and sounds in isolation as well as in context (Anderson et al., 1985). Phonics instruction can be defined as reading instruction that teaches students the “systematic relationship between letters and letter combinations (graphemes) in written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language and how to use these relationships to read and spell words” (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2008, p. 170). Teachers will encourage students to sound out and blend sounds. Once students learn the “code” for phonics, they develop the decoding skill, and it is an automated process. Research indicated the ways in which reading assessment was tested and evaluated had a large influence on how it was taught and the reading skills that were valued. The report stated, “Improved forms of assessment (for reading) are now feasible and can supplement strengthened instructional practices and tools in raising the national levels of literacy” (Anderson et al., 198, p. 8).

Scientific research has clearly demonstrated that explicit phonics instruction is the single-most effective approach for all students. Many students can learn to read without such explicit instruction; yet many students will achieve greater success with phonics instruction. A large-scale study by Barbara Foorman and colleagues from the University of Houston found that explicit, systematic phonics was by far the most effective approach. It was also more effective in

reducing the occurrence of reading problems than any of the one-on-one tutorial programs that were evaluated, including Reading Recovery. Her findings are consistent with both currently accepted theories of reading development and instruction and with other empirical research emphasizing student outcome measures (Foorman, Fletcher, Francis, & Schatschneider, 1998).

In 1997, Congress asked the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to work with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) in establishing a National Reading Panel that would evaluate existing research and evidence to find the best ways of teaching children to read. The National Reading Panel was asked to review all the research available on how children learn to read and determine the most effective evidence-based methods for reading instruction. The Panel considered roughly 100,000 reading studies published since 1966, and another 10,000 published before that time, and selected several hundred studies for its review and analysis. The Panel was also asked to describe which methods of reading instruction are ready for implementation in the classroom and recommend ways of getting this information into schools. Additional research in reading would be recommended by the Panel and a plan would be created on the most appropriate next steps. The National Reading Panel published a report in 2000 based on findings from quantitative research studies on areas of reading instruction. The panel reported that several reading skills are critical to becoming good readers: explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance reading comprehension. The analysis of hundreds of studies in the area of phonics confirmed that teaching phonics, and related phonics skills, is a more effective way to teach children early reading skills than is embedded phonics or no phonics instruction (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000).

As recently as 2009, the whole language versus phonics debate continued between whole language advocate Ken Goodman and associates and DIBELS creators Ruth Kaminski and Roland Good. Ken Goodman published a book in 2006 titled *The Truth About DIBELS*. Ken Goodman argued that DIBELS is much more than a test; it is a “blueprint for a curriculum—driving publishers, district officials, principals, and teachers into a narrow curricular mode in which only the big five are taught at the expense of other curricular foci” (Goodman, 2006, p. 1). Tierney and Thome addressed the costs that schools, teachers, and students must endure when students are held accountable to the indicators in DIBELS rather than the outcomes of reading progress. Teachers are urged to change reading instruction when a student falls below the aimline three times during progress monitoring probes. Advocates for the whole language approach believe DIBELS violates well-documented theories of development, and places value on certain aspects of reading development over others (Tierney & Thome, 2006). A research study, published in 2009, questioned using DIBELS as an assessment for second grade readers. Data indicated no connection between DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) and the student’s oral reading fluency and comprehension of authentic literature (Altwerger, Jordan, & Shelton, 2009). Ruth Kaminski and Roland Good, the creators of DIBELS, published a rebuttal to Ken Goodman’s book in 2007. Kaminski and Good argued that, like any assessment, DIBELS is not intended to narrow the curriculum or encourage a teacher to teach to the assessment. The authors provided a detailed explanation of the purpose behind the DIBELS assessments claiming, “DIBELS were designed to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention for children receiving support in order to make changes when necessary to maximize student learning and growth” (Kaminski & Good III, 2007, p.1). Good and Kaminski added that the DIBELS assessments offer no guarantees; good reading instruction is imperative for a student to become a good reader.

DIBELS was noted as a “scientifically valid” instrument or purposes of progress monitoring by the Reading First Assessment Academy (Goodman, 2006).

Phonics Instruction Mandate

U.S. federal legislation required that the phonics component in federally funded initiatives be explicit and systematic in the No Child Left Behind Act in of 2001, but many educational professionals are unsure of the meaning of explicit phonics instruction. Explicit systematic phonics instruction can be described as the following:

a curriculum with a specified, sequential set of phonics elements; instruction that is direct, precise, and unambiguous; and a practice using phonics to read words, although the NRP reported that the degree of the decodability of the text designated for practice was not specified (Mesmer & Griffith, 2004, pp.4.)

Phonics is systematic when the teacher clearly defines the sound and spelling relationship for the student. According to Marilyn Adams, the goal of systematic instruction involves maximizing the likelihood that when a student is learning a new concept he or she already possesses the prior knowledge and understanding to see the value in the lesson (Adams, 2001). Phonics lessons should be organized in such a way that newly introduced skills are built on existing skills, and the tasks the student complete are arranged from simple to more complex (Honig et al., 2008). It is important for teachers to understand that just because a reading program has a scope and sequence, it does not mean the phonics instruction is cumulative (Blevins, 2006).

Although policy makers currently favor phonics (ESEA, NCLB), whole language advocates have not conceded defeat. Whole language instruction remains in many classrooms today. The National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), a professional association of

educators in English Studies, Literacy, and Language Arts, provides information on their website for teachers who support the whole language concept, as well as a national conference (National Council of Teachers of English, n.d.).

Balanced Literacy

Balanced Literacy can be described as a blend of both phonics and whole language instruction. Systematic, sequential phonics instruction in kindergarten and first grade is the most effective instruction, but by itself, it does not acquire all the procedures students need to become successful readers and writers (Willows, 2002). A balanced literacy program will include a wide range of reading and writing experiences, including reading to children, reading with children, and reading by children. A successful balanced literacy program for grades K-3 can include phonics instruction, guided reading, supported by reading aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, and other approaches (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Excellent elementary reading instruction balances skills instruction and holistic literacy opportunities. Students who show the highest achievements are consistently reading and writing (Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002).

Early Reading Foundations

All students, but especially students with learning disabilities, benefit from sound reading instruction in early literacy skills. Children begin developing literacy skills prior to any formal education. Before children attend school, they will often 'read' books by inventing the text (Clay, 1991). Children as young as three and four have demonstrated phonemic awareness. In 1987, Maclean, Bryant, and Bradley assessed a sample of children from middle class and working class families in England and found more than half of the three years olds demonstrated

some understanding of rhyming words or an awareness of sounds in words. Most of the four years olds were able to recognize words that rhymed and words that had similar beginning sounds. Longitudinal data from 64 children indicated there is a strong relationship between early knowledge of nursery rhymes and success in reading and spelling over the next three years. This correlation remains even after differences in social background, I.Q., and the children's phonological skills at the start of the study. Researchers in this study believed that knowledge of nursery rhymes enhances children's phonological sensitivity, which in turn helps them to learn to read (Bryant, Bradley, Crossland, & Maclean, 1989).

In 2002, the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) was established to synthesize the development of early literacy skills from the ages of zero to five. “The panel’s primary purpose was to synthesize research to contribute to decisions in educational policy and practice that affect early literacy development and to determine how teachers and families could support young children’s language and literacy development” (National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2008, iii). The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) determined that six variables represent early literacy skills and are strong predictors of later measurements of literacy progress. The six variables include alphabet knowledge (AK), phonological awareness (PA), rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters and digits, RAN of objects and colors, writing, or writing a name, and phonological memory. Additional important variables, which are moderately correlated to later literacy success, are concepts about print, print knowledge, reading readiness, oral language, and visual processing. The combination of the above-mentioned eleven elements consistently predicts later literacy progress for students who are in preschool and kindergarten (NELP, 2008).

Students who are not exposed to experiences that promote early literacy skills begin preschool or kindergarten at a disadvantage. Literacy begins at birth, with communication from

parent to child. Literacy development can then be enriched with students from low social economic backgrounds through the increased awareness to the advantages of preschool and community programs that support literacy. Large urban school districts face an exponentially larger challenge when students come to kindergarten with little or no experience with literacy. A performance gap in literacy achievement exists for students in urban schools from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Families that come from a community that lacks resources for early literacy typically have a greater proportion of at-risk students (Flood & Anders, 2005). Literacy skills and a beginning understanding of the format of books can be accomplished through read-alouds. Studies conducted by Mandler (1984) and Nelson (1986) indicated that young children who experience a number of read-alouds understand the components, structure, and function of narrative stories. Children who have been read to at home begin preschool or kindergarten with a basic understanding of the components of stories and text format and are likely to become more successful beginning readers.

Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2012) mentioned that a student could enter kindergarten with little background knowledge and score poorly on a traditional assessment; but when assessed using a different measure, the same student could be motivated and show attention. The research by Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton speaks to the lack of resources and exposure to early literacy that students have who come from low socioeconomic homes. The student will score poorly on a traditional assessment for kindergarten likely due to their lack of background knowledge.

The Importance of Alphabet Knowledge

Alphabet knowledge is a strong predictor of later reading success. In 1968, historian David Diringer described the creation of the alphabet as the “people’s script.” There are few

enough sounds and symbols in the English language that once learned, almost anyone will be able to use their knowledge of the alphabet to read and write (Diringer, 1968). The alphabet can be a challenge to the beginning reader because each letter and sound can be somewhat meaningless and abstract. Each sound alone does not mean anything in isolation, but the combination of sounds (phonemes) provides us our written and spoken language (Griffin, Burns, & Snow, 1998). When a student is learning to read, he or she first learns the letters of the alphabet followed by the sounds each letter represents. Knowledge of the letter names, sounds, and symbols of the letters of the alphabet (alphabet knowledge) is essential for students to learn to read and write. “Alphabet knowledge (AK) is consistently recognized as the strongest, most durable predictor of later achievement in literacy including decoding, comprehension, and spelling” (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

Traditional alphabet instruction in most of the kindergarten classrooms across the United States in the early 21st century has focused on one letter a week, but this is not the most effective way to teach children the alphabet (Bowman & Trieman, 2004). Even in second grade, teachers often begin the year by ensuring all students understand the alphabetic principle (Griffin, Burns, & Snow, 1998). Recent research has indicated the traditional method of teaching the alphabet is not meeting the educational needs of today’s students (Pista & Wagner, 2010). Instruction that focuses on one letter a week is unsound instruction for several reasons. First, not all of the alphabet letters are created equal. Educators understand that certain letters are more frequently found in familiar words. For example, an s or a t will be more frequently found in words than an x or a z. Second, some students may come to school already knowing some of their letters, making it unnecessary to spend an entire week on instruction (Trieman & Broderick, 1998). Third, it will take 26 weeks to learn each letter, which is a significant amount of time in the

school year. Students who are already struggling with reading will become further disadvantaged if the teacher spends a week of instruction on each letter (Piasta & Wagner, 2010). Last, learning requires repetition and practice. If a teacher spends one week on a letter, he or she will not have time for repetition or practice of previously learned letters. Teachers need to remember that the sole purpose of learning the alphabet is for a student to learn to read and write. Spending too much time daily on a single alphabet letter steals too much time from other literacy activities. Research indicates that lessons concerning the alphabet should be brief and explicit. An explicit alphabet knowledge lesson involves “identifying the letter name and sound, recognizing the letter in text, and producing the letter form” (Jones, Clark, & Reutzel, 2013, p.82).

Neurobiology and Reading

Understanding the neurobiology of a student’s brain can help educators intervene in a student’s education to help prevent early reading difficulties. Functional magnetic reasoning imagining (fMRI) technology has allowed scientists to track brain activity. Images discovered students with dyslexia and poor readers have different brain activation patterns than the images of good readers (Honig et al., 2008). The left hemisphere of the brain is associated with speech, language processing, and reading. Within the left hemisphere, the frontal lobe controls speech, regulation of emotions, reasoning, consciousness, and planning. The parietal lobe controls sensory perceptions and connects spoken and written language to memory. The temporal lobe is involved in verbal memory and the occipital lobe is vital in the identification of letters (Hudson, High, & Al Otaiba, 2007; Shaywitz, 2008).

Teaching letter-sound relationships and phonics helps build the neural systems in a child’s brain. When a person reads, he or she has activity in the front of the brain and two areas in the back of the brain. A student who struggles with reading can be found to have underactivity

in the two areas in the back of the brain. Within the two lobes in the back of the brain, there are three areas that are critically important for developed readers: Broca's area, the parietal-temporal lobe, and the occipital-temporal area. "Broca's area is used to organize, produce, and manipulate language and speech, as well as grammar and syntax. Analogous structures in the right hemisphere and noncortical structures have also been associated with language processing" (Joseph, Noble, & Eden, 2001, p. 567). Shaywitz's research is important to the field of education because it proves a neurobiological difference in the brains of good readers versus struggling readers. Skilled readers show the highest level of brain activation in the occipital-temporal area. After a reader correctly analyzes and identifies a word several times, he or she forms a neural model of that word and it is permanently stored in the occipital-temporal area. Future reading of stored words in the occipital-temporal area happens automatically. Evidence-based reading instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics can change brain activity in struggling readers and assist in the activation of the areas in the back of the brain. Educators have often believed that if a student is having trouble reading, there is a developmental concern; but research has shown that the problem could be from significant inactivity in the back areas of the brain. If the student does not get help as soon as possible, the reading problem will remain (Shaywitz, 2008).

The Importance of Fluency Instruction

Reading fluency can be defined as the ability to read phrases and sentences smoothly and quickly, while continuing to comprehend the text. Fluency is often thought of as the "bridge" between decoding and comprehension (Honig et al., 2008). Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) stated reading fluency is made up of three key elements: accuracy, rate, and prosody. Fluency is the "accurate reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody or expression" (p. 702).

Two of the seven essential components of a read-aloud involve the teacher modeling fluent reading and animation and expression to his or her students. A study was conducted that randomly selected 120 teachers from a pool of 284 teachers in 15 schools in San Diego. Two researchers observed the 120 teachers as they conducted read-alouds. The teachers who were considered expert teachers modeled fluency flawlessly. Expert teachers also utilized animation and expression when reading aloud to students. Students in these classrooms were engrossed in the books that their teachers were reading (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004).

Differences in reading fluency separate good readers from poor readers. A teacher who has a student who struggles with reading fluency will also notice the student struggle with reading comprehension. Students with learning disabilities in reading comprehension or basic reading skills frequently have weaknesses in reading fluency. Typically, these students do not comprehend whole phrases and make decoding errors in reading, which reduce the reading pace and prevent them from comprehending the sentence. As a result, the students do not comprehend what they have read and may miss the larger meanings of passages and books. Several studies indicate that oral reading fluency may reflect overall reading competence (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001; Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Lipsey 2000). Reading fluency is often indirectly assessed on timed state assessments. A student who struggles with reading fluently may not complete an assessment in the allotted amount of time given. The National Reading Panel found that an effective reading program must include instruction in reading fluency. The National Research Council (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) recommended that reading fluency be regularly assessed in the classroom and effective instruction be provided when a student is not reading fluently. Despite the importance of reading fluency and the need for direct teaching

(National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000), it is often neglected in reading instructional programs (Allington, 1983; Kame'enui & Simmons, 2001).

The Importance of Vocabulary Instruction

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), vocabulary in the knowledge of words and word meanings and is critically important in learning to read and the comprehension of text. Vocabulary knowledge is often measured on standardized tests and has been known to be correlated to student reading comprehension (Davis, 1968). Students with limited word knowledge struggle with comprehension (Anderson and Freebody, 1983; Kame'enui et al., 1982). Research work on vocabulary instruction and acquisition by Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, and Linda Kucan discussed the importance of the three tiers of vocabulary. Tier I vocabulary words are words that all children know regardless of ethnic background or social economic status. Examples of tier I words include house, baby, mother, and sister. Tier II words are described as common academic vocabulary words that can be seen in various contents. Examples of tier II words include the following words: solve, comprehend, explain, and compare. Tier II words often are seen on standardized assessments and it is important for students to understand what these words mean in the context of a specific content. Tier III words are content specific words that are critical to a student's understanding of text. Examples of tier III words include the following words: photosynthesis, prose, outlier, and parody. Tier III words are not commonly used in everyday language and need to be taught within the specific content. Without a working knowledge of tier III vocabulary, students will struggle with the comprehension of higher-level texts. Teaching the vocabulary of a selection can improve a student's comprehension of that selection (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982). In order to teach students new vocabulary, research indicates the best instructional practice is explicit instruction.

Explicit vocabulary instruction involves putting the definition in a student friendly language, providing an example and non-example of the word, and providing a concrete representation. Explicit instruction is systematic, direct, engaging, and success oriented. Explicit instruction has been shown to promote achievement for all students in any grade level (Archer & Hughes, 2004). According to Michael Graves, there are four components of an effective vocabulary program: extensive independent reading, instruction in specific words to expand word knowledge, instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and word-play activities to motivate and enhance learning (Graves, 2000; Honig et al., 2008).

Children who come from low socio-economic homes or an environment that is not rich in literacy start school in kindergarten at a disadvantage. Regardless of race, growing up in poverty can restrict the vocabulary a student may learn prior to the beginning of school, making attaining an adequate vocabulary a challenge. Students who have a smaller working vocabulary than their peers are more likely to struggle with reading and experience school failure (Becker, 1977; Hart & Risley, 1995; White, Graves, & Slater, 1990).

Students with Disabilities and Reading

Students with reading disabilities can be found in any classroom in the United States. Students with disabilities (SWD) have an individualized education plan (IEP) that contains the student's current levels and personalized measurable educational goals. Schools are challenged when they are faced with student(s) who are not responding to grade level instruction and are not identified with a learning disability. Many states encourage school districts to follow a response to intervention (RtI) system. The IDOE describes RtI as "A framework for prevention and early intervention which involves determining whether all students are learning and making adequate progress when provided high quality instruction and intervention (Nellis, n.d.). RtI can also be

defined as a “comprehensive early detection and prevention strategy that identifies struggling students and assists them before they fall behind” (Gersten et al., 2009, p. 4). Remedial educational intervention is critical to successful outcomes in children with reading disabilities by the use of an evidence-based phonologic reading intervention. The reading intervention expedites the development of those fast-paced neural systems that underlie skilled reading in children (Shaywitz et al., 2004).

Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 511 7-40-2A states a public agency may develop and implement comprehensive and coordinated early intervening services, which may include interagency financing structures, for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a focus on grade K-3) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment (Indiana Administrative Code, 2008). A physician/pediatrician often identifies students who have a significant cognitive disability prior to kindergarten. A physician/pediatrician can help support the family by providing the family with valuable community resources for children age birth to five. A child who is not frequently seen by a physician/pediatrician or not visibly disabled may enter the public school system without a previous evaluation and/or services. Schools must then begin the response to intervention process to support the student’s academic concerns. If a school is too quick to refer a student to special education evaluation in the younger grades, the student may not qualify for special education services. Many schools feel that a student must show three years’ worth of learning deficits prior to being identified. If a second grade student knows the alphabet and has some basic word knowledge, this student typically does not qualify for services, yet schools must intervene prior to special education evaluation. Research suggests that students are more likely to

gain academically if schools intervene early by providing effective instruction to assist young students' transition from nonreaders to readers; less is known about how to effectively remediate struggling readers at the secondary level. Disparity exists for older readers who are from high-poverty and have limited access to community resources (Edmonds et al., 2009)

In *Smart RTI: A Next Generation Approach to Multilevel Prevention*, Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton recommend that school districts utilize special education teachers to provide the tertiary prevention to students who are unresponsive to primary and secondary intervention. Indiana describes multiple levels of academic support as tiers, with primary intervention as tier I, secondary interventions as tier II, and tertiary intervention as tier III. Many educators believe we should rethink the response to intervention and focus on early intervention and prevention. RtI has moved to the center of discussion concerning school reform, partly because RtI procedures were under-specified in the 2004 reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (Fuchs et al., 2012).

Current Best Practices in K-5 Reading

It is important for school districts to provide early reading intervention for students who exhibit reading difficulties (Snow et al., 1999). Many school districts in the United States use Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments in grades K-5 to determine if a student needs additional reading instruction. DIBELS assessments are based on the Big Ideas in Beginning Reading: Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Accuracy, and Fluency with Text, Vocabulary, and Comprehension (Good, Kaminski, Smith, Simmons, Kame'enui, & Wallin, 2003). The big ideas in beginning reading were derived from the research that was completed by the National Reading Panel. Findings from the National Reading Panel were mentioned in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

All students often receive assessments (screeners) in the core (Tier I) instruction to determine if additional instructional supports are needed. Reading assessments help teachers understand how their students are developing as readers and provide critical information for making important instructional decisions (Afflerbach, 2011). Fuchs et al. (2012) mentioned that screening in primary prevention (Tier I) is typically accomplished by administering a brief test to all students, a universal screener. The DIBELS composite score is often used as the universal screener prior to a student being placed in a Tier II reading intervention program in grades K-6.

Many districts begin assessing students in Grade K with DIBELS after a few weeks of school exposure. DIBELS uses beginning of the year (BoY), middle of the year (MoY) and end of year (EoY) benchmark assessments, and students are progressed monitored as needed by a teacher. Progress monitoring involves a teacher assessing the students with a probe. Once the student fails to make adequate instructional growth after three progress-monitoring probes, it is recommended that the teacher change his or her instruction (Simmons, Kame'enui, Good, Harn, Cole, & Braun, 2002).

Schools that use only one screener for reading intervention may receive a false positive. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton define false positives as students who appear to be at risk but are not. Large number of false positives can influence a school district financially but can also take valuable time away from the students who are most at need for reading development (Fuchs et al., 2012).

Schools may have additional personnel to support students who need extra instructional support in reading. Some schools may have either a student interventionist or a special education teacher who supports reading remediation. The interventionist or special education teacher may utilize instructional materials reviewed by The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) that are

specific to the student's specific reading challenges. The federal government created The What Works Clearinghouse in 2002 as an initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the WWC is to be a resource for informed education decision making and provide credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy (referred to as "interventions"). The information collected by WWC is summarized and reported on the website (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>). Some of the reading interventions that are reviewed by WWC include the following: ERI, SBRR, Read Well K, Read Well 1, Read Well Fluency Foundations, Read Well 2, and REWARDS Intermediate.

Prior to a Tier II program being added to a school as an additional academic support, a team of administrators and teachers should schedule a meeting to review the research to determine if the program meets the needs of their struggling students. The Institute for Education Science (IES) funded research findings have contributed to educators' knowledge regarding effective strategies to improve the reading skills of all students, including those who are at risk for reading disabilities, English learners, students who are living in poverty, and students who have reading disabilities. General education classroom teachers who received special training in effective strategies to teach reading can implement these strategies in the classroom. Although further research should be conducted, children who struggle with reading at all grades can make substantial reading gains when they are provided systematic and intensive interventions that may be integrated with classroom instruction or are supplemental to classroom instruction. The demands of reading change as children develop and progress through school and the texts increases in rigor. The students' changes in reading acquisition should influence how assessments and interventions are designed and how learning is evaluated (Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O'Connor, 2014). In Indiana, the student who is in Tier II Target Reading

instruction receives the 90+ minute reading block at grade level in addition to a specific Tier II reading instruction. Tier II instruction should involve small-groups and have protocols and fidelity checks in place to ensure the program is meeting the needs of the students. For schools in Indiana that are utilizing DIBELS, the protocol recommends the student be in Tier II for 12 weeks or until the student meets the DIBELS composite score at or above grade level. The interventionist working with the student should set ambitious, meaningful, and attainable goals for the student and create a personalized aimline. If the student has three marks below the aimline during progress monitoring, the interventionist changes what instruction is being delivered in order to meet the instructional needs of the student. This protocol is consistent with the recommendations of the authors of DIBELS, Dr. Roland Good, and Dr. Ruth Kaminski. The sooner an intervention is delivered to a student at a school, the more likely the student will show academic growth in reading (Torgesen, 2004).

Prior to students entering tier III instruction, referred to as tertiary prevention by Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton, the student must be unresponsive to instruction in tier II. The instruction in tier II may last more than 12 weeks. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton note that schools will often keep students in secondary prevention, tier II, for long periods of time even when the student is unresponsive to the instruction at this level. Students will then be prevented from receiving tertiary instruction or special education services. Schools are likely able to identify students that would not be responsive to tier II instruction prior to placing the student in intervention. If so, Fuchs, Fuchs and Compton recommend these students be placed at the appropriate level on instruction so that the student may be successful (Fuchs et al., 2012). It would be a challenge to do this in our school district, as we are to show what interventions have been unsuccessful prior to sending a student to special education evaluation. However, relying on secondary prevention

as a long-term solution violates IDEA for students with suspected disabilities (Fuchs et al., 2012). Once a student qualifies for special education services, many school districts believe the student is no longer in the RtI process. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton state,

Smart RtI is not to prevent special education placement.... we believe educators should think about prevention as working with students to help them steer clear of school dropout, unemployment, incarceration, poor health, and other life-limiting sequelae of inadequate academic performance (Fuchs et al., 2012, p. 270).

In addition, to prevent school failure and poor life outcomes we must have intensive programs for the students who are most in need. Tertiary instruction is generally for approximately five percent of a school's population. In some school districts, there is a (disproportionate) population of students with IEPs. Large urban schools may have 20% of their student population have an IEP, which implies that more than five percent of their population may need tertiary, tier III instruction. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton recommend a special education teacher be responsible for tier III instruction (Fuchs et al., 2012).

Federal Government and Educational Reform Policies

The federal government has been increasingly involved in educational reform over the past two decades. In 1998, the *Reading Excellence Act* was passed in October in the United States House and Senate. The *Reading Excellence Act* goal was to

improve the reading and literacy skills of children and families by improving in-service instructional practices for teachers who teach reading, to stimulate the development of more high-quality family literacy programs, to support extended learning-time opportunities for children, to ensure that children can read well and independently not later than third grade" (S. Res. H.R.2614).

The Reading Excellence Program provided a competitive discretionary grant program to states that awards grants to improve K-3 reading instruction. States receiving Reading Excellence grants used the money for low-performing, high-poverty school districts. The program was designed to provide children with the readiness skills and support they need to learn to read. The end goal is for every child to read by the end of the third grade. Teachers are trained to use research-based methods to improve the instructional practices. Scientifically based reading instruction was defined in the *Reading Excellence Act of 1998* as “the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties” (S. Res. H.R.2614).

In 1999, citizens of the United States were forewarned about educational policies related to federal legislation aimed at increasing academic standards and emphasizing teacher and school accountability. Former President Clinton called for an end to social promotion in schools, which many educational professionals interpret as an increase in retention rates. Clinton was addressing the nation on October 29, 1997 when he spoke at an elementary school in Chicago and stated, “I challenge every school district to adopt high standards, to abolish social promotion, to move aggressively to help students make the grade through tutoring and summer schools, and to hold schools accountable for results” (Brownstein, 1997, para. 3). Clinton called for an end to social promotion again in 1999 in his *State of the Union Address* in promotion of the *Education Accountability Act* by stating, “...First, all schools must end social promotion. No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she cannot read” (1999 State of the Union Address, 1999, para. 40). The federal and state accountability placed on local school districts and teachers may have a direct impact to student instruction and possibly grade retention (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). In 1996-97, Chicago instituted a policy to end social

promotion. Under the policy, students in third, sixth, and eighth grade were required to perform at predefined levels in both reading and mathematics in order to be promoted to the next grade. In the first three years of the program, roughly 30-40 percent of students in grades three, six and eight failed to meet in the promotional requirements in the spring, and each year approximately 10-20 percent of students in these grades were eventually retained (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007).

In January of 2002, former President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which includes government Title I funding for disadvantaged students. NCLB provisions education reform based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve student learning. The law required states to develop assessments in basic skills, but did not create a national assessment in which all states could be equally measured. NCLB is infamously known to require all students to pass grade level assessments by the year 2014. No Child Left Behind required that 100% of students be reading at grade level by 2014 (Honig et al., 2008). Schools have been unable to meet the requirements of NCLB, and the U.S. Department of Education has invited each state to request flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). In exchange for the waiver, states must have rigorous and comprehensive plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction (U.S. Department of Education, No Child Left Behind para. 1). To date, 42 states and the District of Columbia have received flexibility from the provisions that were in NCLB from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); in exchange, the schools must work to close achievement gaps, prepare students to be college and career ready, and promote rigorous accountability.

On March 13, 2010, the Obama administration released a blueprint for revising the ESEA in response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 focused on the following: improving teacher and principal effectiveness, providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children's schools, implementing college- and career-ready standards, and improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest-performing schools by providing intensive support and effective interventions. In a letter from current President Barack Obama he stated, instead of investing in the status quo, we must reform our schools to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps, inspire our children to excel, and turn around those schools that for too many young Americans aren't providing them with the education they need to succeed in college and a career (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Reading First Grant Results Nationally and in Indiana

According to the interim report from the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP),

Indiana's Reading First (RF) program was established in 2003 as a result of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). The purpose of the program was to improve student reading achievement. The program accomplishes reading improvement in schools by providing support to districts and teachers to increase their knowledge and use of scientifically based reading research (SBRR) (Rouge, Hansen, Muller, & Chien, 2008, p. 10).

The Reading First Grant was not able to make sustainable reading improvements in Indiana schools. For example, six schools were chosen in a large urban district in Indiana. Of those six schools, only one of the schools chosen to participate in the Reading First grant continues to

have ISTEP (grades 3, 4, and 5) and IREAD-3 (grade 3) data that surpasses the state averages. Four of the six schools have data that reflect between 70%-80% of their students passing ISTEP in grades 3, 4, and 5. Students scored either slightly below or slightly above the state average from year to year. One of the six schools had students that scored below the state average in ISTEP and IREAD-3 (Indiana Department of Education, 2012).

Nationally Reading First schools showed some improvement, but there were differences among the Title Reading First Schools and the Non-Title Reading First Schools.

An analysis across states indicates that Reading First schools gained more, on average, from pre- to post-Reading First implementation than non-Reading First Title I schools on their states' third-grade reading assessments, a statistically significant yet small difference (average effect sizes: .17–.21, $p < .001$ for all four analytic methods, corresponding to a 2.4 to 3.0 percentage point difference). In 12 of 24 states, the improvement in third-grade reading performance among Reading First schools was statistically significantly larger than in non-Reading First Title I schools for at least one method. Similarly, for fourth-grade reading performance, a pooled analysis across states showed a statistically significant increase, pre- to post-Reading First implementation, in RF schools compared to non-RF Title I schools. The improvement in fourth grade reading performance among RF schools was statistically significant in six of 17 states for at least one of the methods (Moss, Boulay, Horst, Rodger, Brown-Lyons, 2008).

National performance data from the Reading First grant is similar to the data from the state of Indiana. Many variables could have influenced why the Reading First Grant has not shown much success or sustainability in Indiana. One variable could be the staff turnover in these schools; this challenge was also mentioned in the Reading First Interim Report. The

interim report also mentioned that there was a challenge with communication between school districts and the state. “The other challenge has been the frustration of constant flux in expectations from the state” (Rouge, Hansen, Muller, & Chien, 2008, p. 74). Communication continues to be a challenge between the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and school districts. One of the successes with the Reading First Grant has been the inclusion of special education students. In the interim report, a district representative stated, “I think we have done a really good job of working with our lower students. We can now identify the weaknesses of low level readers and done a good job with concentrating on that” (Rouge et al., 2008, p. 76).

State of Indiana and Reading Assessments

As a result of federal legislation, in 2010 in Indiana the House Enrolled Act (HES) 1367, also known as Public Law 109, required reading evaluation in third grade was passed. In the state of Indiana, during the 2011-2012 school years, third grade students were required to take the new Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) assessment. The IREAD-3 assessment covers the Indiana Academic Standards for vocabulary and reading, standards 1, 2, and 3; students must receive a pass score of 446. Indiana Academic Standard (IAS) 1 assesses students on word recognition, fluency, and word families. Indiana Academic Standards 2 and 3 assess students on comprehension and analysis of nonfiction, informational and literary text respectively. Assessment questions on IREAD-3 may include identifying sounds in a word, finding the meaning of an unknown word, making connections and predictions while reading, and describing story elements. A student who scores a 446 or above on the IREAD-3 assessment is considered a pass score and the student is able to demonstrate proficiency and understanding of grade-level literary and informational texts. Students who pass also are able to identify and comprehend most new variations of word meanings and new text-based vocabulary. A student

who scores below a 446 demonstrates limited understanding when reading and responding to grade-level literary and informational texts. Students who do not pass IREAD-3 may have difficulty identifying and comprehending new variations of word meanings and new text-based vocabulary (Indiana Department of Education, 2012).

The state of Indiana provides third grade students two chances to take and pass the IREAD-3 assessment prior to fourth grade. Students take the IREAD-3 assessment a few weeks after the applied skills section in the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+) in March and before the multiple-choice section of ISTEP in April. Students who do not pass during the IREAD-3 March assessment window are granted a second opportunity to pass during the summer IREAD-3 assessment window. Unlike ISTEP, students who do not pass IREAD-3 during the assessment window in March or during the summer retake opportunity will be registered by the state as third graders. The state requires local school districts come up with a plan to remediate students who do not pass IREAD-3. In addition, the state allows local school agencies to determine if the student is retained in a third grade classroom or if the student is promoted to a fourth grade classroom but receives third grade remediation. Regardless of the local school district's decision, the student is recognized as a third grader by the state. If the student were to transfer from one district to another, the student may be placed in either a fourth or third grade classroom determined by the local school district's IREAD-3 interpretation. If the local school agency determines that the student will move on to fourth grade, the student has to be registered with the state as a third grader, must retake third grade ISTEP and IREAD-3, and is required to receive third grade reading instruction again from an IDOE approved reading program.

Under Indiana state statute 511 IAC 6.2-3.1-4, the state of Indiana requires a school to utilize a research-based core reading program unless the school meets the following two criteria: the state board determines that the school falls within one of the top two performance categories under 511 IAC 6.2-6-5, and 90% of students must pass the IREAD-3 assessment (Article 6.2 School Performance and Improvement; Accountability, 2010). In 2012-2013, the State released their Approved Core Reading program list. Core reading programs are critiqued using rubrics adopted from the Reviewing a Reading Program Professional Development Participant's Guide, developed for the Center on Instruction by the Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University. Reviewers are current classroom teachers, reading coaches, school and corporation administrators, and higher education faculty, but an internal review team at the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) made final determinations. Core reading programs receive one of the following descriptions: fully approved for adoption, approved with reservations, or not approved for adoption (Indiana Department of Education, 2012). Core reading programs contain a scope and sequence of skills to be taught in each grade level. Each core-reading program approved by the state of Indiana includes phonics instruction in the earlier grades. A core-reading program does not preclude the teacher supplementing with materials that meet the instructional needs of a student. Teachers may choose to utilize materials for social studies or science to support the comprehension of informational and non-fiction text (Shanahan et al., 2010).

Reading Accomplishments in Grades K-3

Jeanne Chall described the stages of reading development and explained how the various stages of reading development change when the reader becomes more proficient. In Stages 1-2 (Grades 1-3), students are learning to read and typically read simple texts with familiar words.

Stages 3-5 (Grade 4 and beyond) are often termed the “reading to learn” stages, as students are reading more complex texts that contain challenging vocabulary words (Chall, 2011; Honig et al., 2008).

Prior to a student entering Stage 1 of reading development, a student has experiences in preschool and kindergarten that lay the foundations for future reading development. One of the major goals of kindergarten is to help the children become comfortable in a formal classroom setting, but academic foundations are put in place. Students enter kindergarten with different academic experiences; some students may have had preschool experiences where they prepared students to learn to read and write (Griffin, Snow, & Burns, 1999). Preschoolers and kindergartners with poor phonemic awareness tend to have difficulty learning to read in later grades (Scalon & Vellutino, 1996). In kindergarten some of the academic goals include: recognizing and naming all uppercase and lowercase letters, acquiring a solid understanding of books and print resources, gaining a familiarity with the analysis of language, and developing an interest in what knowledge can be gained from a book. One of the obstacles to reading is an absence or loss of a motivation to read. At the end of kindergarten, students should be prepared to learn to read and write (Griffin et al., 1999).

The largest goal in first grade is for students to make the transition from emergent to “real” reading. In the first grade, the academic initial work that began in preschool and kindergarten should all merge in the students’ understanding. At the beginning of first grade, many students have not written anything independently. Teachers should begin to have students write about topics that are familiar to them. Students should also be encouraged to write and read independently. A few of the accomplishments students make in first grade include: accurately decoding one-syllable and nonsense words, answering simple written comprehension questions,

monitoring his or her own reading and self-correcting, using phonics based knowledge to spell independently, and engaging in a variety of literary activities (Griffin et al., 1999). Studies show that students who are poor readers at the end of first grade rarely acquire the skills necessary to read by the end of elementary school (Francis et al., 1996; Shaywitz et al., 2003; Torgesen & Burgess, 1998).

At the beginning of second grade, teachers have students who read well independently and students who do not know how to read at all. A major focus for second grade teachers is to ensure all students understand the alphabetic principle and then move on to more challenging reading tasks. At the end of second grade, students should be able to read and comprehend fiction and nonfiction books at their level, be motivated enough to read independently, be able to recognize patterns in words and spell correctly in his or her writing, and make reasonable judgments of what to include in writing pieces (Griffin et al., 1999).

In third grade, students should be able to read aloud an appropriate grade level text with fluency and comprehension. Students should also be able to summarize the main idea of fiction and nonfiction texts, clearly identify an unknown word in a text, and ask questions when interpreting texts. In reference to writing, a third grade student should be able to complete all areas of the writing process and begin to incorporate literacy words and language patterns (Griffin et al., 1999). If a student is not reading proficiently by third grade, he or she will experience the “fourth-grade slump.” The fourth grade-s slump is a phenomenon that Chall and Jacobs refer to when schools and teachers notice a sudden drop in reading scores. This is particularly apparent in socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Chall and Jacobs recommend focusing on vocabulary development, fluency, and automaticity to support reading development (Honig et al., 2008).

Importance of Reading at the Third Grade

The ramifications of the IREAD-3 assessments have forced many school districts to evaluate their core reading programs and early literacy interventions. Indiana now has four years of data from the IREAD-3 assessment, which shows if a student is ready read to learn, or needs reading remediation in foundational skills. Many educators are familiar with the phrase, “Up until third grade you are taught to read; after third grade you read to learn.” The phrase is supported by research from multiple sources. In 2010, the Annie E. Casey Foundation published a special report that stated, up until the end of third grade, most children are learning to read. Beginning in the fourth grade, however, they are reading to learn, using their skills to gain more information in math and science, to solve problems, to think critically about what they are learning, and to act upon and share that knowledge in the world around them (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010). Teachers can help support students’ comprehension in other contents by providing a lesson on text structure. Text structure differs from literary text to non-fiction or informational text. Students who are not strong readers will not be able to comprehend text beyond the fourth grade level. According to the Children’s Reading Foundation, half of the fourth grade curriculum is incomprehensible to students who read below grade level (The Children’s Reading Foundation, n.d.). Another strong influence on reading development of third graders was the use of challenging texts that either are at or above grade level that supplement the basal reader (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990).

Poor Readers Face Many Challenges

Children who do not read well are more likely to be retained a grade in school, drop out of high school, become a teen parent, or enter the juvenile justice system (Hernandez, 2011). “Students, who struggle with reading, including those with dyslexia, comprise at least 30% of the

population” (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007). According to Dr. Louisa Moats (2012), about 34% of the population in the United States are “below basic” on the National Assessment of Academic Progress in fourth grade. Students in high poverty areas enter school at risk of reading failure at an astonishing 70–80% rate. Louisa Moats discussed the importance of early reading instruction in *Whole Language Lives On: The Illusion of "Balanced" Reading*

Instruction. Moats clearly states the three areas that we need to improve in reading instruction:

First, it is not being handled well in American schools. Four in ten of our fourth-graders lack basic reading skills. Tens of millions of adults are weak readers. Millions of children are needlessly classified as "disabled" when, in fact, their main problem is that nobody taught them to read when they were five and six years old. Second, we know what works for nearly all children when it comes to imparting basic reading skills to them. Third, we also know what doesn't work for most children. It's called "whole language (Moats, 2000 p.6)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading scores for fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders indicate the importance of learning to read is still critically important. According to the NAEP results, “68% of fourth graders, 70% of eighth grades, and 65% of twelfth graders scored at or below the basic level of reading achievement” (Honig et al., 2008, p. 2). A student who struggles in reading will find the academic content in latter grades is more difficult as it contains higher level text and more literacy is informational and non-fiction. Middle school and high school students have less time in their English class and more time in subjects such as Chemistry, Government, and World History. Content area teachers expect secondary students to be able to navigate and comprehend the higher level thinking that is

required from complex text. Students who are not strong readers struggle with the vocabulary and comprehension that is often found in higher-level courses.

If a student is not able to pass the courses that are required for the Indiana Core 40 diploma, then he or she may opt to drop out of high school. In Indiana, students must pass the states' End of Course Assessments (ECAs) in order to receive a Core 40 diploma. The End of Course Assessments are criterion-referenced assessments developed specifically for students completing their instruction in Algebra I, Biology I, or English 10. Currently students must pass the English 10 and Algebra I ECA for graduation, fulfill the requirements of the Graduation Qualification Examination (GQE) evidence-based waiver, or fulfill the requirements of the GQE Work-readiness waiver (Indiana Department of Education, 2012). Research published on the What Works Clearinghouse reiterates the importance of literacy by stating, "Reading ability is a key predictor of achievement in mathematics and science, and the global information economy requires today's American youth to have far more advanced literacy skills than those required of any previous generation" (Institute of Education Sciences [IES], 2008, p. 4).

Students who struggle with reading at the high school level and struggle to pass the English 10 ECA in Indiana often drop out of school. The Annie E. Casey Foundation published another report that found, "Students not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school" (Hernandez, 2011, p. 5). The high dropout rate can be attributed to students being poor readers, and lack of reading preparation. In November of 1999, as part of the America Reads Challenge project, a research article was published by the US Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement which stated, 75% of students who are poor readers in elementary are poor readers in high school. The research study continues to explore the importance of third grade reading proficiency. Children are expected to

learn to read in kindergarten through third grade when most reading instruction is provided. By fourth grade, students are expected to read to learn. Good reading skills are required to study other content specific materials, use computers, and conduct research. Even students who are highly motivated will struggle with reading if they cannot read well by the end of third grade ("Start Early, Finish Strong. How to Help Every Child Become a Reader", 1999, p. 15).

Students who fail to master reading by the end of third grade often have a decline in their reading ability in the later grades and drop out before graduation. Results of a longitudinal study of nearly 4,000 students confirmed that students who do not read proficiently at the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma compared to proficient readers. The research indicated that students who live in poverty often struggle to receive a high school diploma. In addition, graduation rates for Blacks and Hispanics who were not proficient readers in the third grade were significantly lower than White students reading at the same proficiency level. "The combination of reading poorly and living in poverty put these children in double jeopardy" (Hernandez, 2011, p. 4).

Students with Disabilities and Retention

A student with a disability may receive a good cause exemption in the state of Indiana if he or she does not pass the IREAD-3 assessment (Indiana Department of Education, 2012). The case conference committee that convenes each year to discuss the student's IEP can determine if the student should receive a good cause exemption that will result in the student being promoted to the fourth grade in the state of Indiana. It is best practice and state and federal law (Article 7, ESEA, IDEA) for a student with an IEP to receive instruction based on his or her academic level. The case conference committee meets each year to set appropriate measureable academic goals for the student.

Prior to the 2014-2015 school years, many students with IEPs were assessed on both ISTEP and IREAD-3. The state of Indiana allowed 1% of a district's population to take ISTAR and 2% of a district's population to take IMAST. In a large urban school district with a large percentage of students with IEPs, the state requirements for assessment on IMAST and ISTAR are quickly filled to capacity. In 2014-2015, students with disabilities will be required to take the same assessment as their peers. The state requirements pose a challenge for large school districts with a large special education population. If a school knows that some of their lower performing IEP students are going to be forced to take an on-grade level assessment, then they provide the student access to the core grade level material with support from a special education teacher.

New Jersey is an example of another state that retains a portion of their struggling students. A study conducted in 2011 in New Jersey entailed surveying elementary school principals in Camden and Gloucester Counties that gauged their feelings concerning grade retention. The results of the Grade Retention Decision Making Survey showed principals have the knowledge of support services and interventions to serve the struggling learner populations, yet even when the strategies are employed, 1-5% of elementary students in these counties are being retained (DelConte, 2011).

Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton refer to the education of low performing special education students in the general education as "special education with accommodations" or "special education lite" (Fuchs et al., 2012, p. 274). IEP academic goals are written for the student's independent academic level but the student often remains in the Tier I class and receives the personalized instruction outside of Tier I, generally from a special education teacher. This situation is obviously not ideal, as the student may best be served by learning off-grade level academics. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton state, "Concern about access should not prevent

practitioners from providing out-of-level instruction to meet students' academic needs" (Fuchs et al., 2012, p. 275). They go on to mention that alignment with the core curriculum is not as important as meeting the instructional needs of the students. It is imperative that we build foundational proficiencies so that the student may learn foundational skills that are necessary for eventual success in grade level materials. In tertiary prevention, teachers set end of year goals with materials that match the students' needs; this may or may not include grade level materials. The teacher may intensify programs that occur in the secondary prevention or may design a program that meets the specific instructional needs of the student. The special education teacher must monitor progress and make instructional changes necessary to meet the needs of each student (Fuchs et al., 2012).

Grade Retention and Assessments

"Grade retention is making a comeback as a popular method of remediating poor academic performance" in the United States (McCoy & Reynolds, 1999, p. 273). Grade level retention is defined as requiring a student who has been in a given grade level instruction for a full year to remain in that same level for an additional year. The practice of holding a student back a grade is a long-standing one in the United States that impacts significant numbers of students. Historically, national statistics do not exist for the rate of retention, but many research reports contain data that speak to the approximations and estimations. In two research studies completed in 1993 and 1994 respectively, it was estimated that by the time children reach third grade, one in five has been retained (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1994; Meisels & Liaw, 1993). Additional research done in 1999 indicated that in some districts, by ninth grade 30% to 50% of students will have been retained at least once (Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 1999; McCoy & Reynolds, 1999). There has also been an increase in retention rates among students

born after 1985, and retentions in later grades are likely being replaced by grade retentions in kindergarten and first grade in recent birth cohorts (Frederick and Hauser 2008). Grade level retention, even in the primary grades, is considered a highly significant negative event (Andrew, 2014).

According to the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (2006), in 2004, 9.6% of youth ages 16–19 had ever been retained in grade. This represents a decrease from 16.1% in 1995. Of great concern is the fact that the highest retention rates are found among poor, minority, and inner-city youth” (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2011, p. 1).

Data collected in 2009-10 from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) was the first time the United States included the number of students retained at each grade level as an element of the data it collects at regular intervals from a large share of the nation’s school districts. It is important to note that this is not a complete census but nearly 7,000 school districts that participated in the OCR data collection serve more than 85% of students in American public schools. The OCR data indicated that 2.3% of all students in these districts were retained in the same grade at the close of the 2009-10 school year. Interestingly, much of this overall rate reflects retention in high school, when many students fail to accumulate enough credits to advance their academic standing but often repeat only specific courses as a result. Students who were retained in grades K-8 account for only 1%, with the largest numbers repeating kindergarten or the first grade. The OCR data mentioned in a Center for Children and Families (CCF) brief released in 2012 “confirm that retention rates are highest among traditionally disadvantaged minorities, who are most likely to suffer from low academic

performance. The respective retention rates for black and Hispanic students were 4.2% and 2.8%, compared with just 1.5% for whites” (West, 2012, p. 3).

Other states have put retention guidelines in place. In 2003, New York City had promotion and retention policies whereby students were retained if they achieved a 1 out of 4 on the New York State Assessment in either English/Language Arts (ELA) or Mathematics for 3rd, 5th, 7th graders in 2005, and 8th graders in 2008 (Rose & Schimke, 2012). Florida began to retain third graders in 2013 who scored at the lowest performance level on the state reading assessment and provided these students with intensive remediation. Data collected from Florida showed students who were retained under Florida’s test-based promotion policy performed at higher levels than their promoted peers in both reading and math for several years after repeating third grade (West, 2012). According to Education Weekly, in 2012, 13 states have passed legislation intended to identify, intervene, and/or retain students who struggle to demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. That brings the total number of states with reading policies specifically targeted at third graders to 32, plus the District of Columbia. More specifically, D.C. and 14 states, including Indiana, now have the controversial ability to retain students based on a lack of reading proficiency (Stipek & Lombardo, 2014).

As teachers and principals are held more accountable for student performance, many states use retention as an intervention strategy for students who are performing below grade level. When a school retains a student, the school incurs additional costs of educating the students for an additional year. It has been estimated that nearly 2.5 million students are retained each year at a cost of over 14 billion dollars annually (Dawson, 1998; Shepard & Smith, 1990; Stipek & Lombardo, 2014). Texas, for example, retained approximately 202,099 students (4.8% of total students enrolled) during the 2006–2007 year; based on the average per student yearly

expenditure of \$10,162 that year, the cost was more than two billion dollars (NASP, 2011).

Many schools in the state of Indiana are retaining third grade students because of not passing the IREAD-3 assessment.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary principals concerning their current knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment, instructional reading strategies being utilized, and the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment on retention among gender and minority groups. The study also examined the perceptions of superintendents, directors of special education, assistant directors and/or program coordinators, and elementary principals in relationship to the impact the IREAD-3 assessment had on their respective district/school.

Sample

The population for this study was drawn from all 92 counties in Indiana. This included all 296 school corporations, 67 special education cooperatives and individual public school corporations, not including charter schools, who provide an education to third graders. Participants for this study were superintendents, directors of special education, assistant directors and/or program coordinators, and elementary principals working with public elementary schools in Indiana. Charter schools in Indiana are not required to submit their web address to the Indiana Department of Education, therefore, the researcher decided to remove charter schools from the survey. The researcher used the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) website, the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE), and the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP) to obtain potential participants. The researcher found the updated superintendent list on the 2014-2015 Indiana School Directory. The directors of special education, assistant directors, and/or program coordinators were located online on the Indiana IEP Resource Center (IEPRC). The IEPRC, with assistance from Indiana Council of

Administrators of Special Education (ICASE), designs and develops a directory for Indiana's Special Education Administrators; this list was updated in February 2015. The researcher, to attain the names and email addresses of elementary school principals in Indiana, contacted Dr. Todd Bess, Executive Director of IASP. Dr. Bess directed the researcher to the second tab on the 2014-2015 Indiana School Directory that had been updated by the IDOE in January 2015. The researcher used a census study design to focus on a population of interest specifically targeted at superintendents, directors of special education, assistant directors, and/or program coordinators, and elementary school principals in the state of Indiana. The study design was developed to include the entire state of Indiana.

The first stage involved identifying public school superintendents in the state of Indiana by utilizing the 2014-2015 Indiana School Directory that had been updated by the IDOE in January of 2015 and is located on the IDOE website. The researcher needed to identify all school corporations that fell under each specific superintendent. Each school corporation in the state of Indiana typically has one superintendent.

The second stage involved identifying the directors of special education, assistant directors, and/or program coordinators associated with each public school superintendent. The researcher utilized Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE) to obtain participants and align them to their respective superintendent.

The third stage involved the researcher identifying the elementary school principals who are associated with each superintendent and respective school corporation. The researcher contacted both Dr. Todd Bess, the Executive Director of the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP), and the IDOE data center to obtain this information. The 2014-2015 Indiana School Directory contains all elementary, middle, and high schools in the state of Indiana. The

researcher used the filter system in excel to separate the schools that contain third grade students from other schools. The total number of schools in the state of Indiana that contain third grade students that were surveyed was 985. Three schools in Indiana were excluded from this study, including Indianapolis Public Schools, Fort Wayne Community Schools, and Vigo School corporation, due to either a conflict of interest or their inability to participate during the eight-week survey window. The total number of schools surveyed was 871.

Sampling Method

Participants were selected using a census survey method which is considered descriptive research. In a census survey, the researcher is attempting to acquire information from every member of the population (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of the census survey was to acquire information from every member of a population. “Census surveys are usually conducted when a population is relatively small and readily accessible” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 184). Surveys generally involve either questionnaires or interviews. The researcher chose to create an online questionnaire that was emailed to superintendents, directors of special education, assistant directors and/or program coordinators, and elementary principals working with public elementary schools in Indiana.

Good survey questions are both reliable and valid and maximize the relationship between the answers recorded and what the researcher is trying to measure (Fowler, 2014; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). In this survey, the researcher wanted to gain an understanding of the knowledge and perceptions of Indiana Superintendents, Special Education Administrators, and Elementary Principals in relationship to the effectiveness of the IREAD-3 assessment and third grade retention.

Research Design

This study was a quantitative study that included four open-ended questions which provided the researcher qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). The following are advantages to open-ended questions: allow the researcher to obtain answers that were unanticipated, they closely describe the real views of the respondents, and respondents like the opportunity to answer questions in their own words (Fowler, 2014). The first open-ended question explored the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning the belief that there are significant differences in reading instructional practices that have impacted your district/school as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. The second open-ended question explored the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment. The third open-ended question explored the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning gender differences and retention. The fourth open-ended question explored the perceptions of superintendents, special education administration, and principals concerning minority differences and retention. Even though this research study collected both quantitative and qualitative data, it is not by definition a mixed methods design. Creswell believes the mixed methods approach to research is a distinct type of research that bridges quantitative and qualitative research (Gay et al., 2012). Gay, Mills, and Airsian define mixed methods research as a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches by including both types of data in a single study. “The purpose of mixed methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods” (Gay et al., 2012, p. 483). The design included forced choice survey questions with data interpreted through descriptive and inferential

statistical data analysis (parametric and non-parametric) and four open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were added to the research design to provide a level of knowledge related to the perceptions of the impact the IREAD-3 assessment had on school districts in the state of Indiana.

Closed-answered questions give the respondent a fixed list of possible answers that make the question clearer to the respondent. Many surveys have a few open-ended questions that are connected to the closed-answered questions and provide the researcher additional information. When the research study contains one or more open-ended questions, it allows the respondent a forum to add additional information, comments, or opinions that pertain to reading instruction, reading assessments, and retention (Rea & Parker, 2014). Open-ended questions also allowed the study to have explanatory power in addition to implications for practice (Connelly, 2013). The majority of this study was quantitative and measured perceptions of knowledge around the IREAD-3 assessment; open-ended questions with a less measurable quality allowed participants to provide insights on the impact the IREAD-3 assessment has had on retention of specific sub-groups (Gelo, Braakman, & Benetka, 2008).

Instrumentation

A survey was designed in Ball State University Qualtrics. A survey research design was determined to be the best model to conduct this study (Creswell, 2013). The development of the survey instrument utilized key information and skills found in the literature review. The survey instrument utilized key information on reading instructional practices and retention information and was guided by the literature concerning early literacy, the IDOE IREAD-3 assessment, and grade level retention. The survey questions involved structured questions and utilized the Likert Scale. Structured questions are also called closed-ended items and require the respondent to

choose among the provided responses. The survey also included four open-ended questions that provided the researcher a chance to gain a deeper understanding into the issues surrounding IREAD-3 concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment, gender differences and retention, and minority differences and retention (Gay et al., 2012; Rea & Parker, 2014). The information gathered from this research study is important as the state of Indiana is undergoing multiple changes to their assessments. The information will also provide school administration additional information on the impact the IREAD-3 assessment has had on schools across the state of Indiana.

This researcher used Qualtrics, a software system that Ball State University utilizes, for the development, delivery, and management of survey research. The survey was disseminated electronically via email to study participants with a website link to the survey embedded in the email. The URL allowed the participants access to the survey in [BSU.Qualtrics.com](https://www.bsuc.edu/qualtrics). The survey obtained demographic information and incorporated different types of questions: Likert-type scale design, yes/no/do not know questions, and open-ended response. The survey was designed by the researcher with expert panel review/suggestions and pilot testing prior to implementation of the research study. Two of the panel members offered suggestions on clarifying the definitions in the key terms section. Demographic data collected allowed the researcher to make comparisons between different subgroups. “Survey research involves collecting data to test hypotheses or to answer questions about people’s opinions on some topic or issue” (Gay et al., 2012, p. 183).

The majority of this study was quantitative with the survey questionnaire design to measure knowledge and perceptions of IREAD-3 assessment, instructional practices, and perceptions of gender and minority retention data. The open-ended questions allowed

participants to provide general perceptions of the impact of IREAD-3, gender differences and retention, and minority differences and retention (Gelo, Braakman, & Benetka, 2008).

The quantitative portion of the research allowed for examining the relationship differences among the variables. The variables were measured so the data can be analyzed utilizing statistical procedures. The qualitative portion of the research provided a means to understand the perceptions of public school superintendents, special education administration, and elementary school principals. This survey research sampled all superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals in Indiana (Creswell, 2013). It should be noted that charter schools were not included in this study due to the inability to gather up-to-date information concerning superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals.

There were two independent variables in this study. The primary independent variable was the position the respondent has in their district, and the secondary independent variable was the demographics of the district. The dependent variables were differences in knowledge levels and the perceptions of superintendents, special education directors, and elementary school principals in relationship to the impact of IREAD-3, gender differences and retention, and minority differences and retention. Dependent variables depend on the independent variables; these are the outcomes that influence the independent variables (Creswell, 2013).

Survey Structure

The structure of this survey encouraged the respondent to respond to either the forced answer type questions or the Likert-type question. Questions in this survey are in an order that increases the likelihood the respondent will answer and not overlook a question. The electronic survey mode the researcher utilized increased the rate of return versus a survey that requires the

respondent to return the survey via the mail (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). Of the 1330 surveys the researcher emailed to respondents, 405 (30.5%) surveys were completed.

Section I. The first section of the survey contained information about the survey. Its focus was to gain insight into the perceptions of public school superintendents, special education administration, and elementary principals in relationship to the impact the IREAD-3 assessment had on their respective district.

Section II. The second section of the survey obtained demographics. It asked questions regarding gender, age, and current position. In addition, the survey asked questions about educational attainment, years in current position, and years with current employer. Questions also addressed years in the field of education, description of the special education cooperative, and size of the cooperative or corporation.

Section III. The third section of the survey contained key terms relevant to this study, which pertain to reading instruction, reading assessments, and retention.

Section IV. The fourth section of this survey were level of knowledge questions pertaining to the IREAD-3 assessment, effective reading instruction, federal and state of Indiana accountability around assessments, and the Reading First Initiative. The intent of this section of the survey was to investigate the knowledge of effective reading instruction, the IREAD-3 assessment, federal and state of Indiana accountability measures, and the Reading First Initiative by superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals. Participants were asked to rate their knowledge of the above mentioned categories by indicating 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree, and 5 = no knowledge.

Section V. The fifth section of the survey was designed to obtain the beliefs of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals in the state

of Indiana concerning the IREAD-3 assessment, federal and state of Indiana accountability around assessments, reading instruction, and gender and minority differences in retention. Participants were asked to rate their beliefs concerning the effectiveness of the IREAD-3 assessment, federal and state of Indiana accountability around assessments, reading instruction, and gender and minority differences in retention by indicating 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree, and 5 = no knowledge.

Section VI. The sixth section of this survey was designed to ask clarifying questions concerning current reading instructional practices that were being used in the district/school of the survey participant. The participant was asked to respond to both yes/no/do not know questions and Likert-type scale questions that pertained to early literacy development. Questions included in this section focused on phonics instruction, whole language instruction, and balanced literacy instruction and the impact the instruction has had on students based on gender or racial differences.

Section VII. The seventh section of this survey was designed to explore the perceptions of the superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals in the state Indiana on the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment and the difference in retention based on gender or race. This section contained four open-ended questions that allowed the survey participant to comment on the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment and if the assessment showed differences in retention levels among genders or minorities. These questions provided the researcher with supplemental data.

Survey Development and Review

Jury Panel. This survey instrument was disseminated to a jury panel of state and national subject matter experts in transition services and programs to obtain feedback on its face and

construct validity. Included in the jury panel was (1) national level expert in the field of phonics instruction and five (5) state level experts in the field of reading instruction, reading assessments, and retention based on assessment data. Each jury panel member was asked to review and provide feedback on the formatting, question design, and overall usefulness. Their feedback was used as a reference to guide the researcher in any redesign and/or revision of the survey instrument. Their feedback caused the researcher to clarify a few of the survey questions.

Pilot Testing. The survey instrument was piloted to test for content validity and consistency as well as readability, user-friendliness, and to obtain an average time for completion. The pilot study provided the researcher with a small scale trial run. A pilot study can greatly increase the likelihood of success in the main study (Simon, 2011). Participants were asked to provide comments on the ease of use of the survey and any suggestions for improvement of the survey. The data provided from the pilot testing assisted in obtaining insight to the use of the electronic system, any technology barriers, and the time commitment needed to complete the survey. Feedback included suggestions on wording in the survey to add clarity. The suggestions resulted in minor editing of the survey instrument. There were no flaws found in the collection, delivery, or statistical analysis process. The pilot data was not used for the dissertation research study.

Survey Procedures

An electronic survey format, Qualtrics 23.0, provided by Ball State University was used for the design, distribution, and collection of the survey data. The Qualtrics 23.0 program created a link that was e-mailed to potential participants. The Qualtrics 23.0 program had a letter of informed consent per IRB and electronic agreement for participation before opening the survey.

If the participant marked yes, then the participant was allowed to take survey. If the participant marked no, he/she was thanked for his/her time and then exited the program.

The researcher made contact with all superintendents in the state of Indiana by electronic e-mail on September 11th, 2015. The researcher sent an electronic invitation that described the identity of the researcher, explained the study, asked if they were willing to participate, and gave them the link in order to make an informed decision about participating in the survey. After the initial e-mail, if the researcher had not heard from the superintendent, then the researcher sent four reminder emails.

In the second step, the researcher made contact with directors of special education, assistant directors, and program coordinators by electronic e-mail. The electronic invitation explained the identity of the researcher, explained the study, asked if they were willing to participate, and gave them the link in order to make an informed decision about participating in the survey. If after the initial e-mail, the researcher had not heard from the directors of special education within three days, then the researcher sent a reminder email. The researcher waited two additional days; if there was no response, a telephone call was made. If no contact had been made after three attempts, the director of special education, assistant director, and program coordinators were respectively crossed off the list.

As the third step, the researcher made contact with the elementary school principals by email. The electronic invitation described the identity of the researcher, explained the study, asked if they were willing to participate, and gave them the link in order to make an informed decision about participating in the survey. If after the initial e-mail, the researcher had not heard from the elementary school principals within three days, then the researcher sent a reminder email. The researcher waited two additional days; if there was no response, a telephone call was

made. If no contact had been made after three attempts, the elementary school principal was crossed off the list.

Analysis

Data Analysis

Responses to survey questions concerning reading instruction, federal and state laws, retention practices, and assessments were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Program for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 23.0, 2015), a statistical computer software program was used for all data analysis. First, descriptive statistics were used to measure and describe demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, years of experience, employment role, employment setting). Descriptive statistics included the frequency of responses, means of response groups, and the standard deviation of responses. Three questions involved interval responses (a) What is your age, (b) How many years have you been at your current position, and (c) How many years of experience do you have working in the field of education? All of the other response items had a single choice and a distinct coded value. A table displayed the *N* (frequency) and the percentages (proportionate ratio of the number within each group by category). The independent and dependent variables were presented and outlined to provide insight into the analysis process.

Independent Variables. An independent variable is thought to be the cause of some effect. It denotes a variable that the experimenter has manipulated (Field, 2009). The independent variables in this study are first the positions (a) superintendents, (b) directors of special education, (c) elementary principals; and second, the demographics of the respondents.

Dependent Variables. The dependent variable is thought to be affected by changes in an independent variable (Field, 2009). The dependent variables in this study were the differences in the perceptions of superintendents, special education directors, and elementary school principals

in relationship to their knowledge/understanding of the impact of IREAD-3, gender differences and retention, and minority differences and retention.

Descriptive Statistics. Descriptive statistics measurements of central tendency calculated were the mean and standard deviation. The mean was used because it is the measure that considered all scores and was the most stable measure. The mean provides a foundation for further evaluation using inferential statistics that may be limited when using other measures of central tendency (Welkowitz, Cohen, & Ewen, 2006). The standard deviation of responses was calculated. This served two purposes (a) to display any variability of responses, and (b) to provide information for using inferential statistical analysis. The standard deviation was useful due to its relationship to the normal distribution (McMillan, 1996).

Internal Consistency. To determine internal consistency as a measure of reliability for the survey instrument items, Cronbach's alpha (α) was used. Levels (α) at or above ≥ 0.60 are appropriate for research purposes (Institute for Digital Research and Education, n.d.). The survey items related to respondents' Knowledge (Q.14-18) had a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.846 and items related to Beliefs (Q. 19-22) had Cronbach's alpha of 0.847. The set of questions concerning usage of reading approaches included: (a) Phonics (Q. 27) with Cronbach's alpha of 0.978; (b) Whole Language (Q. 31) with Cronbach's alpha of 0.974; and (c) Balanced Literacy (Q. 35) with Cronbach's alpha of 0.990. The final section of the survey with questions related to IREAD-3 (Q. 37) had a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.942. These indicate acceptable levels of internal consistency.

Summary

The study used a state-based population and census sample design focused on public school superintendents, directors of special education, assistant directors, and program

coordinators, and elementary school principals in the state of Indiana. The survey was designed by the researcher and presented in electronic form (BSU Qualtrics) for distribution and data collection. The analytic plan included IBM Statistical Program for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 23.0), a statistical computer software program used for all data analysis in this study. SPSS is a statistical package used for statistical analysis data. Although the majority of the study was quantitative, there was one open-ended question. First, descriptive statistics were used to measure and describe demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, and years of experience, employment role, and employment setting). Descriptive statistics included the frequency of responses, means of response groups, and the standard deviations of responses. Three questions involved interval responses (a) What is your age, (b) How many years have you been at your current position, and (c) How many years of experience do you have working in the field of education? All of the other response items had a single choice and a distinct coded value. A table displayed the *N* (frequency) and the percentages (proportionate ratio of the number within each group by category).

The measure of central tendency was both the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). The mean was used because it is the measure that considered all scores and was the most stable measure. The mean also provided a foundation for further evaluation using inferential statistics that may be limited when using other measures of central tendency (Welkowitz, Cohen, & Ewen, 2006). The standard deviation of responses was also calculated. This served two purposes (a) to display any variability of responses, and (b) to provide information for using inferential statistical analysis. The standard deviation was useful due to its relationship to the normal distribution (McMillan, 1996). Cohen's *F* was also calculated due to the difference in response rates between populations.

The analysis of the study data was completed using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences 23.0 (SPSS, 2015) an IBM statistical software program. The findings reported as descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The inferential statistics were reported for respondents based on three groups: (1) superintendents, (2) special education administration, and (3) elementary principals. The inferential statistics were parametric, which included one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc Tamhane test. The ANOVA test must meet four basic assumptions: (1) normally distributed data, (2) homogeneity of variance, (3) interval data, and (4) independence (Field, 2009). Due to unequal variance, the researcher reported ANOVA with a Welch *F-statistic* (Field, 2009). The Levene's test was problematic due to unequal variance. As a result of the unequal variance, the researcher used the Welch F and the post-hoc Tamhane test was conducted. (Welkowitz et al., 2006). Tamhane's T2 test was then performed on the results of the Welch test to determine which groups had significant differences between them. The Tamhane T2 test, designed for unequal variances, was the best choice because it controls the confidence level (Tamhane, 1979). The study was exploratory and used census sampling. Self-selection of respondents accounts for randomization.

The data analysis design was organized and developed to answer eight research questions. The survey questions sought to capture the knowledge and perceptions of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals in the state of Indiana concerning the IREAD-3 assessment, effective reading instructional practices, and retention differences based on gender and ethnic background.

Chapter 4 - Results

Summary of the Study

The importance of reading at the third grade has been researched and well documented as a fundamental predictor for later academic success. This chapter presents the findings from the data collected through BSU Qualtrics survey software. This researcher of this study sought to investigate the knowledge and perceptions of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary principals around the IREAD-3 assessment, reading instruction, and differences in retention based on ethnicity and gender. The research was conducted in the state of Indiana. This research is likely one of the initial studies completed that investigates the knowledge and perceptions of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary principals around the IREAD-3 assessment. The analysis of the study data was completed using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences 23.0 (SPSS, 2015), an IBM statistical software program.

The findings reported as descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The inferential statistics are reported for respondents based on three groups (1) superintendents, (2) special education administration, and (3) elementary principals. The inferential statistics were parametric which included one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc Tamhane T2 test. The ANOVA test must meet four basic assumptions: (1) normally distributed data, (2) homogeneity of variance, (3) interval data, and (4) independence (Field, 2009). Due to unequal variance, the researcher reported the Welch *F*-*statistic* and the post-hoc Tamhane T2 test was conducted. The Levene's test was problematic due to unequal variance; unequal sample sizes included a higher number of elementary school principal responses and a smaller number of administrators in special education and

superintendent responses. Tamhane's T2 test was then performed on the results of the Welch F test to determine which groups had significant differences between them. Tamhane T2 test, designed for unequal variances, was the best choice because it controls the confidence level (Tamhane, 1979; Welkowitz et al., 2006). The study was exploratory and used census sampling. Self-selection of respondents accounts for randomization.

Internal data was tested by utilizing a five-point Likert scale reported for inferential statistics per explanation below. Inferential statistics are used to draw inferences about numerical quantities concerning populations. Questions 14-18, 19-22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, and 37 were answered using the Likert scale. Likert scale questions provide order to the categories even though the intervals are not precise. The lowest point on the scale (1) was classified as strongly disagree (0-25%). The second point on the scale (2) was classified as disagree (26-50%). The next point on the scale (3) was classified as agree (51-75%). The highest point on the scale (4) indicated strongly agree (76-100%). The fifth point on the scale was (5) do not know. The survey questions where respondents indicated "Do Not Know" were accounted for as descriptive data. The item responses "Do Not Know" were recoded as system missing by SPSS for the purposes of statistical analysis. Thus, the number five rating was eliminated for the reporting of statistical analysis for Likert-type scale items (e.g., *M*, *SD*, ANOVA) for the subsequent sections reported below.

Participants and Demographic Characteristics

Two hundred, eighty-four superintendents were sent letters and invited to participate in the survey; 105 (36.8%) superintendents agreed to participate in the survey or opt out. One hundred, seventy-five special education administrators were sent letters and invited to participate in the survey; 62 (35.4%) special education administrators participated in the survey. In addition,

a total of 871 elementary principals were sent letters and invited to participate in the survey; 238 (27.3%) elementary principals agreed to participate in the survey. The sampling procedure yielded 1,330 potential study participants who were sent invitations to participate via e-mail that included a survey link. There were a total of 460 (34.6%) partial responses received. All returned surveys with incomplete responses ($n = 55$) were removed from the data set. The remaining 405 surveys were used for analysis and gave a 30.5% return rate. The final sample of usable surveys included responses from (a) 105 superintendents, (b) 62 special education administrators, and (c) 238 elementary school principals in the state of Indiana. This resulted in 405 usable responses. As indicated in Table 1, the study had a 30.5% average return rate. The highest response rate was among superintendents (36.8%). Due to the large sample size of elementary school principals, they represented more than half of the 405 usable responses. Surveys received from the superintendents accounted for 25.9% (105 of 405) of usable responses, special education administrators accounted for 15.3% (62 of 405), and elementary school principals accounted for 58.8% (238 of 405).

Table 1

Return Rates for Superintendents, Special Education Administrators, and Elementary School Principals

Participation Classification	Number Sent	Number Returned	Return Rate
Superintendents	284	105	36.8%
Special Education Administrators	175	62	35.4%
Elementary School Principals	871	238	27.3%
Total	1330	405	30.50%

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category.

The findings of this study were viewed as exploratory due to the onset of the IREAD-3 assessment in the 2012-13 school year. The return rate from superintendents was the highest at 37%, special education administrators had the second highest return rate at 35%, and elementary school principals had the lowest return rate at 27%.

Demographics

The first 10 questions of the survey (Section II) were designed to collect demographic data from all of the respondents. Table 2 below reports the demographic characteristics of respondents in this study. Two hundred and thirty-six of the respondents were female (58.3%). Females accounted for most of the respondents in the following two categories: special education administration (88.7%) and elementary school principals (63%). Males accounted for the majority of the respondents (71.5%) in the superintendent category. The most common age range of participants was 41-50 (37%). Elementary school principals represented 60.7% of the population in this age group; Special Education Administrators represented 13.3% of this age group. A little more than half of the respondents (54.8%) had a MA/MS degree. Elementary School Principals represented 81.1% of the respondents who had an MA/MS degree. Superintendents were more likely to have either an Educational Specialist degree (46.7%) or a Doctoral Ed.D/Ph.D degree (48.6%). The majority of the respondents in all three categories (35.8%) had been in their current position between three to five years. Superintendents, Special Education Administrators, and Elementary School Principals (60.6%) had been in the field of education for more than 20 years. The majority of respondents taught in a rural area (52.7%) and most (52.8%) described the size of their cooperative as medium (1,000-4,999 students). Two of the schools that reside within the 12 metropolitan areas in Indiana were unable to be included in this survey due to a block in external emails and a conflict of interest.

Table 2

Demographics Reported by Position

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
	<i>Gender</i>							
Male	74	71.5	7	11.3	88	37.0	169	41.7
Female	31	29.5	55	88.7	150	63.0	236	58.3
Total	105	100	62	100	238	100	405	100
<i>Age</i>								
20-30	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
31-40	8	7.6	15	24.2	61	25.6	84	20.7
41-50	39	37.1	20	32.3	91	38.2	150	37.0
51-60	40	38.1	22	35.5	62	26.1	124	30.6
61 or older	18	17.1	5	8.1	24	10.1	47	11.6
Total	105	100	62	100	238	100	405	100
<i>Education Level</i>								
BA/BS	0	0.0	3	4.8	1	0.4	4	1.0
MA/MS	5	4.8	37	59.7	180	75.6	222	54.8
Ed.S.	49	46.7	12	19.4	30	12.6	91	22.5
PhD/EdD	51	48.6	10	16.1	27	11.3	88	21.7
Total	105	100	62	100	238	100	405	100
<i>Years in Current Position</i>								
less than a year	1	1.0	2	3.2	8	3.4	11	2.7
1-2 years	17	16.2	7	11.3	20	8.4	44	10.9
3-5 years	47	44.8	21	33.9	77	32.4	145	35.8
6-10 years	27	25.7	14	22.6	64	26.9	105	25.9
11-15 years	7	6.7	11	17.7	37	15.5	55	13.6
16-20 years	4	3.8	4	6.5	21	8.8	29	7.2
more than 20 years	2	1.9	3	4.8	11	4.6	16	4
Total	105	100	62	100	238	100	405	100
<i>Years in Current Corporation/Cooperative</i>								
less than a year	3	2.9	1	1.6	1	0.4	5	1.2
1-5 years	33	31.4	7	11.3	42	17.6	82	20.2
6-10 years	19	18.1	19	30.6	41	17.2	79	19.5
11-15 years	20	19.0	15	24.2	59	24.8	94	23.2

16-20 years	8	7.6	6	9.7	39	16.4	53	13.1
more than years	22	21.0	14	22.6	56	23.5	92	22.7
Total	105	100	62	100	238	100	405	100
<i>Years in Education</i>								
less than a year	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
1-5 years	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
6-10 years	0	0.0	2	3.2	7	2.9	9	2.2
11-15 years	10	9.6	11	17.7	42	17.6	63	15.6
16-20 years	18	17.3	9	14.5	60	25.2	87	21.5
20 or more years	76	73.1	40	64.5	129	54.2	245	60.6
Total	104	100	62	100	238	100	404	100
<i>Educational Setting</i>								
Urban	9	8.6	12	19.4	56	23.8	77	19.2
Suburban	25	23.8	17	27.4	59	25.1	101	25.1
Metropolitan	5	4.8	0	0	7	3.0	12	3.0
Rural	66	62.9	33	53.2	113	48.1	212	52.7
Total	105	100	62	100	235	100	402	100
<i>Size of Cooperation/Cooperative</i>								
Large 10,000+	6	5.7	4	6.5	51	21.4	61	15.1
Medium-Large 5,000-9,999	13	12.4	18	29.0	53	22.3	84	20.7
Medium 1,000- 4,999	72	68.6	35	56.5	107	45.0	214	52.8
Small less than 1,000	14	13.3	5	8.1	27	11.3	46	11.4
Total	105	100	62	100	238	100	405	100

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category.

The respondents were asked to describe their administrator role in relationship to decisions regarding curriculum. Some school districts have a specific curriculum or scope and sequence that schools are required to use, while other school districts permit their building principal to determine what reading curriculum best fits the needs of their students. Table 3 indicates that elementary school principals directly oversee decisions concerning reading instruction at their building (71%); superintendents mainly delegate reading curriculum decision-

making (73%), whereas special education administrators (79%) are not directly involved in this process.

Table 3

How would you describe your administrator role in relationship to decisions regarding curriculum?

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
I directly oversee curriculum decisions concerning reading instruction	24	22.9	4	6.5	169	71.3	197	48.8
I delegate curriculum decisions concerning reading instruction to others	77	73.3	9	14.5	44	18.6	130	32.2
I am not directly involved in curriculum decisions regarding reading	4	3.8	49	79.0	24	10.1	77	19.1
Total	105	100.0	62	100.0	237	100.0	404	100.0

Note. Percentages reported by category.

Respondents were asked to describe their administrator role in relationship to decisions concerning grade level retention. If students do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts, without a good cause exemption, the IDOE requires them to be registered at the state as a third grade student for an additional year. Schools may determine if they want to permit that student to be socially promoted to a 4th grade classroom or remain in a third grade classroom for an additional year. Table 4 indicates that elementary school principals primarily oversee the retention of a student (97.4%). In addition, superintendents (75.2%) delegate the responsibility to retain students who do not pass oversee the IREAD-3 assessment to other administrators in our

district/school whereas a little less than half of the administrators in special education (43.5%) are not directly involved in this process.

Table 4

How would you describe your administrator role in relationship to grade level retention?

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
I directly oversee the retention of students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment	14	13.3	14	22.6	229	97.4	257	63.9
I delegate the responsibility to retain students who do not pass oversee the IREAD-3 assessment to other administrators in our district/school	79	75.2	21	33.9	2	0.9	102	25.4
The decision to retain a student who does not pass the IREAD-3 assessment is not one of my responsibilities	12	11.4	27	43.5	4	9.3	77	19.1
Total	105	100.0	62	100.0	235	100.0	402	100.0

Note. Percentages reported by category.

Respondents were asked who is in charge of the determining the reading curriculum in their district/school. Superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals all had a variety of responses. The respondents were able to choose from the following: superintendents, assistant/associate superintendent, director of curriculum and instruction, elementary curriculum coordinator, title I coordinator, elementary school principal, lead teacher, or other. Table 5 reports the director of curriculum and instruction ($N=155$) was the most common response (38.3%), elementary school principals ($N= 96$) received the second highest response (23.7%), and assistant/associate superintendent ($N=88$) received the third highest response rate (21.7%).

Table 5

Who is in charge of the reading curriculum in your district/school?

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Superintendent	10	9.5	1	1.6	4	1.7	15	3.7
Assistant/Associate Superintendent	29	27.6	13	21.0	46	19.3	88	21.7
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	25	23.8	28	45.2	102	42.9	155	38.3
Elementary Curriculum Coordinator	0	0.0	5	8.1	20	8.4	25	6.2
Title I Coordinator	4	3.8	3	4.8	0	0.0	7	1.7
Elementary Principal	32	30.5	9	14.5	55	23.1	96	23.7
Lead Teacher	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.3	3	0.7
Other	5	4.8	3	4.8	8	3.4	16	4.0
Total	105	100.0	62	100.0	238	100.0	405	100.0

Note. Percentages reported by category.

Research Questions

The findings of the research questions for this investigation (outlined in Chapter 1) are presented below. The quantitative portion of the survey answered the first five research questions. Analysis was conducted on respondent groups' perceptions of their knowledge concerning the IREAD-3 assessment, the effectiveness of the IREAD-3 assessment, effective reading instructional practices, and differences of the level of impact retention has based on a

Knowledge of...

the IREAD-3 assessment	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and total for “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 7 presents the perceptions of knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment and the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on the IREAD-3. Respondents agreed ($M = 3.10 - 3.72$) that they have comprehensive knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 29.53$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$) for respondents on this question. The Tamhane 2 post hoc test found that elementary school principals had a higher rating compared to superintendents (.446) and higher rating compared to administrators in special education (.613) concerning their comprehensive knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment ($p < .05$). The effect size (.43) was large. Respondents agreed ($M = 3.07-3.52$) that they have comprehensive knowledge of the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on the IREAD-3 assessment. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 18.15$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$) for respondents on this question. The Tamhane 2 post hoc test found that elementary school principals had a higher rating compared than superintendents (.411) and higher rating compared to administrators in special education (.455) concerning their comprehensive knowledge of the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3 ($p < .05$). The effect size (.32) was large.

Table 7

Perceptions of knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment and the standards that are assessed on the IREAD-3 assessment by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>Welch F</i>	<i>Cohen's f</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
<i>I have comprehensive knowledge of...</i>																
the IREAD-3 assessment	100	3.27	0.66	58	3.10	0.81	222	3.72	0.48	380	3.51	0.64	2	119.58	29.53***	0.43
the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3	99	3.11	0.71	59	3.07	0.72	224	3.52	0.64	382	3.35	0.70	2	135.62	18.15***	0.32

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

accountability as mandated by NCLB Act of 2001	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.3
state of Indiana Public Law 109 which requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.9	2	0.5
the impact of assessments in the state of Indiana on AYP, teacher evaluations, and the overall A-F school rating	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and total for “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 9 presents the perceptions of knowledge of the following: accountability as mandated by NCLB Act of 2001, state of Indiana Public Law 109, which requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students, and the impact of assessments in the state of Indiana on AYP/teacher evaluations/overall A-F school rating. Respondents agreed or tended to strongly agree ($M = 3.48 - 3.59$) that they all had comprehensive knowledge of the accountability as mandated by NCLB Act of 2001, There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 1.22$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$) among respondents. Respondents agreed or strongly agreed ($M = 3.32 - 3.61$) that they all have comprehensive knowledge of Public Law 109 which requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 3.50$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). Tamhane 2 post-hoc test (.291) found that superintendents had a higher rating, indicating more agreement that they had comprehensive knowledge of state of Indiana Public Law 109 which requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students, compared to administrators in special education ($p < .05$). The effect size (.15) was small. Respondents agreed or strongly agreed ($M = 3.45 - 3.60$) they have comprehensive knowledge of the impact assessments have on AYP, teacher evaluations, and the overall A-f school rating. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 2.36$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 9

Perceptions of knowledge of NCLB, Public Law 109, and the impact of assessments in the state of Indiana by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>Welch F</i>	<i>Cohen's f</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>
<i>I have comprehensive knowledge of...</i>																
accountability as mandated by NCLB Act of 2001	104	3.59	0.55	62	3.50	0.62	233	3.48	0.64	399	3.51	0.62	2	154.62	1.22	0.07
state of Indiana Public Law 109 which requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students	102	3.61	0.53	60	3.32	0.75	232	3.54	0.62	394	3.52	0.63	2	141.35	3.50*	0.15
the impact of assessments in the state of Indiana on AYP, teacher evaluations, and the overall A-F school rating	103	3.60	0.57	60	3.45	0.65	234	3.45	0.70	397	3.49	0.66	2	152.32	2.36	0.10

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey section IV, question 16 addressed the respondents' knowledge of local schools' district option to retain a student in third grade or socially promote the student to fourth grade, the IDOE requirement for a student who did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts (without a good cause exemption) must be registered as a third grader. The requirement for students who did not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts must retake the IREAD-3 assessment and retake the third grade ISTEP. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The "Do Not Know" responses were collected to provide the researcher with an overall perspective of the lack of knowledge concerning the implications of a student not passing the IREAD-3 assessment as a third grader in two attempts (without a good cause exemption). The lack of knowledge may require additional professional learning at the district/school level. Respondents all had good comprehensive knowledge of the following: district option to retain a student in third grade or socially promote the student to fourth grade, the IDOE requirement for a student who did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts (without a good cause exemption) must be registered as a third grader, and the requirement for students who did not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts must retake the IREAD-3 assessment and retake the third grade ISTEP. Only two special education administrators (3.3%) did not have comprehensive knowledge of the local school districts' choice to retain a third grade student or socially promote the student to fourth grade. Three elementary school principals (1.3%) and one superintendent (1.0%) did not have comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts must register as a third grader as reported in Table 10.

Table 10

“Do Not Know” responses concerning perceptions of knowledge of retention of a DNP third grader, registering the DNP third grade with the state, and DNP student requirements for the ISTEP+ assessment

<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses to Comprehensive Knowledge of...</i>	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
local schools districts' choice to retain a student in the third grade or socially promote the student to fourth grade	0	0.0	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	0.5
the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts (without a good cause exemption) must be registered with the state as a third grader	1	1.0	0	0.0	3	1.3	4	1.0
the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 assessment as a third grader. These students must retake the IREAD-3 assessment and retake the third grade ISTEP the following year.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and total for “Do Not Know” responses.

First, table 11 reports the perception of knowledge of the local school districts' choice to retain a student who does not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts or socially promote them to the fourth grade. Second, the table reports the perception of knowledge of the IDOE requirement concerning the no pass student being identified as a third grader. Third, the table reports the perception of knowledge concerning the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3. These students may have to retake the third grade ISTEP+ if they did not receive 4th grade instruction in all content areas. The respondents agreed or strongly agreed ($M = 3.49$ -

3.70) they have comprehensive knowledge of a school districts' choice to retain a student in third grade or socially promote them to fourth grade. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 2.46$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). The respondents tended to strongly agree ($M = 3.57 - 3.71$) they have comprehensive knowledge concerning the IDOE requirement that a student who does not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts must be registered as a third grader the following year. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 2.69$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents tended to strongly agree ($M = 3.52 - 3.63$) concerning the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts. These no pass students must retake ISTEP+ for grade 3 unless they receive the entire fourth grade curriculum. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 1.10$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 11

Perceptions of knowledge of retention of a “do not pass” IREAD-3 student, IDOE requirement for students who do not pass concerning registering with the state and the ISTEP+ assessment by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	Welch <i>F</i>	Cohen's <i>f</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
<i>I have comprehensive knowledge of...</i>																
local schools districts' choice to retain a student in the third grade or socially promote the student to fourth grade	105	3.66	0.53	59	3.49	0.65	235	3.70	0.58	399	3.66	0.58	2	140.68	2.46	0.12
the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts (without a good cause exemption) must be registered with the state as a third grader	104	3.58	0.57	61	3.57	0.59	233	3.71	0.58	398	3.66	0.58	2	147.66	2.69	0.12
the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 assessment as a third grader. These students must retake the IREAD-3 assessment an retake the third grade ISTEP the following year	105	3.54	0.69	61	3.52	0.50	236	3.63	0.66	402	3.59	0.65	2	163.04	1.10	0.07

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey section IV, question 17 addressed the respondents' knowledge of the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment and utilize an approved third grade-reading curriculum. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The "Do Not Know" responses were collected to provide the researcher with an overall perspective regarding retention and the IDOE requirements surrounding the IREAD-3 assessment. The lack of knowledge may require additional professional learning at the district/school level. Respondents all had good comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement to provide third grade reading instruction for student who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment and utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum. Only one Special Education Administrator (1.6%) did not have comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement to provide a third grade reading instruction again to a student who did not pass IREAD-3. Two administrators in special education (3.3%) and two elementary school principals (0.8%) did not have comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement to utilize an approved third grade-reading curriculum with third grade students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment. Table 12 indicates superintendents had comprehensive knowledge of both the IDOE requirement to provide third grade reading instruction and utilize an approved reading curriculum for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment.

Table 12

"Do Not Know" responses concerning perceptions of knowledge concerning the IDOE requirements for districts/schools for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment

	Administrators in Special Education	Elementary School Principals	Total
Superintendents			

<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses to Comprehensive Knowledge of...</i>	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction the following year for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment	0	0.0	1	1.6	0	0.0	1	0.2
the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum with students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment	0	0.0	2	3.3	2	0.8	4	1.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and total for “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 13 presents the perceptions of knowledge concerning the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction for students who do not pass the IREAD- 3 assessment and the use of an approved reading curriculum. Respondents agreed or strongly agreed ($M = 3.48 - 3.69$) they had comprehensive knowledge concerning the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction the following year for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 4.52$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$). Tamhane 2 post-hoc test (.220) found that elementary school principals had a higher rating, indicating more agreement that they had comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction the following year for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment, compared to administrators in special education ($p < .05$). The effect size (.15) was medium. Respondents tended to agree or strongly agree ($M = 3.41 - 3.65$) they had comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to use an approved third grade reading curriculum with students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 4.69$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$). Tamhane 2 post-hoc test (.240) found that elementary school

principals had a higher rating, indicating more agreement that they had comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum with students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment, compared to administrators in special education ($p < .05$). The effect size (.16) was medium.

Table 13

Perceptions of knowledge concerning the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction for students who do not pass the IREAD- 3 assessment and the use of an approved reading curriculum by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>Welch F</i>	<i>Cohen's f</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
<i>I have comprehensive knowledge of...</i>																
the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction the following year for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment	105	3.61	0.56	61	3.48	0.54	236	3.69	0.48	402	3.64	0.52	2	140.67	4.52**	0.15
the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum with students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment	105	3.53	0.59	59	3.41	0.59	235	3.65	0.52	399	3.58	0.56	2	137.20	4.69**	0.16

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey section IV, question 18 addressed the respondents' knowledge of the funding provided to states from the Reading First Grant (ensure all students read by grade three), the impact the grant had on the state of Indiana, and the reading research reports that are published in What Works Clearinghouse. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The "Do Not Know" responses were collected to provide the researcher the overall knowledge of respondents concerning the Reading First Grant. The lack of knowledge may require additional professional learning at the district/school level. Seventeen elementary school principals (7.2%) report to not have comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade. Twenty-one elementary school principals (8.9%) do not have comprehensive knowledge of the history of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004 compared with superintendents (6.7%) and administrators in special education (4.9%). Table 14 indicates that 20 elementary school principals (8.5%) also have the highest "Do Not Know" responses for item three concerning comprehensive knowledge of the research surrounding the Reading First Grant and the Reading First Initiative that has been published in multiple research reports and on What Works Clearinghouse. Administrators in special education had the lowest response on this item (4.9%) whereas superintendents (7.6%) responded with "Do Not Know".

Table 14

“Do Not Know” responses concerning perception of knowledge concerning the funding from the Reading First Grant, history of how the grant impacted the state of Indiana, and the research that is published in What Works Clearinghouse

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses to Comprehensive Knowledge of...</i>								
the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade	5	4.8	2	3.2	17	7.2	24	6.0
the history of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004	7	6.7	3	4.9	21	8.9	31	7.7
the research surrounding the Reading First Grant and the Reading First Initiative that has been published in multiple research reports and on What Works Clearinghouse	8	7.6	3	4.9	20	8.5	31	7.7

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 15 presents the perceptions of knowledge pertaining to the history of the Reading First Grant to ensure all students can read well by the end of third grade, how the grant impacted the state of Indiana, and the research reports that pertain to reading that are on the What Works Clearinghouse website. Respondents disagreed or slightly agreed ($M = 2.35 - 2.65$) that they have comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding to school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional

and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 4.37$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). The Tamhane 2 post-hoc test found that superintendents (.300) and elementary school principals (.292) had a higher rating, indicating more consistency they slightly agreed about having comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade in comparison to administrators in special education ($p < .05$). The effect size (.16) was small. Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.29 - 2.46$) that they had comprehensive knowledge of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = .92$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.31 - 2.41$) that they have comprehensive knowledge of the research surrounding the Reading First Grant and the Reading First Initiative that has been published in multiple research reports and on What Works Clearinghouse. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = .48$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 15

Perceptions of knowledge pertaining to the history of the Reading First Grant to ensure all students can read well by the end of third grade, how the grant impacted the state of Indiana, and the research reports that pertain to reading that are on the What Works Clearinghouse website by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			Welch F	Cohen's f		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD			df1	df2
<i>I have comprehensive knowledge of...</i>																
the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade	100	2.65	0.76	60	2.35	0.69	218	2.64	0.85	378	2.60	0.81	2	159.10	4.37*	0.13
the history of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004	98	2.46	0.78	58	2.29	0.73	215	2.41	0.84	371	2.40	0.80	2	149.16	0.92	0.07
the research surrounding the Reading First Grant and the Reading First Initiative that has been published in multiple research reports and on What Works Clearinghouse	97	2.41	0.77	58	2.31	0.71	216	2.41	0.85	371	2.40	0.81	2	150.80	0.48	0.05

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Research Question 2

Are there differences in the perceptions of the level of effectiveness of the IREAD-3 assessment among superintendents, special education administration, and principals?

Survey section V, question 19 addressed the respondents' beliefs concerning the positive impact of the following: NCLB on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment, Reading First Grant on reading instruction, research on the importance of phonics instruction on reading instruction, the IREAD-3 assessment has had on accountability related to reading instruction, and the IREAD-3 assessment has had on teacher's accountability to reading instruction. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The "Do Not Know" responses were collected to provide the researcher the overall beliefs of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals. Elementary school principals (10.3%) "Do Not Know" if they believe that NCLB has had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment. Forty-six superintendents (43.8%), 28 administrators in special education (46.7%), and 104 elementary school principals (43.7) answered "Do Not Know" to the portion of question 19 that addressed if the Reading First Grant has had a positive impact on reading instruction. Table 16 indicates that seven superintendent (6.7%) and four administrators in special education (6.6%) reported they "Do Not Know" that they believe the research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction. Administrators in special education (4.9%) and elementary school principals (1.3%) each had three respondents who "Do Not Know" if they believe the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school. Four administrators in special education

(6.6%) “Do Not Know” if they believe the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on teacher accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school.

Table 16

“Do Not Know” responses pertaining to beliefs concerning NCLB, Reading First Grant, research on phonics, and the impact of IREAD-3 on reading instruction and teacher accountability.

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses to I believe that...</i>								
NCLB has had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment	14	13.3	6	9.8	24	10.3	44	11.0
the Reading First Grant has had a positive impact on reading instruction	46	43.8	28	46.7	104	43.7	178	44.2
research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction	7	6.7	4	6.6	10	4.2	21	5.2
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school	2	1.9	3	4.9	3	1.3	8	2.0
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on teachers accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school	2	1.9	4	6.6	1	0.4	7	1.7

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 17 represent the beliefs of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals concerning the following: if NCLB had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment, if the Reading First Grant had a positive impact on reading instruction, research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction, the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction, and if the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on

teachers accountability related to reading instruction. Respondents tended to disagree ($M = 2.31 - 2.35$) they believed that NCLB has had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = .09$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Respondents tended to agree ($M = 2.78 - 2.86$) they believed the Reading First Grant has had a positive impact on reading instruction. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = .20$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Respondents agreed ($M = 3.26 - 3.37$) the research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 1.25$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Respondents disagreed or slightly agreed ($M = 2.34 - 2.47$) they believed the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = .45$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Respondents tended to disagree ($M = 2.24 - 2.40$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on teacher accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 1.11$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Table 17 below reports this data.

Table 17

Beliefs concerning NCLB, Reading First Grant, research on phonics, and the impact of IREAD-3 on reading instruction and teacher accountability by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			df1	df2	Welch F	Cohen's f
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD				
<i>I believe that...</i>																
NCLB has had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment	91	2.34	0.87	55	2.35	0.65	210	2.31	0.72	356	2.32	0.75	2	133.86	0.09	0.07
the Reading First Grant has had a positive impact on reading instruction	59	2.86	0.82	32	2.78	0.55	134	2.84	0.73	225	2.84	0.73	2	85.34	0.20	0.03
research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction	98	3.26	0.56	57	3.37	0.56	227	3.36	0.57	382	3.33	0.56	2	138.61	1.25	0.08
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school	103	2.34	0.97	58	2.47	0.86	235	2.43	0.79	396	2.41	0.85	2	134.59	0.45	0.05
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on teacher accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school	103	2.24	0.93	57	2.33	0.83	235	2.40	0.83	395	2.35	0.86	2	137.23	1.11	0.08

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

the IREAD-3 assessment impacted our district/school by providing valuable information concerning a students' reading level	3	0.9	4	6.6	1	0.4	8	2.0
the IREAD-3 assessment provided our district/school with data specific to a students' reading concerns	4	3.8	6	9.8	1	0.4	11	0.0
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact by providing our district/school information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3	2	1.9	6	9.8	3	1.3	11	2.8

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 19 reports the respondents’ beliefs concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment provided their district/school with data specific to a students’ reading level, students’ reading concerns, and if the IREAD-3 assessment had a positive impact by providing the district/school information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3. Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.13 - 2.49$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment provided valuable information concerning a students’ reading level. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 4.01$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). Tamhane 2 post-hoc test (.364) found that administrators in special education had a higher rating, indicating they collectively disagreed in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment impacted their district/school by providing valuable information concerning a students' reading level, compared to superintendents ($p < .05$). The effect size (.14) was small. Respondents tended to disagree ($M = 2.22 - 2.53$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment provided their district/school with data specific to a students’ reading concerns. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 3.33$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). Tamhane 2 post-hoc test (.307) found that administrators in special education had a higher rating, indicating they collectively disagreed in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment provided their district/school

with data specific to a students' reading concerns, compared to elementary school principals ($p < .05$). The effect size (.13) was small. Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.34 - 2.47$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on by providing their district/school information on areas of reading that can be improved upon in grade K-3. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 4.22$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). The Tamhane 2 post-hoc test found that administrators in special education had a higher rating compared to elementary school principals (.329) and superintendents (.321) indicating they collectively disagreed in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact by providing our district/school information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3 ($p < .05$). The effect size (.14) was small.

Table 19

Beliefs concerning information provided to a district/school on a students' reading level, a students' reading concerns, and reading instruction for grades K-3 that may need improved by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			df1	df2	Welch F	Cohen's f
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD				
<i>I believe that...</i>																
the IREAD-3 assessment impacted our district/school by providing valuable information concerning a students' reading level	102	2.13	0.82	57	2.49	0.78	234	2.21	0.78	393	2.23	0.80	2	138.46	4.01*	0.14
the IREAD-3 assessment provided our district/school with data specific to a students' reading concerns	101	2.30	0.79	55	2.53	0.79	236	2.22	0.81	392	2.28	0.81	2	135.60	3.33*	0.13
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact by providing our district/school information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3	102	2.21	0.81	55	2.53	0.77	232	2.20	0.80	389	2.25	0.80	2	136.47	4.22*	0.14

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey section V, question 21 addressed the respondents' beliefs concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in the district/school or negatively impacted retention in the district school. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The "Do Not Know" responses were collected to provide the researcher with the overall beliefs of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary principals concerning the positive or negative impact of the IREAD-3 assessment. Six administrators in special education (9.8%) and six elementary school principals (2.6%) "Do Not Know" if they believe that the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in their district/school by providing the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader. Table 20 indicates eight superintendents (7.8%), seven administrators in special education (11.5%), and 20 elementary school principals (8.7%) indicated they "Do Not Know" if they believe the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention in their district/school by requiring students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts to register as a third grader with the state of Indiana.

Table 20

"Do Not Know" responses concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment has positively or negatively impacted retention in a district/school

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses to I believe that...</i>								
the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in our district/school by providing us the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader	0	0.0	6	9.8	6	2.6	12	3.0

the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention in our district/school by requiring students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts to register as a third grader with the state of Indiana	8	7.8	7	11.5	20	8.7	35	8.9
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Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 21 reports the respondents’ beliefs if the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in their district school by providing us the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader and if the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention by requiring students who did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts to register as a third grader. Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.05 - 2.08$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment had positively impacted retention in their district/school by providing the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.04$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 2.74 - 3.04$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention in their district/school by requiring students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts register as a third grader again with the state of Indiana. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 2.99$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Table 21 below reports this data.

Table 21

Beliefs concerning the positive and negative impact on retention based on the IREAD-3 assessment by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>Welch F</i>	<i>Cohen's f</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>
<i>I believe that... the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in our district/school by providing us the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader</i>	104	2.08	0.78	55	2.05	0.68	225	2.05	0.74	384	2.06	0.74	2	140.00	0.04	0.01
<i>the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention in our district/school by requiring students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts to register as a third grader with the state of Indiana</i>	95	2.82	0.83	54	3.04	0.75	211	2.74	0.90	360	2.81	0.86	2	141.46	2.99	0.06

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey section V, question 22 addressed the respondents' beliefs concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment identified gender or racial differences in retention. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The "Do Not Know" responses were collected to provide the researcher with the overall beliefs of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary principals concerning gender or racial differences in retention. Table 22 reports that 17 superintendents (16.5%), 20 administrators in special education (32.8%) and 31 elementary school principals (13.4%) "Do Not Know" if they believe that the IREAD-3 assessment has identified gender differences in retention in their district/school. Twenty-one administrators (34.4%) in special education indicate they "Do Not Know" if they believe that the IREAD-3 assessment has identified racial differences in retention in our district/school.

Table 22

"Do Not Know" responses concerning beliefs around gender or racial differences as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
the IREAD-3 assessment has identified gender differences in retention in our district/school	17	16.5	20	32.8	31	13.4	68	17.2
the IREAD-3 assessment has identified racial differences in retention in our district/school	17	16.5	21	34.4	30	12.8	68	17.1

Note. Percentages reported by category and "Do Not Know" responses.

Table 23 reports the respondents' beliefs if the IREAD-3 assessment has identified either gender and/or racial differences in their district/school. Respondents disagreed ($M = 1.83 - 1.88$)

in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment had identified gender differences in retention in their district/school. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.13$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Respondents also tended to disagree ($M = 1.87 - 1.89$) in the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment had identified racial differences in retention in their district/school. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.02$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 23

Beliefs the IREAD-3 assessment had identified either gender and/or racial differences in their district/school by position

	Superintendents			Special Education Administrators			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>Welch F</i>	<i>Cohen's f</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>
<i>I believe that...</i>																
the IREAD-3 assessment has identified gender differences in retention in our district/school	86	1.88	0.69	41	1.83	0.59	201	1.85	0.63	328	1.85	0.64	2	102.98	0.13	0.03
the IREAD-3 assessment has identified racial differences in retention in our district/school	86	1.87	0.73	40	1.88	0.65	204	1.89	0.70	330	1.88	0.70	2	101.14	0.02	0.01

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Research Question 3

Are there differences in what schools in Indiana utilize for effective reading instructional strategies as perceived by superintendents, special education administrators, and principals?

Survey section VI, question 23 addressed if the respondents' district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development (kindergarten – 3rd grade). This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: yes, no, or do not know. The “Yes”, “No”, and “Do Not Know” responses were collected to provide the researcher the overall responses of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals. As indicated in Table 24, 104 superintendents (25.7%), 58 special education administrators (14.4%), and 233 elementary school principals (57.7%) answered “Yes” their district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development (kindergarten – 3rd grade). In sharp contrast, one superintendent (0.2%), one special education administrators (0.2%), and two elementary school principals (0.5%) answered “No” their district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development (kindergarten – 3rd grade). Only three administrators in special education (0.7%) and two elementary principals (0.5%) answered “Do Not Know” if their district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development (kindergarten-3rd grade). In summary, 395 of the respondents (97.8%) answered “Yes” their district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development.

Survey Section VI, question 24 addressed if respondents' district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on the IREAD-3 results. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: yes, no, or do not know. Table 24 reports 76 superintendents (18.8%), 40 administrators in special education, and 171 elementary

school principals answered “Yes” their district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on the IREAD-3 assessment results. Twenty-two superintendents (5.4%), eight administrators in special education (2.0%), and 62 elementary school principals (15.3%) answered “No” their district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on the IREAD-3 assessment results. Seven superintendents (1.7%), 14 special education administrators (3.5%), and four elementary school principals (1.0%) who answered “Do Not Know” if their district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on the IREAD-3 results. Table 24 reports 287 of the respondents (71.0%) answered “Yes” their district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on the IREAD-3 results whereas ninety-two (22.8%) answered “No”.

Table 24

“Yes”, “No”, and “Do Not Know” responses concerning effective reading programs for early literacy development and targeted reading approach to support literacy development based on IREAD-3

		Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<hr/>									
Our district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development									
Yes		104	25.7	58	14.4	233	57.7	395	97.8
No		1	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.5	4	1.0
Do Not Know		0	0.0	3	0.7	2	0.5	5	1.2
Total		105	26.0	62	15.3	237	58.7	404	100.0
<hr/>									
Our district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on the IREAD- 3 assessment results									
Yes		76	18.8	40	9.9	171	42.3	287	71.0
No		22	5.4	8	2.0	62	15.3	92	22.7
Do Not Know		7	1.7	14	3.5	4	1.0	25	6.2
Total		105	25.9	62	15.4	237	58.6	404	100

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Yes”, “No”, and “Do Not Know” responses.

Survey Section VI, questions 25, 26, 27, and 28 gathered information from the respondents on phonics instruction in their district/school. Skip logic questions were embedded in survey questions 25-28. Skip logic allowed the respondent to move forward based on a response of “Yes”, “No” or “Do Not Know.” Question 25 asked respondents if their district/school uses phonics based instruction to support students’ early literacy development. Question 25 required respondents to answer by forced choice: yes, no, or do not know. If the respondent answered “Yes” (88.4%), he or she proceeded to question 26. If the respondent answered “No” (7.7%) he or she proceeded to question 29. If the respondent answered “Do Not Know” (4.0%), he or she proceeded to question 29. Table 25 reports ninety superintendents (22.3%), 48 administrators in special education (11.9%), and 219 elementary school principals (54.2%) answered “Yes” their district/school uses phonics based instruction to support students’ early literacy development. Seven superintendents (1.7%), seven administrators in special education (1.7%), and 17 elementary school principals (4.2%) answered “No” their district/school uses phonics based instruction to support students’ early literacy development. Eight superintendents (2.0%), seven administrators in special education (1.7%), and one elementary school principals (0.2 %) answered “Do Not Know” their district/school uses phonics based instruction to support students’ early literacy development.

The 357 respondents who answered “Yes” to question 25 proceeded to question 26. Question 26 asked respondents if phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Question 26 required respondents to answer by forced choice: yes, no, or do not know. If respondents answered “Yes” (93.3%), they proceeded to question 27. If the response was “No” (0.8%) to question 26 respondents advanced to question 28, and if respondents answered “Do Not Know” (5.9%) they proceeded to question 29. Eighty-two

superintendents (23.0%), 44 administrators in special education (12.3%), and 207 elementary school principals (58.0%) answered “Yes” phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Whereas two superintendents (0.6%), one administrator in special education (0.3%) and zero elementary principals answered “No” phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Respondents that answered “No” to question 26 were to advance to question 28. Due to having only three respondents (0.8%) that were forced to answer question 28, question 28 data was not reported here. Six superintendents (1.7%), three administrators in special education (0.8%), 12 elementary school principals (3.4%) answered “Do Not Know” phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes.

Table 25

“Yes”, “No”, “Do Not Know” responses concerning phonics based instruction

		Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
My school district/school uses phonics based instruction to support students' early literacy									
	Yes	90	22.3	48	11.9	219	54.2	357	88.4
	No	7	1.7	7	1.7	17	4.2	31	7.7
	Do Not Know	8	2.0	7	1.7	1	0.2	16	4.0
	Total	105	26.0	62	15.3	237	58.7	404	100
Phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes									
	Yes	82	23.0	44	12.3	207	94.5	333	93.3
	No	2	0.6	1	0.3	0	0	3	0.8
	Do Not Know	6	1.7	3	0.8	12	3.4	21	5.9
	Total	90	25.2	48	13.4	219	61.3	357	100.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Yes”, “No”, and “Do Not Know” responses.

Survey Section VI, Question 26 asked if phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Question 26 is a skip logic question. Skip Logic allowed the respondent to move forward based on a response of “Yes”, “No” or “Do Not Know.” If the respondents answered “Yes” (93.3%) to question 26 they skipped to question 27, if the respondents answered “No” (0.8%) to question 26 they skipped to question 28. Question 27 was a Likert scale question and required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know if phonics based reading instruction had a positive impact on different racial groups. Likert scale questions provide order to the categories even though the intervals are not precise. The lowest point on the scale (1) was classified as strongly disagree (0-25%). The second point on the scale (2) was classified as disagree (26-50%). The next point on the scale (3) was classified as agree (51-75%). The highest point on the scale (4) indicated strongly agree (76-100%). The fifth point on the scale was (5) do not know. Administrators in special education (19.4%) indicated in table 26 that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based instruction had a positive impact for female student's reading/literacy development in their district/school whereas superintendents (15.2%) and elementary school principals (9.2%) responded “Do Not Know”. Similarly, administrators in special education (19.4%) indicated in table 26 that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based instruction had a positive impact for male student's reading/literacy development in their district/school whereas superintendents (15.2%) and elementary school principals (9.2%) responded “Do Not Know”. Fifty-four elementary school principals (22.7%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based instruction had a positive impact for African American students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. In addition, 54 elementary school principals (22.7%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based instruction had a positive impact for Hispanic/Latino students’

reading/literacy development in their district/school. Seventy-eight elementary school principals (32.8%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based instruction had a positive impact for Asian students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Table 26 reports, nine administrators in special education (14.5%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based instruction had a positive impact for Caucasian students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Thirty-eight elementary school principals (16.0%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if phonics based reading instruction had a positive impact for multi-racial students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school.

Table 26

“Do Not Know” responses concerning the positive impact phonics based instruction has had on students based by their gender or ethnic background

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" responses that phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for:</i>								
female student's reading/literacy development in our district/school	16	15.2	12	19.4	22	9.2	50	12.3
male student's reading/literacy development in our district/school	16	15.2	12	19.4	22	9.2	50	12.3
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school	22	21.0	14	22.6	54	22.7	90	22.2
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school	20	19.0	16	25.8	54	22.7	90	22.2
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school	27	25.7	18	29.0	78	32.8	123	30.4
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school	10	9.5	9	14.5	21	8.8	40	9.9
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school	16	15.2	14	22.6	38	16.0	68	16.8

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 27 reports if the respondents believe that phonics based instruction has had a positive impact in their district school. Respondents were specifically asked if they noticed if the instruction had a positive impact based on a student's gender or ethnic background. Respondents agreed ($M = 3.23 - 3.24$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for female students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.02$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents also agreed ($M = 3.22 - 3.29$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for male students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.58$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.17 - 3.22$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.22$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.15 - 3.24$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.47$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.14 - 3.28$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 1.15$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.23 - 3.27$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.26$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Last, respondents agreed ($M = 3.21 - 3.23$) phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.06$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 27

Phonics based reading instruction's positive impact in a district/school based on students' gender or ethnic background as reported by position

	Superintendents			Administrators in Special Education			Elementary School Principals			Total			Welch F	Cohen's f		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD			df1	df2
<i>Phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact for...</i>																
female students reading/literacy development in our district/school	64	3.23	0.43	29	3.24	0.44	176	3.23	0.47	269	3.23	0.46	2	71.91	0.02	0.01
male students reading/literacy development in our district/school	65	3.29	0.46	29	3.24	0.44	178	3.22	0.48	272	3.24	0.47	2	71.98	0.58	0.07
African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school	59	3.20	0.45	27	3.22	0.42	143	3.17	0.53	229	3.18	0.50	2	72.00	0.22	0.04
Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school	61	3.21	0.49	25	3.24	0.44	142	3.15	0.60	228	3.18	0.55	2	69.93	0.47	0.06
Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	54	3.28	0.45	23	3.26	0.45	118	3.14	0.59	195	3.19	0.54	2	63.37	1.15	0.12
Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	70	3.27	0.45	31	3.26	0.45	177	3.23	0.51	278	3.24	0.48	2	79.65	0.26	0.04
Multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school	65	3.23	0.43	27	3.22	0.42	158	3.21	0.48	250	3.22	0.46	2	69.80	0.06	0.02

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey Section VI, questions 29, 30, 31, and 32 gathered information from the respondents on whole language instruction in their district/school. Skip logic questions were embedded in survey questions 29-32. Skip logic allowed the respondent to move forward based on a response of “Yes”, “No” or “Do Not Know.” Respondents who answered “Yes” (48.0%) on question 29 that their district/school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development skipped to question 30. Fifty-two superintendents (27.8%), 20 administrators in special education (10.7%), and 100 elementary school principals (53.5%) answered “Yes” their district/school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development. If respondents answered “No” (44.4%) on question 29 that their district school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development skipped to question 33. Table 28 reports 34 superintendents (8.6%), 23 administrators in special education (5.8%), and 119 elementary school principals (30.1%) answered “No” their district/school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development. Respondents who answered “Do Not Know” (7.6%) on question 29 they preceded to question 33. Eleven superintendents (2.8%), 12 administrators in special education (3.0%), and seven elementary school principals (1.8%) answered “Do Not Know” their district/school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development. Respondents who answered “Yes” to question 29 advanced to question 30.

Survey Section VI, question 30 asked if whole reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. If the respondents answered “Yes” (92.0%) to question 30 they skipped to question 31, if the respondents answered “No” (1.1%) to question 30 they skipped to question 32. Question 32 data was not reported here due to having only two respondents (1.1%) who were forced to answer the question. If the respondent answered “Do Not Know” (7.0%),

they skipped to question 33. Fifty-two superintendents (27.8%), 20 administrators in special education (10.7%), and 100 elementary school principals (53.5%) answered “Yes” that whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Whereas only two elementary school principals (1.1%) answered “No” that whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Six superintendents (3.2%), two administrators in special education (1.1%), and five elementary school principals (2.7%) answered “No” that whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes.

Table 28

“Yes”, “No”, “Do Not Know” responses concerning whole language reading instruction

		Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
My school district/school uses whole language reading instruction to support students early literacy									
	Yes	60	15.2	24	6.1	106	26.8	190	48.0
	No	34	8.6	23	5.8	119	30.1	176	44.4
	Do Not Know	11	2.8	12	3.0	7	1.8	30	7.6
	Total	105	26.5	59	14.9	232	58.6	396	100
Whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes									
	Yes	52	27.8	20	10.7	100	53.5	172	92.0
	No	0	0	2	1.1	0	0	2	1.1
	Do Not Know	6	3.2	2	1.1	5	2.7	13	7.0
	Total	58	31.0	24	12.8	105	56.1	187	100.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Yes”, “No”, and “Do Not Know” responses.

Question 31 is a Likert style question and required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. Likert scale questions provide order to the categories even though the intervals are not precise. The lowest point on the scale (1) was classified as strongly disagree (0-25%). The second point on the scale (2) was classified as disagree (26-50%). The next point on the scale (3) was classified as agree (51-75%). The highest point on the scale (4) indicated strongly agree (76-100%). The fifth point on the scale was (5) do not know. Table 29 indicates superintendents (10.5%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if whole language reading instruction had a positive impact for both female and male student’s reading/literacy development in their district/school whereas administrators in special education (8.1%) and elementary school principals (1.7%) responded “Do Not Know”. Twenty-four elementary school principals (10.1%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if whole language reading instruction had a positive impact for African American students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. In addition, 22 elementary school principals (9.2%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if whole language reading instruction had a positive impact for Hispanic/Latino students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Thirty-two elementary school principals (13.4%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if whole language reading instruction had a positive impact for Asian students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Administrators in special education (8.0%) and elementary school principals (8.0%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if whole language reading instruction had a positive impact for Caucasian students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Last, superintendents (11.4%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if whole language reading instruction had a positive impact for multi-racial students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school.

Table 29

“Do Not Know” responses concerning whole language reading instruction’s positive impact in a district/school based on students’ gender or ethnic background

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" responses that whole language instruction has had a positive impact for:</i>								
female student's reading/literacy development in our district/school	11	10.5	5	8.1	4	1.7	20	4.9
male student's reading/literacy development in our district/school	11	10.5	5	8.1	4	1.7	20	4.9
African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school	14	13.3	7	11.3	24	10.1	45	11.1
Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school	14	13.3	8	12.9	22	9.2	44	10.9
Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	19	18.1	10	1.6	32	13.4	61	15.1
Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	8	7.6	4	6.5	8	3.4	20	4.9
Multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school	12	11.4	6	9.7	16	6.7	34	8.4

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 30 reports if the respondents' belief that whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact in their district school. Respondents were specifically asked if they noticed if the instruction had a positive impact based on a student's gender or ethnic background. Respondents agreed ($M = 3.13 - 3.22$) whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for female students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.32$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents also agreed ($M = 3.13 - 3.21$) whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for male students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.38$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.14 - 3.18$) whole language reading has had a positive impact for African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.09$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.11 - 3.17$) whole language reading has had a positive impact for Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.11$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.11 - 3.20$) whole language reading has had a positive impact for Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.39$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.00 - 3.20$) whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.79$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Last, Table 30 reports respondents agreed ($M = 3.14 - 3.21$) whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 2.42$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 30

Whole language reading instruction's positive impact in a district/school based on students' gender or ethnic background as reported by position

	Superintendents			Administrators in Special Education			Elementary School Principals			Total			Welch F	Cohen's f		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD			df1	df2
<i>Whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for...</i>																
female students reading/literacy development in our district/school	38	3.18	0.39	15	3.13	0.35	93	3.22	0.49	146	3.20	0.45	2	40.76	0.32	0.06
male students reading/literacy development in our district/school	38	3.16	0.37	15	3.13	0.35	95	3.21	0.48	148	3.19	0.44	2	40.48	0.38	0.07
African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school	35	3.14	0.36	13	3.15	0.38	72	3.18	0.57	120	3.17	0.49	2	36.36	0.09	0.04
Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school	35	3.14	0.43	12	3.17	0.39	75	3.11	0.67	122	3.12	0.58	2	35.36	0.11	0.04
Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	30	3.20	0.41	10	3.20	0.42	63	3.11	0.60	103	3.15	0.53	2	26.90	0.39	0.08
Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	41	3.15	0.36	16	3.00	0.63	89	3.20	0.55	146	3.16	0.51	2	38.77	0.79	0.16
Multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school	37	3.16	0.44	14	3.14	0.36	81	3.21	0.49	132	3.19	0.47	2	38.38	2.42	0.06

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Survey Section VI, questions 33, 34, 35, and 36 gathered information from the respondents on balanced literacy instruction in their district/school. Skip logic questions were embedded in survey questions 33-36. Skip logic allowed the respondent to move forward based on a response of “Yes”, “No” or “Do Not Know.” Respondents who answered “Yes” (84.5%) on question 33 that their district school used balanced literacy reading instruction to support students’ literacy development skipped to question 34. Table 31 reports 80 superintendents (20.7%), 46 administrators in special education (11.9%), and 201 elementary school principals (51.9%) answered “Yes” their district/school used balanced literacy reading instruction to support students’ literacy development. Twelve superintendents (3.1%), four administrators in special education (1.0%), and 17 elementary school principals (4.4%) answered “No” their district/school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development. Seven superintendents (1.8%), nine administrators in special education (2.3%), and 11 elementary school principals (2.8%) answered “Do Not Know” their district/school used whole language reading instruction to support students’ literacy development.

Survey Section VI, question 34 asked if balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. If the respondents answered “Yes” (95.3%) to question 34 they skipped to question 35, if the respondents answered “No” (0%) to question 34 they skipped to question 36. Skip logic allowed the respondent to move forward based on a response of “Yes”, “No” or “Do Not Know.” Question 36 is not reported here due to zero responses. If the respondent answered “Do Not Know” (7.0%), they skipped to question 37. Seventy-two superintendents (22.6%), 43 administrators in special education (13.5%), and 189 elementary school principals (59.2%) answered “Yes” balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes. Zero respondents answered, “No” balanced literacy reading

instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes whereas seven superintendents (2.2%), three administrators in special education (0.9%), and five elementary school principals (1.6%) responded “Do Not Know”.

Table 31

“Yes”, “No”, “Do Not Know” responses concerning balanced literacy reading instruction

		Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
My school district/school uses balanced literacy reading instruction to support students early literacy									
	Yes	80	20.7	46	11.9	201	51.9	327	84.5
	No	12	3.1	4	1.0	17	4.4	33	8.5
	Do Not Know	7	1.8	9	2.3	11	2.8	27	7.0
	Total	99	25.6	69	15.2	229	59.2	387	100
Balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes									
	Yes	72	22.6	43	13.5	189	59.2	304	95.3
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Do Not Know	7	2.2	3	0.9	5	1.6	15	4.7
	Total	79	24.8	46	14.4	194	60.8	319	100.0

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Yes”, “No”, and “Do Not Know” responses.

Question 34 required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. Likert scale questions provide order to the categories even though the intervals are not precise. The lowest point on the scale (1) was classified as strongly disagree (0-25%). The second point on the scale (2) was classified as disagree (26-50%). The next point on the scale (3) was classified as agree (51-75%). The highest point on the scale (4) indicated strongly agree (76-100%). The fifth point on the scale was (5) do not know. Table 32 indicates administrators in special education (22.6%) that they “Do Not Know” if balanced literacy reading instruction had a positive impact for both female and male student’s reading/literacy development in their district/school whereas superintendents (10.5%) and elementary school principals (4.2%) responded “Do Not Know”. Forty-three elementary school principals (18.1%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if balanced literacy reading instruction had a positive impact for African American students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. In addition, thirty-nine elementary school principals (16.4%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if balanced literacy reading instruction had a positive impact for Hispanic/Latino students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Fifty-seven elementary school principals (23.9%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if balanced literacy reading instruction had a positive impact for Asian students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school compared with 22 superintendents (21.0%) and 22 administrators in special education (35.5%). Fifteen administrators in special education (24.2%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if balanced literacy reading instruction had a positive impact for Caucasian students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school. Last, administrators in special education (25.8%) responded that they “Do Not Know” if balanced literacy reading instruction had a positive impact for multi-racial students’ reading/literacy development in their district/school.

Table 32

“Do Not Know” responses concerning balanced literacy reading instruction’s positive impact in a district/school based on students’ gender or ethnic background

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" responses that balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for:</i>								
female student's reading/literacy development in our district/school	11	10.5	14	22.6	10	4.2	35	8.6
male student's reading/literacy development in our district/school	11	10.5	14	22.6	10	4.2	35	8.6
African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school	17	16.2	15	24.2	43	18.1	75	18.5
Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school	15	14.3	18	29.0	39	16.4	72	17.8
Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	22	21.0	22	35.5	57	23.9	101	42.4
Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	8	7.6	15	24.2	11	4.6	34	8.4
Multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school	14	13.3	16	25.8	27	11.3	57	14.1

Note. Percentages reported by category and “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 33 reports if the respondents believe that balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact in their district school. Respondents were specifically asked if they noticed if the balanced literacy instruction had a positive impact based on a student's gender or ethnic background. Respondents agreed ($M = 3.14 - 3.35$) balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for female students reading/literacy development in our district/school. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 3.85$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). Further statistical analysis determined that there was not a statistical significance as measured by the Tamhane 2 post hoc test. Respondents also agreed ($M = 3.14 - 3.35$) balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for male students reading/literacy development in our district/school. A significant difference was reported (Welch $F = 3.65$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$). Further statistical analysis determined that there was not a statistical significance as measured by the Tamhane 2 post hoc test. Respondents agreed ($M = 3.11 - 3.32$) balanced literacy reading has had a positive impact for African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 2.39$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.17 - 3.29$) balanced literacy reading has had a positive impact for Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.62$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.20 - 3.33$) balanced literacy reading has had a positive impact for Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 0.89$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Respondents agreed ($M = 3.19 - 3.34$) balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 2.16$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). Last, Table 33 reports respondents agreed ($M = 3.15 - 3.33$) balanced literacy reading phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for multi-

racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school. No significance difference was reported (Welch $F = 2.09$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 33

Balanced literacy reading instruction's positive impact in a district/school based on students' gender or ethnic background as reported by position

	Superintendents			Administrators in Special Education			Elementary School Principals			Total			df1	df2	Welch F	Cohen's f
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD				
<i>Balanced Literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for...</i>																
female students reading/literacy development in our district/school	58	3.17	0.50	28	3.14	0.45	178	3.35	0.57	264	3.29	0.55	2	71.57	3.85*	0.16
male students reading/literacy development in our district/school	58	3.19	0.51	28	3.14	0.45	178	3.35	0.58	264	3.30	0.56	2	71.50	3.65*	0.16
African American students reading/literacy development in our district/school	52	3.17	0.62	27	3.11	0.51	142	3.32	0.63	221	3.26	0.61	2	68.14	2.39	0.14
Hispanic/Latino students reading/literacy development in our district/school	54	3.22	0.54	23	3.17	0.49	148	3.29	0.66	225	3.26	0.62	2	61.80	0.62	0.07
Asian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	47	3.23	0.56	20	3.20	0.41	128	3.33	0.64	195	3.29	0.60	2	56.82	0.89	0.08
Caucasian students reading/literacy development in our district/school	61	3.21	0.52	27	3.19	0.40	176	3.34	0.60	264	3.30	0.57	2	75.53	2.16	0.11
Multi-racial students reading/literacy development in our district/school	54	3.20	0.53	26	3.15	0.46	157	3.33	0.58	237	3.28	0.56	2	66.26	2.09	0.12

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Qualitative Analysis

Survey section VII, question 41 was an open-ended question that asked respondents if they believe there is a gap between a teacher's knowledge of effective reading instruction and the implementation with classroom-based instruction. The open-ended questions in this study allowed the researcher to identify central themes among responses. The researcher created table 34 and responses were placed in a category dependent on its themes (Creswell, 2009). If respondents answered "Yes", they were asked to please explain why. Table 34 shows the frequency data by position for the three central themes from each respondent category. Ninety-nine respondents answered "Yes"; they believe there is a gap between a teacher's knowledge of effective reading instruction and the implementation with classroom-based instruction. Of the 99 respondents who answered "Yes", they believe there is a gap between a teacher's knowledge of effective reading instruction and the implementation with classroom-based instruction, 66 explained why. Twenty-three superintendents (23.2%) of the 99 respondents answered "Yes" they believe there is a gap between a teacher's knowledge of effective reading instruction and the implementation with classroom-based instruction, 14 superintendents (21.2%) explained why. The top three common themes among superintendents' responses were (a) lack of professional development for teachers, (b) teachers were not adequately trained in college to prepare them to teach reading, and (c) teachers do not adequately teach phonics to developing readers. Eighteen administrators in special education (18.2%) of the 99 respondents answered "Yes" they believe there is a gap between a teacher's knowledge of effective reading instruction and the implementation with classroom-based instruction, 13 administrators in special education (19.7%) explained why. Administrators in special education responses had the following three themes: (a) teachers are unable to differentiate lesson to meet the instructional needs of students, (b) there is

a gap between the knowledge teachers have and their application to instruction, and (c) lack of professional development for teachers. Fifty-eight elementary school principals (58.6%) of the 99 respondents answered “Yes” they believe there is a gap between a teacher’s knowledge of effective reading instruction and the implementation with classroom-based instruction, 39 elementary school principals (59.1%) explained why. Elementary school principals’ responses had the following three themes (a) teachers were not adequately trained in college to prepare them to teach reading, (b) lack of professional development for teachers, and (c) teachers are unable to differentiate lesson to meet the instructional needs of students. Other responses included the following: “not enough time to teach”, “teachers are resistant to change”, “too much focus on test prep and not reading instruction”, “not enough teaching experience”, “teachers need instructional strategies”, “teachers lack capacity to teach reading”, and “outside factors impact classroom instruction”.

Table 34

Themes to respondents’ responses concerning perceived gaps between teacher knowledge and implementation as reported by position

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Central themes to responses concerning a belief that there is a gap between a teacher’s knowledge of effective reading instruction and implementation with classroom-based instruction</i>								
Lack of on-site professional development	5	7.6	2	3.0	6	9.1	13	19.7
Not enough teacher training	3	4.5	1	1.5	7	10.6	11	16.7
Lack of differentiation of instruction	0	0	3	4.5	6	9.1	9	13.6
Gap between knowledge and application exists	0	0	2	3.0	4	6.1	6	9.1

Phonics is not included in reading instruction	2	3.0	0	0.0	3	4.5	5	7.6
Other responses	4	6.1	5	7.6	13	19.7	22	33.3
Total	14	21.2	13	19.7	39	59.1	66	100.0

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category and totals.

Research Question 4

Are there differences in the level of impact retention have had on gender as perceived by superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals?

Survey question 37a and 37b was a Likert style question and asked respondents if the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of third grade female and male students. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. Likert scale questions provide order to the categories even though the intervals are not precise. The lowest point on the scale (1) was classified as strongly disagree (0-25%). The second point on the scale (2) was classified as disagree (26-50%). The next point on the scale (3) was classified as agree (51-75%). The highest point on the scale (4) indicated strongly agree (76-100%). The fifth point on the scale was (5) do not know. The “Do Not Know” responses were collected to provide the researcher the overall responses of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals. Thirty-nine elementary school principals (17.0%) responded “Do Not Know” if the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of third grade female students, compared with 19 administrators in special education (32.2%) and 23 superintendents (23.7%). In addition, Table 35 reports 37 elementary school principals (16.2%) responded “Do Not Know” if the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of third grade male students, compared with 20 administrators in special education (33.9%) and 22 superintendents (23.7%).

Table 35

“Do Not Know” responses concerning the overall negative impact on retention as a result of IREAD-3

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses that the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of...</i>								
third grade female students.	23	23.7	19	32.2	39	17.0	81	21.3
third grade male students.	22	23.7	20	33.9	37	16.2	79	20.5

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category and total for "Do Not Know" responses.

Table 36 reports if respondents believed the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of third grade female and male students. Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.38 - 2.40$) the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of female students. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.03$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$) among respondents. Table 36 also indicates respondents disagreed ($M = 2.45 - 2.49$) the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of male students. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.02$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$) among respondents.

Table 36

Overall negative impact of retention on female and male students because of IREAD-3 as reported by position

	Superintendents			Administrators in Special Education			Elementary School Principals			Total			<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>Welch F</i>	<i>Cohen's f</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
<i>The IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of....</i>																
third grade female students	74	2.38	0.84	40	2.38	0.81	190	2.40	0.80	304	2.39	0.81	2	94.79	0.03	0.01
third grade male students	75	2.45	0.87	39	2.49	0.82	192	2.46	0.81	306	2.46	0.82	2	92.13	0.02	0.01

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Research Question 5

Are there differences in the level of impact retention have had on minorities as perceived by superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals?

Survey question 37c was a Likert style question and asked respondents if the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of minority students. This survey question required respondents to answer one of the following: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, or do not know. The “Do Not Know” responses were collected to provide the researcher the overall responses of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals. Likert scale questions provide order to the categories even though the intervals are not precise. The lowest point on the scale (1) was classified as strongly disagree (0-25%). The second point on the scale (2) was classified as disagree (26-50%). The next point on the scale (3) was classified as agree (51-75%). The highest point on the scale (4) indicated strongly agree (76-100%). The fifth point on the scale was (5) do not know. Table 37 reports fifty-seven elementary school principals (24.9%) responded “Do Not Know” if the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention on minority students compared with 24 administrators in special education (40.7%) and 26 superintendents (26.8%).

Table 37

“Do Not Know” responses concerning the overall negative impact on retention of minorities because of IREAD-3

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Respondents' "Do Not Know" Responses that the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of...</i>								
our district/school minority population(s).	26	26.8	24	40.7	57	24.9	107	27.8

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category and total for “Do Not Know” responses.

Table 38 reports if respondents believed the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of their district/school minority population(s). Respondents disagreed ($M = 2.38 - 2.40$) the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of female students. There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.03$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$) among respondents. Table 35 also indicates respondents disagreed ($M = 2.38 - 2.44$) the IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of their district/school minority population(s). There was no significant difference reported (Welch $F = 0.12$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$) among respondents.

Table 38

Overall negative impact of retention on a district/school minority population(s) because of IREAD-3as reported by position

	Superintendents			Administrators in Special Education			Elementary School Principals			Total			Welch F	Cohen's f		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD			df1	df2
<i>The IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of....</i>																
our district/school's minority population(s)	71	2.38	0.92	35	2.46	0.89	172	2.44	0.85	278	2.42	0.85	2	82.62	0.12	0.03

*Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.*

Research Question 6

What is the difference in the perception of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment?

Qualitative Analysis

Survey section VII, question 38 was an open-ended question that asked respondents if they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. The open-ended questions in this study allowed the researcher to identify central themes among responses. The researcher created table 39 and responses were placed in a category dependent on its themes (Creswell, 2009). If respondents answered “Yes”, they were asked to please explain why. Table 39 shows the frequency data by position for the three central themes from each respondent category. One hundred and twenty-seven respondents answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Of the 127 respondents that answered “Yes”, they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 66 explained why. Thirty superintendents (23.6%) of the 127 respondents answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Of the 30 superintendents that answered “Yes”, they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 11 superintendents (16.7%) explained why. The top three common themes among the 11 superintendent responses include: (a) the IREAD-3 assessment is not a true measure of a student’s reading ability, (b) research does not support

retention of a student based on one assessment, and (c) there are not adequate instructional resources or time to support reading instruction. Twenty-one administrators in special education (16.5%) of the 127 respondents answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Of the 23 administrators that answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 11 administrators in special education explained why. The top three responses among the 11 administrators in special education were (a) research does not support retention based on one assessment, (b) the IREAD-3 assessment is a challenge for some students with IEPs, and (3) there are not adequate instructional resources or time to support reading instruction. Seventy-six elementary school principals (59.8%) answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Of the 76 elementary school principals (59.8%) of the 127 respondents answered “Yes”, they believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 44 elementary school principals (66.7%) explained why. Elementary school principals’ top three responses were (a) teachers are now teaching to the test instead of delivering quality reading instruction, (b) there are not adequate instructional resources or time to support reading instruction, and (c) research does not support retention of a student based on one assessment. Other responses include: “the IREAD-3 assessment does not consider how students develop”, “students have text anxiety”, “students should not be taking the IREAD-3 assessment too close to ISTEP+”, “the IREAD-3 assessment has forced us to improve

our K-2 reading instruction”, and “the IREAD-3 assessment has forced our school to develop remediation and intervention programs”. Other comments from each group were varied.

Table 39

Themes to respondents’ responses concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment as reported by position

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Central themes to responses concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment</i>								
The IREAD-3 assessment is not a true measure of a student's reading ability	3	4.5	1	1.5	1	1.5	5	7.6
Research does not support retention of a student based on one assessment	3	4.5	2	3.0	6	9.1	11	16.7
There are not adequate instructional resources or time to support reading instruction	2	3.0	2	3.0	7	10.6	11	16.7
The IREAD-3 assessment is a challenge for some students with IEPs	0	0.0	3	4.5	3	4.5	6	9.1
Teachers are now teaching to the test instead of delivering quality reading instruction	0	0.0	1	1.5	9	13.6	10	15.2
Issues surrounding grade replacement	2	3.0	2	3.0	5	7.6	9	13.6
Other responses	1	1.5	0	0.0	13	19.7	14	21.2
Total	11	16.7	11	16.7	44	66.7	66	100.0

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category and totals.

Research Question 7

What is the difference in the perception of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals concerning gender differences in retention?

Qualitative Analysis

Survey section VII, question 39 was an open-ended question that asked respondents if they believe there are challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school

and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. The open-ended questions in this study allowed the researcher to identify central themes among responses. The researcher created table 40 and responses were placed in a category dependent on its themes (Creswell, 2009). If respondents answered “Yes”, they were asked to please explain why. Table 40 shows the frequency data by position for the three central themes from each respondent category. Forty-three respondents answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Of the 43 respondents that answered “Yes”, they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 23 explained why. Sixteen superintendents (37.2%) answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, nine superintendents (39.1%) explained why. Four administrators in special education answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, all four administrators in special education (9.3%) explained why. Twenty-three elementary school principals (53.5%) responded “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, ten elementary school principals (43.5%) explained why. Superintendents’ top three responses were (a) males are retained more than females, (b) males develop their reading skills later than females, and (c) girls outperform boys in reading and reading assessments. Only four administrators in special education answered yes to this question. The following responses are three responses that were received (a) it is based on individual needs, not by gender, (b) males are retained more than

females, and (c) retention is outdated. The most common responses among elementary school principals were (a) males are retained more than females, (b) males develop reading skills later than females, and (c) K-2 teachers need culturally responsive strategies to teach reading.

Table 40

Themes to respondents' responses concerning the challenges in gender grade level retention as reported by position

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Central themes to respondents' responses concerning the challenges in gender grade level retention</i>								
Males are retained more than females	3	13.4	2	4.7	2	4.7	7	30.4
Males develop their reading skills later than females	1	4.3	0	0.0	1	4.3	2	4.7
Girls outperform boys in reading and reading assessments	2	4.7	0	0.0	1	4.3	3	13.0
Other responses	3	13.0	2	4.7	6	14.0	11	47.8
Total	9	39.1	4	17.4	10	43.5	23	100.0

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category and totals.

Research Question 8

What is the difference in the perception of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals concerning minority differences in retention?

Qualitative Analysis

Survey section VII, question 40 was an open-ended question that asked respondents if they believe there are challenges in grade level retention for minority students that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. The open-ended questions in this study allowed the researcher to identify central themes among responses. The researcher created table 41 and responses were placed in a category dependent on its themes (Creswell,

2009). If respondents answered “Yes”, they were asked to please explain why. Table 41 shows the frequency data by position for the three central themes from each respondent category.

Seventy-four respondents answered “Yes” they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Of the 74 respondents that answered “Yes”, they believe there are significant challenges in gender grade level retention that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 38 explained why. Seventeen superintendents (23.0%) responded “Yes” they believe there are there are challenges in grade level retention for minority students that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, seven superintendents (18.4%) explained why. Superintendents most common responses were (a) IREAD-3 is a waste of time, (b) minority students are retained more than other students are, and (c) test questions are biased. Seventeen administrators (23.0%) in special education responded “Yes” they believe there are there are challenges in grade level retention for minority students that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, eight administrators in special education (21.1%) explained why. Administrators in special education had the following responses (a) minority students are retained more than other students, (b) One test is not an accurate measure of what a student knows, and (c) special education students often do not pass the IREAD-3. Forty elementary school principals (54.1%) responded “Yes” they believe there are there are challenges in grade level retention for minority students that have impacted their school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment, 23 elementary school principals (60.5%) explained why. Elementary school principals’ responses included (a) minority students are retained more than other students, (b) ELL students struggle to pass IREAD-3, and (c) IREAD-3 has a negative impact on students with a 504 plan. The most

common themes among all three respondents' groups were (a) our district/school is retaining more minority students, (b) ELL students are not passing the IREAD-3 assessment due to their limited English proficiency, and (c) the IREAD-3 assessment has biased test questions. Other responses included "poverty is an issue that may result in a student not passing IREAD-3", "we do not do a good job connecting with students of different cultures", "the benchmark assessment creates stress anxiety in eight year olds", and "teachers and parents do not support the IREAD-3 results to determine retention decisions".

Table 41

Themes to respondents' responses concerning the challenges in grade level retention for minority students as reported by position

	Superintendents		Administrators in Special Education		Elementary School Principals		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<i>Central themes to respondents' responses concerning the challenges in grade level retention among minority groups</i>								
Minority students are retained more than other students	3	7.9	4	10.5	9	23.7	16	42.1
ELL students struggle to pass the IREAD-3 assessment due to their limited English	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	15.8	6	15.8
Biases exist	1	2.6	1	2.6	2	5.3	4	10.5
IEP/504 students struggle to pass	0	0.0	1	2.6	1	2.6	2	5.3
Assessment concerns	2	5.3	1	2.6	1	2.6	4	10.5
Other Responses	1	2.6	1	2.6	4	10.5	6	15.8
Total	7	18.4	8	21.1	23	60.5	38	100.0

Note. Percentages represent data reported by category.

Summary

The qualitative analysis of this survey found central themes among the superintendents, administrators in special education, and the elementary school principals. Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals perceive there is a gap

between teacher knowledge of instruction and implementation in the classroom (Table 34). The top three responses included a lack of on-site professional development for teachers in the area of reading instruction, not enough teacher training in the area of reading at the university/college level, and a lack of differentiation of instruction. Additional teacher training and professional development in differentiation of instruction and reading may help close the gap between teacher knowledge and instruction.

Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals found central themes to responses concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment on a district/school (Table 39). The top two responses reported are that research does not support retention of a student based on one assessment and there are not enough adequate instructional resources or time to support reading instruction. Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals also believe one of the impacts of the IREAD-3 assessment is that teachers are now spending too much time teaching to the test instead of delivery quality instruction.

Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals found central themes to responses concerning the challenges in grade level retention based on gender (Table 40). Respondents believe males are retained more than females, males develop their reading skills later than females, and girls typically outperform boys in reading and on reading assessments.

Central themes were also found among superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals concerning challenges in grade level retention for minority students. Minority students are retained more than other students and ELL students struggle to pass the IREAD-3 assessment due to their limited English.

CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY

This study used survey research methods and was exploratory in nature. The majority of this study was quantitative with the survey questionnaire design to measure knowledge and perceptions of the IREAD-3 assessment, instructional practices, and perceptions of gender and minority retention data. The open-ended questions allowed participants to provide general perceptions of the impact of the IREAD-3, knowledge application gap among teachers, gender differences and retention, and minority differences and retention. A survey instrument was created and distributed electronically to participants. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Eight (8) research questions were developed to guide this study. These questions investigated the perceptions of knowledge, beliefs, and the impact the IREAD-3 assessment has had on a district/school.

The importance of students reading by grade 3 has been identified through research and reiterated in numerous federal and state laws (Fiester, 2010; Flanagan, 2013; Graves, 1998; Griffin, Burns, & Snow, 1998; Hernandez, 2011). An extensive literature review about reading instruction, assessments in reading, and retention was conducted for this study. The literature included in this review under search criteria, included one of the following: (a) research concerning the best practices in reading instruction and assessments, (b) research concerning federal and/or state laws that pertained to reading instruction and school accountability, (c) and research concerning retention of students who do not pass a state assessment. Due to the accountability measures that have been put in place as a result of NCLB, many state educational departments have passed laws that measure a district/school progress in AYP, teacher effectiveness measures, and a high-stakes/retention assessment for students.

Samples and Returns

An electronic survey was sent to the study participants through a link embedded in the Internet e-mail request. The survey was created, disseminated, and housed utilizing BSU Qualtrics, a survey and statistical management software program. Analysis was conducted using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 23.0).

The distribution list included 284 superintendents, 175 administrators in special education, and 871 elementary school principals. The researcher used the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) website, the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE), and the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP) to obtain lists and contact information of potential participants. The researcher found the updated superintendent list on the 2014-2015 Indiana School Directory. The directors of special education, assistant directors, and/or program coordinators were located online on the Indiana IEP Resource Center (IEPRC). The IEPRC, with assistance from Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE), designs and develops a directory for Indiana's Special Education Administrators; this list was updated in February 2015.

Each survey invitation letter was emailed to the respondents and described the research that was being conducted. The letter contained a link that directed participants to the online survey. Qualtrics generates a 15 letter-digit code that was associated with the respondents. The study involved an eight-week survey period. Follow-ups reminder letters were emailed every two weeks. Of the 1,330 surveys distributed, 405 valid surveys were completed (return rate 30.5%) (Table 1). The information gathered was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Welch-F tests, and Tamhane post-hoc tests were used to analyze differences among respondent groups' perceptions. The researcher

completed qualitative analysis by reporting item central themes and frequencies to four open-ended questions. The responses to the open-ended questions provided further examination of the level of knowledge related to the perceptions of the impact the IREAD-3 assessment had on school districts in the state of Indiana.

Discussion

The following discussion highlights study findings in relationship to the knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions of the IREAD-3 assessment. It is critical to understand the perceptions of knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions of the respondents as it impacts implementation. The IREAD-3 assessment was adopted in Indiana in 2010, and implemented in the spring of 2012. The intent of this assessment is to determine if a student has proficient reading skills. The assessment is directly tied to the Indiana Academic Standards in English language arts and reading development. Understanding the perceptions of school leaders' knowledge and beliefs concerning the IREAD-3 assessment with its connection to assessing literacy development for Indiana's third grade students is essential. School leaders need to have a functional understanding of curriculum, content, and student achievement in order to provide effective leadership in the educational system of today, especially school improvement efforts focused on literacy development. Efforts to support literacy development have a long history in American education and school leaders are an important stakeholder in supporting school improvement efforts in the area of reading instruction.

Respondents provided information to the researcher concerning current reading instructional practices in his or her district/school. In addition, this study addresses the perception of knowledge and beliefs on gender and minority retention data. Literature and research studies are provided to support the findings in this study.

Perceptions of Knowledge

The data from this study's findings suggested that there were statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment and the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3 (Table 7). This data suggests all three respondent groups by position agreed or strongly agreed that they had (a) comprehensive knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment, and (b) the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3. There was a significant difference between administrators in special education and superintendents versus elementary school principals concerning the perceptions of knowledge around the IREAD-3 assessment. Administrators in special education and superintendents tended to agree they had comprehensive knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment, whereas the elementary school principals strongly agreed. Elementary school principals likely have a deeper comprehensive knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment as they work directly with their school faculty, families, and students regarding this assessment. A significant difference existed among administrators in special education and superintendents versus elementary school principals concerning the perceptions of knowledge of the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3. Administrators in special education and superintendents tended to agree they had comprehensive knowledge of the Indiana Academic standards that are assessed on IREAD-3, whereas elementary school principals strongly agreed they had comprehensive knowledge. Elementary school principals' day-to-day activities and responsibilities revolve around the standards being assessed and the assessments that are given by the IDOE, whereas superintendents and administrators in special education likely do not deal with these issues on a daily basis. The IREAD-3 aligns with literacy development nationally and at the state level (US DOE and IDOE Reading First Initiative, 2002). The intent was to support

early literacy and provide strong literacy development for Indiana students. Respondents' knowledge of the Indiana academic standards and the IREAD-3 assessment provide a framework for reading development in Indiana's public schools. Elementary principals had strong comprehension of these factors. Their comprehensive knowledge implies they support the importance of literacy development by the third grade as noted in the literature.

The literature findings indicate the importance of reading by the third grade (Fiester, 2010; Flanagan, 2013; Graves, 1998; Griffin, Burns, & Snow, 1998; Hernandez, 2011). Foundational reading skills need to be developed by third grade in order to ensure later academic student success. Students who have a smaller working vocabulary than their peers are more likely to struggle with reading and experience school failure whereas skilled readers are good at comprehension and are able to draw inferences from texts. Students who are unable to read by third grade struggle with academic content and often fall behind in courses (Griffin, Burns, & Snow, 1998; Graves, 2000; Fiester, 2010; Hernandez, 2011). In addition, NAEP results report "68% of fourth graders, 70% of eighth grades, and 65% of twelfth graders scored at or below the basic level of reading achievement" (Honig et al., 2008, p. 2). The findings from the literature and national assessment data show a need to ensure students are reading by third grade in order to achieve later academic success. The IREAD-3 assessment began in spring 2012 as a way to measure students' reading ability by the third grade. If a student does not pass the IREAD-3 the local district/school provides remediation for the student to ensure he or she has acquired necessary reading foundational skills.

Data from this study suggested that there were no statistical significant differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the accountability as mandated by NCLB Act of 2001 (Table 9). In addition, there were no statistical significant

differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the impact of assessments in the state of Indiana on AYP, teacher evaluations, and the overall A-F school rating. A significant difference was found among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge that the state of Indiana Public Law 109 requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students. The state of Indiana (IDOE) has aligned reading expectations with that of NCLB through the IREAD- 3 assessment and its recently developed reading framework (Indiana Department of Education, 2011). As a result of federal legislation, in 2010 in Indiana the House Enrolled Act (HES) 1367, also known as Public Law 109, required reading evaluation in third grade was passed. Administrators in special education tended to agree they had comprehensive knowledge of the state of Indiana Public Law 109 requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students whereas superintendents and elementary school principals strongly agreed they had comprehensive knowledge. This data suggests administrators in special education may not have a strong comprehensive knowledge on the law that sanctioned the creation of the IREAD-3 assessment. Administrators in special education are responsible for organizing and holding case conferences that determine the best placement and educational services for students with and IEP. Students with an IEP are eligible for a “good cause exemption” as determined by the case conference committee. A student who has a learning disability in reading should be provided personalized reading instruction.

Findings from the literature indicate the importance of supporting students with learning difficulties to ensure they have every opportunity to learn how to read. Students as young as three, regardless of their IQ, benefit from learning early nursery rhymes (Bryant, Bradley, Crossland, & Maclean, 1989). As children grow, they need to understand the alphabetic principle and the relationship sounds have with letters (phonemes/morphemes) then students develop

reading fluency. Students who struggle with reading fluency often struggle with reading comprehension (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 1998). Oral reading fluency also reflects overall reading competence and is indirectly assessed on timed assessments (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Lipsey, 2000; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001). The IREAD-3 is a timed assessment that assesses phoneme/morpheme knowledge, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Students who have a learning disability in reading may struggle with the timed IREAD-3 assessment. During a case conference committee, administrators in special education need to ensure the IEP has academic supports to support a student's reading concerns. A case conference committee will determine if a "good cause exemption" is in the best interest of the student. The committee will then determine what instructional supports should be put in place if the student with an IEP did not pass (DNP) the IREAD-3. Once support services are written into an IEP for a student, and agreed to by the case conference committee, the school must provide the services as described.

The data from this study's findings suggested there were statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade. The data from the study indicate there was a significant difference between superintendents and elementary school principals versus administrators in special education concerning their perception of knowledge of the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade. The Reading First Grant provided millions of dollars to states and school districts to support reading

by the third grade. The findings from the literature report the Reading First grant was established because of NCLB, identifying multiple commitments to assist in closing the achievement gap in reading. The purpose of Reading First, as outlined in NCLB, was to provide assistance to state and local educational agencies in instituting reading programs grounded in scientific based reading research. The federal government allotted 900 million dollars collectively to states who participated in the Reading First grant to select and administer reading assessments, provide resources that would allow teachers to implement the five essential components of a reading program (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension instruction) and strengthen early literacy and family literacy programs (NCLB, 2001). The central goal of the Reading First Program is to ensure that all students read well by the end of grade three, thereby setting the stage for students to reach their full academic potential in subsequent grades. Research studies indicate the Reading First grant made an impact on some, but not all, of the Reading First schools (Gamse, Bloom, Kemple, Jacob, 2008; Moss, Boulay, Horst, Rodger, & Brown-Lyons, 2008). Despite the financial support from the government many districts/schools were unable to close the achievement gap in reading.

Data from this study's findings indicate there was no statistical difference among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004. National performance data from the Reading First grant is similar to the data from the state of Indiana. Many variables could have influenced why the Reading First Grant has not shown much success or sustainability in Indiana. One variable could be the staff turnover in these schools; this challenge was also mentioned in the Reading First Interim Report. Findings from the literature indicate that one of the variables why there was not sustainability with the Reading First Grant in Indiana was due to a challenge

with communication between school districts and the state. “The other challenge has been the frustration of constant flux in expectations from the state” (Rouge, Hansen, Muller, & Chien, 2008, p. 74). The state of Indiana does not offer professional development to a district/school around the IREAD-3 assessment. If a district/school has a high percent of students who do not pass the IREAD-3 the district school must use an approved reading program and determine the remediation for the students. A district/school who has not purchased an approved reading program is then forced to allocate funds to purchase an approved reading program.

The data from this study’s findings indicate there was not a statistical significance among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of a local schools districts' choice to retain a student in the third grade or socially promote the student to fourth grade. Social promotion, educational gaps among students, best instructional methods, and retention has been debated on the political forefront since Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency. Findings from the literature indicate that former President of the United States Lyndon B. Johnson focused on creating positions in schools that supported reading remediation. In addition, President Johnson brought attention to the gap between black children who scored far below their white peers on achievement tests (Jeffrey, 1972). Former president, Bill Clinton, called for an end to social promotion and held schools accountable for student results (Brownstein, 1997, para. 3; 1999 State of the Union Address, 1999, para. 40). Former United States President, George W. Bush, enacted NCLB, reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2001 that required all students pass assessments by the end of 2014. President, Barack Obama, called for school reform that focused on closing achievement gaps (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The political stance on education from the current and former Presidents of the United

States has created accountability in education. Students across the United States are required to take assessments at multiple grades to demonstrate learning.

Data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistically significant differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts (without a good cause exemption) must be registered with the state as a third grader (Table 11). In addition, there were no statistically significant differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 assessment as a third grader. These students must retake the IREAD-3 assessment and retake the third grade ISTEP the following year. It should be noted that in the 2014-15 school year the IDOE permitted school districts to allow "do not pass" (DNP) IREAD-3 students the opportunity to take the 4th grade ISTEP if they were provided a comprehensive 4th grade curriculum. Findings from the literature do not support retaining a student, even an elementary school student, because of an assessment (Anderson, Whipple, & Jimerson, 2002; Andrew, 2014; Jacob & Lefgren; Warren, Hoffman, & Andrew 2014). Students who are retained typically continue to struggle academically, develop behavioral issues, and are less likely to graduate from high school. Grade retention is identified as the most powerful predictor of future dropout of African American males.

Findings from the literature also indicate there are differences in the retention of a student based on gender and/or racial differences (Anderson et al., 2002; Andrew, 2014; Jacob & Lefgren, 2007; Roderick & Nagaoka, 2005; Warren et al., 2014). Retention rates are highest among Blacks and Hispanics and are also higher among children who were born outside of the United States (Warren et al., 2014). Furthermore, an additional finding from the literature

indicates that Indiana continues to have a fourth grade reading achievement gap in 2013 between African American and Caucasian students. The reading achievement gap among fourth grade Hispanic students and Caucasian students also remains unchanged, but is smaller than the gap between African American and Caucasian students (Bohrnstedt, Kimitto, Ogur, Sherman, & Chan 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; The Nation's Report Card, 2013). A reading achievement gap among students of different races would suggest that Indiana is retaining more African American and Hispanic/Latino students than Caucasian students. The literature supports the findings in this study concerning the beliefs around the retention of minority students in the state of Indiana. Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals each report (Table 41) that minority and ELL students are retained more in their district/school.

The findings from this survey reveal that there is a significant difference among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction the following year for students who "do not pass" (DNP) the IREAD-3 assessment in two attempts (Table 13). Administrators in special education tended to agree they had comprehensive knowledge of the requirement to provide third grade reading instruction for a DNP IREAD-3 student whereas elementary school principals strongly agreed. There is also a significant difference among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum with students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment. Administrators in special education tended to agree they had comprehensive knowledge of the IDOE requirement to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum whereas elementary school principals tended to strongly agree. A scope and sequence provides

teachers with a “road map” on what reading foundational skill should be taught in a sequential order. Some districts/schools in the state of Indiana do not purchase a research based reading curriculum. The IDOE requires the use of an approved reading curriculum for students; this demand aligns with the findings in the literature. The findings from the literature report the importance of using a reading curriculum that begin with phonics (Biemiller, 1977; Blevins, 2006; Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001). “Students, who struggle with reading, including those with dyslexia, comprise at least 30% of the population” (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007). Reading instruction for students with learning disabilities need sound reading instruction in early literacy skills (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler 2002; Clay, 1991; Good & Kaminski, 2002). Furthermore, students with learning disabilities in reading comprehension or basic reading skills frequently have weaknesses in reading fluency and do not comprehend what they have read and may miss the larger meanings of passages and books (Fuchs L., Fuchs D., Mathes, & Lipsey 2000; Fuchs L., Fuch D., Hosp & Jenkins 2001; Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schadtschnieder, & Torgensen, 2010). It is imperative that schools utilize a research based reading program that develops the foundational reading skills of all students. A student with a learning disability in reading should be provided the instruction that he or she needs in order to become a successful reader.

Data from this study’s findings suggested that there were no statistical significant differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the history of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004 (Table 15). In addition, there were no statistical significant differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge of the research surrounding the Reading First Grant and the Reading First Initiative that has been published in multiple research

reports and on What Works Clearinghouse. Significant amounts of research and program reviews have been conducted in the area of reading instruction, but many educators may not be aware or use these resources. Findings from the literature report the federal government created The What Works Clearinghouse in 2002 as an initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the WWC is to be a resource for informed education decision making and provide credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy. Research published on the What Works Clearinghouse reiterates the importance of literacy by stating, “Reading ability is a key predictor of achievement in mathematics and science, and the global information economy requires today’s American youth to have far more advanced literacy skills than those required of any previous generation” (Institute of Education Sciences [IES], 2008, p. 4).

A significant difference was found among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the perception of knowledge the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade. The Tamhane 2 post-hoc test found that superintendents and elementary school principals slightly agreed about having comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research and proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with research, to ensure all students learn to read well by the end of third grade in comparison to administrators in special education. Reading development in children progresses in difficulty from year to year in order to ensure the students are reading by the end of third grade. As reported in the literature, reading skills are acquired as students move from one grade

level to the next. At the end of kindergarten, students should be prepared to learn to read and write. Students should also be encouraged to write and read independently. A few of the accomplishments students make in first grade include: accurately decoding one-syllable and nonsense words, answering simple written comprehension questions, monitoring his or her own reading and self-correcting, using phonics based knowledge to spell independently, and engaging in a variety of literary activities. A major focus for second grade teachers is to ensure all students understand the alphabetic principle and then move on to more challenging reading tasks. At the end of second grade, students should be able to read and comprehend fiction and nonfiction books at their level, be motivated enough to read independently, be able to recognize patterns in words and spell correctly in his or her writing, and make reasonable judgments of what to include in writing pieces. In third grade, students should be able to read aloud an appropriate grade level text with fluency and comprehension (Griffin et al.,1998). Superintendents and elementary school principals have a better comprehensive knowledge than administrators in special education concerning the history of the IREAD-3 assessment and the importance of students reading by the third grade. Findings from the literature indicate that students should be proficient readers by the end of third grade (Fiester, 2010; Flanagan, 2013; Graves, 1998; Hernandez, 2011). If a student is not reading proficiently by third grade, he or she will experience the “fourth-grade slump.” The fourth grade-slump is a phenomenon that Chall and Jacobs refer to when schools and teachers notice a sudden drop in reading scores. Chall and Jacobs recommend focusing on vocabulary development, fluency, and automaticity to support reading development (Honig et al., 2008). Students who are not proficient readers by the third grade will struggle with later academic content.

Beliefs

The data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that NCLB had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment and the Reading First Grant had a positive impact on reading instruction. In addition, there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction, and the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction. Last, there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on teacher accountability related to reading instruction (Table 17). Respondents tended to disagree that NCLB has had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment, slightly agreed the Reading First Grant has had a positive impact on reading instruction, and agreed the research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction. Respondents beliefs concerning federal legislation in education and research in reading indicate there is uncertainty among superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals in relationship to the impact of federal legislation and research in reading has had on their district/school. Findings from the literature discuss how federal legislation has initiated grants to support a district/school in closing achievement gaps and required an assessment to hold a district/school/teacher accountable for student learning ("1999 State of the Union Address", 1999, para. 40; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000). The IREAD-3 assessment is one result of federal and

state legislation that requires an assessment to measure a student's academic ability. Assessments are also used to measure the effectiveness of a district, school, and a teacher.

The data from this study's findings suggested that there are statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment provided their district/school with data specific to a students' reading level. Superintendents tended to strongly disagree that the IREAD-3 assessment provided their district with valuable information concerning a students' reading level whereas administrators in special education slightly disagreed. There is also a statistical difference among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief concerning if the IREAD-3 assessment provided their district/school with data specific to a students' reading concerns. Elementary school principals tended to disagree that the IREAD-3 provided their school with data specific to a students' reading concerns whereas administrators in special education tended to slightly agree IREAD-3 provided them information specific to a students' reading concerns. In addition, there was a statistical significance among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief the IREAD-3 assessment had a positive impact by providing the district/school information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3. Elementary school principals tended to disagree the IREAD-3 assessment provided their school with information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3. Administrators in special education tended to slightly agree the IREAD-3 the IREAD-3 assessment provided their school with information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3 (Table 19). The IREAD-3 assessment does not provide a district/school with useful data to guide future instruction. Findings in the literature discuss the importance of assessments as a means to provide useful data to guide instruction (Fuhrken, 2009). The IREAD-3 assessment should be providing

district/school useful information to assist in providing remediation support. The use of one assessment score to determine grade level retention is not the intent of an assessment(s). The literature also notes that even with a high level of reliability and validity assessment scores can vary by 20% (Marzano, 2010). Given the range of discrepancy of 20%, it would seem that students who score 20% below the IREAD-3 pass score of 446 should also be included in the pass group.

The data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in our district/school by providing us the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader. In addition, there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention in our district/school by requiring students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts to register as a third grader with the state of Indiana (Table 21). Respondents collectively believe the IREAD-3 assessment has had a negative impact on their district/school. Unlike other assessments in the state of Indiana, the data from the IREAD-3 assessment is used to determine grade level retention for a student. Findings in the literature resonate the negative impact retention has on students, schools, and school districts (Anderson, Whipple, & Jimerson, 2002; Andrew, 2014; Roderick & Nagaoka, 2005; Lefgren, 2007; Warren, Hoffman, & Andrew 2014). Retention should not be based on a single assessment. The IDOE permits the district/school to determine if a DNP student is socially promoted to the fourth grade but requires that students to be registered as a third grader with the state of Indiana. The lack of consistent retention practices among districts/schools create issues when a family moves their child from one district/school to another in the state of Indiana.

The data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment has identified gender differences in retention in our district/school. In addition, there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the belief that the IREAD-3 assessment has identified racial differences in retention in our district/school (Table 23). The respondents collectively disagreed the IREAD-3 assessment identified either gender or racial differences in retention as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment. Data from the central themes in this study conflict with data concerning the beliefs that the IREAD-3 assessment has identified racial differences in retention in our district/school. In addition, findings from the literature are clear; retention rates are higher among boys than among girls (Warren Hoffman, & Andrew, 2014). An interesting finding in the research conducted by Bond and Dyskra concerned a student's gender and readiness to read. Girls tended to have a greater degree of readiness for reading at the beginning of first grade and tended to read at a higher level at the end of the first grade. None of the instructional materials or methods treatment groups had a unique effect on the achievement of boys and girls; girls tended to be better readers in all programs. Forty-three respondents believe there are challenges in gender grade level retention (Table 40). The respondents went on to explain boys are often retained more than girls (six) and girls tend to develop reading skills at an earlier age than boys (four). Seventy-four of the respondents identified challenges in minority grade level retention (Table 41). Respondents identified either minority or ELL students were at a greater risk of not passing the IREAD-3 assessment and being retained at a greater rate (Table 41).

Impact of Reading Instructional Approaches

Phonics Instruction

The data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding if phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact for female and male students in their district/school (Table 27). Findings in the research suggest that boys' reading development is different than that of girls. Boys tend to take longer to learn letters, words, and identify words in context (Biedmiller, 1977). Teachers also may have gender stereotypes that make it a challenge for boys' self-concept of their reading ability. Teachers need to be aware of gender stereotypes and make necessary adjustments in their instruction to encourage the development of reading abilities in males (Bond & Dyskra, 1967; Retelsdorf, Schwartz, & Asbrock, 2015; Senn, 2012; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002).

The study also indicated that a central theme from the respondents concerning the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment indicated the assessment is a challenge for some students with IEPS (Table 39). Findings from the literature indicate that reading fluency is often indirectly assessed on timed state assessments. A student who struggles with reading fluently may not complete an assessment in the allotted amount of time given. Students with learning disabilities in reading may not comprehend whole phrases and make decoding errors in reading, which reduce the reading pace and prevent them from comprehending the sentence. Fluency in reading is an important skill; yet it is often neglected in reading instructional programs (Allington, 1983; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins 2001; Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Lipsey 2000; Kame'enui & Simmons, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Findings from the literature also indicate that children as young as three or four have demonstrated phonemic awareness The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) was established to

synthesize the development in early literacy skills from the ages of zero to five and found six variables that represent early literacy skills and are a strong predictor for later success in literacy. The six variables include alphabet knowledge (AK), phonological awareness (PA), rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters and digits, RAN of objects and colors, writing, or writing a name, and phonological memory. Furthermore, students who are not exposed to experiences that promote early literacy skills begin preschool or kindergarten at a disadvantage. Literacy begins at birth with communication from parent to child. Literacy development can then be enriched with students from low social economic backgrounds through the increased awareness to the advantages of preschool and community programs that support literacy (Bryant, Bradley, Crossland, & Maclean, 1989; Flood & Anders, 2005; NELP, 2008, p. 16). Additionally, U.S. federal legislation required that the phonics component in federally funded initiatives be explicit and systematic in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2011. Phonics is systematic when the teacher clearly defines the sound and spelling relationship for the student. According to Marilyn Adams (2001), the goal of systematic instruction involves maximizing the likelihood that when a student is learning a new concept, he or she already possesses the prior knowledge and understanding to see the value in the lesson.

Additional findings from the literature indicate suggest that a district/school intervene early if they notice a student is struggling with early reading foundational skills. Assessments such as DIBELS can be used in kindergarten to monitor student progress in reading. DIBELS assessments are based on the Big Ideas in Beginning Reading: Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Accuracy, and Fluency with Text, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. Reading assessments help teachers understand how their students are developing as readers and provides critical information for making important instructional decisions. Some schools may also utilize

a student interventionist or a special education teacher to support reading remediation. The interventionist or special education teacher may utilize instructional materials reviewed by The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) that are specific to the student's specific reading challenges. Although further research should be conducted, children who struggle with reading at all grades can make substantial reading gains when they are provided systematic and intensive interventions that may be integrated with classroom instruction or are supplemental to classroom instruction (Afflerbach, 2011; Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O'Connor, 2014; Good, Kaminski, Smith, Simmons, Kame'enui, & Wallin, 2003; Institute of Education Sciences, 2008; Snow et al., 1999). A district/school should intervene early when they notice a student is struggling with learning early foundational reading skills.

Findings from the literature report that recent literature connects the importance of students learning phonics to help build neural systems in a child's brain. When a person reads, he or she has activity in the front the brain and two areas in the back of the brain. A student who struggles with reading can be found to have underactivity in the two areas in the back of the brain. Within the two lobes in the back of the brain, there are three areas that are critically important for developed readers: Broca's area, parietal-temporal lobe, and the occipital-temporal area. Shaywitz's research is important to the field of education because it proves a neurobiological difference in the brains of good readers versus struggling readers. Skilled readers show the highest level of brain activation in the occipital-temporal area. After a reader correctly analyzes and identifies a word several times, he or she forms a neural model of that word and it is permanently stored in the occipital-temporal area. Future reading of stored words in the occipital-temporal area happened automatically. Evidence-based reading instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics can change brain activity in struggling readers and assist in the activation

of the areas in the back of the brain. Educators have often believed that if a student is having trouble reading there is a developmental concern, but research has shown that the problem could be from significant inactivity in the back areas of the brain if the student does not get help as soon as possible the reading problem will remain (Joseph, Noble, & Eden, 2001, p. 567; Shaywitz, 2008). Students who are skilled readers likely have had phonics instruction and will successfully pass the IREAD-3 assessment; students who have not been exposed to phonics instruction will be at a disadvantage. In addition, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] panel reported that several reading skills are critical to becoming good readers: explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance reading comprehension. The analysis of hundreds of studies in the area of phonics confirmed that teaching phonics, and related phonics skills, is a more effective way to teach children early reading skills than is embedded phonics or no phonics instruction (2000; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000).

Last, data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding if phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact for African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Caucasian, and Multi-racial students. Respondents collectively agreed that phonics based instruction has had a positive impact for all of the previous mentioned groups. In addition, findings in the literature stress the importance of providing reading materials in the classroom that students can identify with the characters/setting (Meier, 2015). It is important that books students have access to represent each culture in the classroom. The research concerning phonics based reading instruction is extensive and reports the importance of utilizing a phonics based reading program. Teachers must "balance" phonics instruction for students who are not successful in this reading approach.

Whole Language

The data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding if whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for female and male students in their district/school (Table 30). Findings from the research indicate that boys are more likely to struggle with whole language instruction as boys tend to learn letters, words and words in context at a slower pace than girls (Biedmiller, 1977). A whole language approach to reading instruction requires students to learn whole (word) to part (letter). Boys may not have a solid foundation in letter recognition and recognizing letters represent sound (phonemes). Findings in the literature suggest phonemic awareness is a strong predictor of children who experience early reading success (Blevins, 2006; Ehri, 2004; Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Good & Kaminski, 2002). Based on the literature, many boys may struggle with learning to read with the whole language reading approach.

Interestingly, studies done in the 1960's produced conflicting reports. A study conducted in 1967 reported the whole language approach was superior for average and above-average pupils, while the Basal approach was better for students who were struggling readers. Another conclusion of this study-involved vocabulary, word study skills must be emphasized and taught systematically regardless of what approach to initial reading instruction is used. In contrast, Jeanne S. Chall, a researcher, Chall visited many schools and talked to teachers and administrators about reading instruction. Chall also analyzed reading series being used in the schools she visited and took anecdotal notes on how teachers were using the reading series (Chall, 1967). Chall concluded that a change to a code emphasis (phonics) over a meaning emphasis (whole language) would enhance a child's attainment of reading (Guzzetti, 2002).

Furthermore, findings in the literature indicate that whole language instruction is appealing to educators because of its emphases on whole pieces of literature and functional language as opposed to segmented texts (whole to part), students' choice as opposed to teacher-sponsored whole-class assignments, and integrated language experiences as opposed to direct instruction in isolated skill sequences. Whole-language teachers observe their students closely, and based on what they learn about their observations, they develop the curriculum with their student's instructional needs in mind. Whole language involves teachers who are classroom researchers, participants, coaches, learners, resource persons, and perhaps most important, listeners. Advocates of whole language also argue that students tend to over rely on phonics and lose the skills necessary for making text predictions and reading comprehension. Children who are successful in whole-language programs tend to be visual and tactile learners. Whole-language programs usually emphasize fun, literature, hands-on learning, and peer interactions (Carbo, 1995; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Meyer, 2002). Based on the research one might conclude that whole language reading instruction is good for some of the students but not all of the students. Only 48% of the respondents answered "Yes" their district/school uses whole language reading instruction to support students early literacy.

In addition, data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding if whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact for African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Caucasian, and Multi-racial students. Findings in the literature have shown that whole language instruction by itself has not supported students in developing necessary foundational reading skills (Jeynes & Littell, 2000; Krashen, 2002; Stahl, McKenna, & Pagnucco, 1993; Stahl & Miller, 1989). A combination of programs, such as a basal program with supplementary materials, often is

superior to single approaches. The reading instruction delivered by teachers who use the whole language approach indicates that the addition of language experiences to any type of reading instruction will ultimately benefit the student. (Bond & Dyskra, 1967). Research in reading indicates the use of only whole language reading instruction is not sufficient to develop the necessary reading foundational skills by grade three. Boys in particular need more time to learn the alphabetic principle and phonics prior to learning whole words and would benefit from a phonics based reading program.

Balanced Literacy

The data from this study's findings suggested that there are statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding if balanced literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for female and male students in their district/school (Table 33). Balanced literacy is defined in this study as a program that combines both whole language and phonics. The strongest elements are incorporated into a literacy program that aims to guide students toward proficient and lifelong reading. Findings in the literature indicate a balanced literacy program would include phonics instruction, guided reading, supported by reading aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, and other approaches. Excellent elementary reading instruction balances skills instruction and holistic literacy opportunities. Students who show the highest achievements are consistently reading and writing (Fountas & Pinnell 1996; Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002). A balanced literacy approach would provide students the necessary foundational skills in reading before they learn whole words.

In addition, data from this study's findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding if balance literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Caucasian,

and Multi-racial students. Findings from the literature describe balanced literacy as a blend of both phonics and whole language instruction. Systematic, sequential phonics instruction in kindergarten and first grade is the most effective instruction, but it does not acquire all the procedures students need to become successful readers and writer. A balanced literacy program will include a wide range of reading and writing experiences, including reading to children, reading with children, and reading by children (Willows, 2002). A successful balanced literacy program for grades K-3 can include phonics instruction, guided reading, supported by reading aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, and other approaches (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Students who show the highest achievements are consistently reading and writing (Pressley, Roehrig, Bogner, Raphael, & Dolezal, 2002). A strong elementary reading curriculum will balance skills instruction and holistic literacy opportunities. Ninety-five percent of the respondents in this study report that balanced literacy instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes (Table 31). Balanced literacy instruction integrates the strong components of a phonics based literacy instruction and whole language instruction. Teachers utilize both methods to teach students how to read. There is not a “one size fits all” method for teaching reading. Balanced literacy provides a “balance” of approaches to successfully meet the instructional needs of each student.

Impact of Retention

The data from this study’s findings suggested that there were no statistical differences among the three (3) groups of respondents regarding the overall negative impact has had on the retention of male student, female student, and a district/school minority population. As previously stated, findings from the literature do not support retaining a student. Students who are retained typically continue to struggle academically, develop behavioral issues, and are less

likely to graduate from high school. Findings from the literature indicate there are differences in the retention of a student based on gender and/or racial differences. Grade retention is identified as the most powerful predictor of future dropout of African American males (Anderson, Whipple, & Jimerson, 2002; Andrew, 2014; Roderick & Nagaoka, 2005; Lefgren, 2007; Stroup & Robbins, 1972; Warren, Hoffman, & Andrew 2014). Retention rates in the United States are higher among boys than among girls, are higher among Black and Hispanic students, and are higher among children who are born outside of the United States (Warren, Hoffman, & Andrew, 2014). Grade level retention, even in the primary grades, is considered a highly significant negative event. (Andrew, 2014). The findings in the literature are clear, grade level retention has been proven to have adverse effects on later academic success and high school completion (Andrew, 2014). A student's educational career should not be based on a decades-old high-stakes environment emphasizing test scores or other singular indicators of academic ability at the primary and secondary school levels (Duncan 2012). The IREAD-3 assessment emphasizes the use of a single test score to determine if a student should move on to the fourth grade.

Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions of school district superintendents, special education administration, and elementary school principals concerning their current knowledge and beliefs on the IREAD-3 assessment. It is important to identify the perceptions of knowledge and beliefs concerning the IREAD-3 assessment as it directly impact practice in a district/school, whereas perceptions and beliefs impact implementation. The IREAD-3 is intended to measure a students' reading ability at the end of third grade. The majority of respondents disagree that the IREAD-3 assessment provides the district/school with valuable information concerning a students' reading level. The IDOE believes the purpose of the IREAD-3 assessment is to

measure foundational reading standards through grade three. Based on the Indiana Academic Standards, *IREAD-3* is a summative assessment that was developed in accordance with House Enrolled Act 1367 (also known as Public Law 109 in 2010), which requires the evaluation of reading skills for students who are in grade three beginning in the Spring of 2012 to ensure that all students can read proficiently before moving on to grade four. It is apparent through findings from the research that assessments are not intended to be used to determine grader level retention. Effective assessments provide a district/school with information on how to guide instruction, but are not used as a single data measure to retain a student.

The importance of reading instruction has existed in the United States since the colonial times. Reading has always been considered a valuable skill and a necessary skill for a successful and fulfilling life. Since the creation of the International Reading Association (IRA) in 1956, now known as the International Literacy Association (ILA), the focus has been to improve reading instruction. The ILA is important because it supports literacy professionals and professional development activities based on current research.

Ensuring students were provided an equitable education has been a major focus of legislation in the field of education since 1965 when President Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA gave billions of dollars to private and public schools to support remedial reading positions in schools. In the 1960's disadvantaged black children scored far below their white peers on achievement tests, and approximately 60% of non-white students dropped out of school before graduating (Jeffrey, 1972). The goal of ESEA was to help all public school districts, with additional money going to districts that had large proportions of students from low socio-economic families (Title I). Early studies suggested initial improvements in educational services for economically disadvantaged children in the

content areas of reading and math, but later assessments indicated that benefits from additional services were not sustained (Jeffrey, 1978). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 was enacted to address the gap in achievement between students who were high-performing and those who were low-performing, including students who were disadvantaged and/or from a minority background. One of the goals of NCLB (2001) was to ensure teachers were implementing research-based reading instruction to assist with reducing the number of students who were not reading at grade level. As a result of NCLB the Reading First Program was created. The central goal of the Reading First Program is to ensure that all students read well by the end of grade three, thereby setting the stage for students to reach their full academic potential in subsequent grades. In summary, federal legislation over the past fifty years has “paved the way” for states to create accountability measures for districts/schools around the area of reading instruction. As accountability, assessments, and the importance of reading by the third grade has expanded some states have erroneously measured a students’ reading ability by one assessment. This one assessment is used to determine if a student is retained in the third grade or socially promoted to the fourth grade. As one elementary school principal survey respondent accurately stated, “Retaining a student on the bias of a 90-minute test in a school year that is well over 1,000 hours is irrational and unsound policy”. Third grade students in the 2015-16 school year spent approximately 9.5 hours on both the IREAD-3 and ISTEP+ assessment.

Critical to a developing a students’ reading ability by the third grade is the instruction the student receives in the classroom. Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals must have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of best practices in reading instruction. Knowledge of how to create a classroom that is conducive to

reading for all cultures is of the utmost importance. Special attention should be given to how boys and minority students learn, and feel inspired, to read.

The results of this study highlight overall the agreement (or strong agreement) of respondents by position of the knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment and the standards that are assessed. Respondents agree they have a knowledge base of public law 109, accountability as mandated by NCLB, impact assessments have on AYP/teacher evaluations/overall school rating, and the IDOE requirements for students who are DNP on IREAD-3. Interestingly the respondents collectively disagreed they have comprehensive knowledge of the impact of the Reading First Grant and the research reports that are available on What Works Clearinghouse. What Works Clearinghouse can be utilized as a resource to a district/school who seeks research on multiple instructional practices.

The qualitative findings in this study supported the literature review findings and the implications of current assessment/retention practices that are occurring in the United States. The narrative comments from the respondents by position provide additional insight into retention differences among various cultures. The focus on accountability and assessments are affecting the quality instruction that teachers are able to provide students. Districts/schools share frustration to the loss of instructional time due to necessary test prep activities and the amount of time students actually spend on assessments. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) argues that students with academic, emotional, or behavioral difficulties do not benefit from either repeating a grade or social promotion. In 2007, the NASP released a position paper to families outlying the effects of grade retention as an “ineffective and possibly harmful intervention” (Jimerson, Woehr, & Kaufman, 2007, p. 1). In 2011, the NASP released an

additional position paper recommending school districts implement models of service delivery to students instead of grade retention that ensure:

Multitiered problem-solving models to provide early and intensive evidence-based instruction and intervention to meet the needs of all students across academic, behavioral, and social–emotional domains, equitable opportunities to learn for students from diverse backgrounds, universal screening for academic, behavioral, and social–emotional difficulties, and frequently progress monitor students and evaluate interventions to ensure they are meeting the academic needs of the students. (p. 5)

Yet, it still appears that despite the overwhelming research against grade level retention, many policymakers see grade retention as a reasonable approach, even an intervention, for a struggling student. In addition, research indicates grade level retention is the number one predictor of a student later dropping out of high school.

Limitations

This study involved surveying educational professionals in the state of Indiana to include: (a) superintendents, (b) administrators in special education, and (c) elementary school principals. The focus of the survey was to examine the perceptions of each respondent group concerning their knowledge, beliefs, and impact of the IREAD-3 assessment.

One limitation of this study was the inability to survey the two of the 12 metropolitan areas in the state. The request to survey one of the schools in one metropolitan area (school A) went unanswered whereas the researcher was unable to survey the other school in a different metropolitan area (school B) as it was a conflict of interest with the researcher. It should be noted that both districts were below the state average concerning the IREAD-3 pass rate. If these two school districts would have been able to participate in the IREAD-3 survey it is likely

additional valuable information would have been collected from the superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals.

A second limitation is the unequal group sizes of the respondent groups. The number of respondents in one category were small compared to the total number of respondents in another category. Due to the unequal variance the researcher ran and reported the Welch F statistic and Tamhane 2 post hoc test to account for unequal sample sizes. In addition, due to small n for respondent groups more complex analysis (e.g., Logistic Regression models could not be conducted) was performed.

A third limitation of this study was the time frame the electronic survey was distributed. The survey ran eight-weeks during the fall of 2015. Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals are busy in the fall with back to school events. Superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals receive quite a few online surveys and this survey may have been overlooked. The return rate on this survey was 30.5%.

A fourth limitation could have been the use of technology to survey the respondents. The on-line survey tool BSU Qualtrics was utilized for the survey distribution and data collection. Schools have security measures to limit e-mails, and on occasion unfamiliar emails get sent to a “spam” or “clutter” folder. In addition, respondents need to have a general familiarity with technology in order to access the survey. The respondent must be able to open the link to the survey, answer the survey in its entirety, and submit data electronically. Respondents unfamiliar with electronic surveys may have had difficulty opening the link or had trouble accessing the survey on their device. Furthermore, schools have spam filters that could have blocked the survey. An eight-week collection period with reminders was utilized to help offset this situation

and encourage respondents to participate in the survey. BSU Qualtrics allows the researchers to see what e-mails failed or bounced back, allowing the researcher to attempt to correct the problem.

Implications for Practice

The state of Indiana needs to reassess the IREAD-3 assessment based on the negative implications the assessment is having on a district/school, classroom teacher, and the student and their families. One assessment should not be used to determine if a student is able to read or if he or she should be promoted to the fourth grade. Quality assessments provide a district/school with information concerning a student's academic level and contain useful data to help guide teacher instruction. The IREAD-3 assessment does not provide useful data to a school concerning a student's reading level or concerns. Schools that contain students who are economically disadvantaged, ELL students, and minority students will likely have an increase rate of students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment.

Reading will be improved if teachers ensure each student has a solid foundation in the alphabetic principle and phonics prior to learning whole words. Students who memorize whole words (sight words) prior to having a solid foundation in the alphabet or phonics will struggle decoding new words. If a student spends too much time decoding words he or she will not be able to comprehend a text.

Based on the IREAD-3 data, the IDOE can support a district/school by providing professional learning for teachers in the area of reading instruction. In addition, the IDOE can recommend or provide instructional supports for a district/school that has a high percentage of students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment.

In order to improve the reading outcomes for all minority students a district/school need to focus on the growth of each individual student. Students need to have access to books that represent all of the cultures in the classrooms. A minority student will should be able to identify with a character(s) in multiple books. A district/school should consider the role poverty, and lack of access to books, plays in relationship to reading development. It may not be a student's ethnicity but rather his or her social economic class.

In order to improve reading among boys special attention should also be given to how boys learn to read. Boys develop their reading foundational skills differently than girls and they often benefit from learning part to whole before moving onto whole words. The first recommendation is to provide male reading models to male students. A district/school should implement programs that have community members who are males and pair them with boys who struggle with reading. The second recommendation is to engage the students' interest in a book. Boys tend to read less than girls do and teachers need to provide genres/topics that interest the boy readers in their classroom. The educational importance of engaging interest and providing a student choice should not be underestimated. Third, a supportive home environment that contains a father who reads to his sons will encourage later reading. Recent research has also indicated a teacher may have a bias about the reading development in males that impact his or her instruction. Teachers need to be aware of their biases and not let them get in the way of ensuring all students learn to read.

Students with reading disabilities often struggle with fluency that lead to a decrease in text comprehension. A district/school should provide a student, with a learning disability in reading, precise, and robust intervention that will support the reading instruction for that student. Reading assessments are often a struggle for students with learning disabilities as the assessment

is often timed and contain grade level reading. A student with and IEP can be provided extended time on an assessment but is not provided support for the reading portion. An alternative assessment for these students may prove to be more beneficial.

Research provided by the ILA and NCTE is invaluable to the work of developing our students into successful lifelong readers. Both organizations provide research articles, resources, and conferences to support teachers to become better equipped to teach reading. A district/school would benefit from joining these organizations to keep current on the best instructional supports for students in the area of reading.

Recommendations

1. Students should be able to develop reading foundational skills without an assessment that will retain them if they do not meet assessment expectations. Mastery of reading foundational skills may occur at different ages for students. Students should be provided with instruction that is precise to their individual instructional needs in the area of reading.
2. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) should provide an assessment that provides valuable information concerning a student's reading level or reading concerns. This information should be used to help support instruction and provided remediation to the student.
3. A district/school should provide the six variables (alphabet knowledge (AK), phonological awareness (PA), rapid automatic naming (RAN) of letters and digits, RAN of objects and colors, writing, or writing a name, and phonological memory) to student in a preschool setting. Students who are not exposed to experiences that promote early literacy skills are at a disadvantage.
4. A district/school should contain intervention programs to support all struggling readers. Continuous efforts should be made by the district/school to ensure students have every opportunity to learn to read regardless of their age or grade.

5. The IDOE should provide superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals an opportunity to provide feedback on how the IREAD-3 assessment impacts their district/school. There should be extensive conversation on how the IREAD-3 assessment impacts the students we service in the state of Indiana. If it is determined that this assessment is not in the best interest of students stakeholders should determine the next step.
6. Classroom libraries should be provided to each classroom so all students have access to books. Students should be given a choice in the books that they read and regular conferences between the teacher and the student should be conducted to encourage independent reading.
7. Professional development sessions should be created for teachers to discuss best practices in the area of reading instruction. Teachers should be frequently engaged in collaborative discussion around student achievement. Research, literature, webinars, conferences, and literacy organizations can all be used to support growth in teacher practice.
8. The IDOE should have a team that previews current research and implications on retention before connecting retention to an assessment. A team of stakeholders can provide the IDOE with valuable information and feedback prior to a new initiative.
9. Recommendations for future research should incorporate (a) more comprehensive analysis of “Do Not Know” and “No” which represents do not use, (b) examination of the influence poverty has on a student as he or she learns to read, and (c) while this study has investigated perceptions of knowledge and beliefs of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals it may be interesting to survey teachers and families.
10. Recommendations for future research could include both charter and private schools. Indiana currently has 38 charter schools and 770 private schools. Charter schools and parochial schools

are provided some autonomy in how they teach and what they teach. It would be of interest to determine if the administrators in these schools have similar knowledge and beliefs concerning the IREAD-3 assessment.

11. Recommendations for future research would include a survey of the teachers and students/families around the IREAD-3 assessment. Third grade teachers may have additional insight into instructional practices and remediation of DNP IREAD-3 students. Families would provide interesting data on how the assessments impact their children in grade 3. Families who have a child who has been retained as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment could provide insight on how retention has affected their child.

12. Recommendations for future research could explore reading programs that are used within a district/school in Indiana and the fidelity of the use of the program.

13. This study collected perceptions of school administrators. More research needs to be done to include observational data/study on classrooms that are high SES but have a strong IREAD-3 pass rate.

14. Longitudinal research can be conducted to determine educational outcomes for students who pass and do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment.

15. Teacher pre-service education should include courses in reading development and instructional practices in reading instruction.

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Appendix A

CITI Training

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Karyn Tomkinson (Smith) (ID: 4244716)
- **Email:** kjsmith3@bsu.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Unit:** Special Education

- **Curriculum Group:** RCR FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

- **Report ID:** 13435084
- **Completion Date:** 12/13/2014
- **Expiration Date:** N/A
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Ball State University	12/04/14	No Quiz
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Introduction	12/04/14	No Quiz
Mentoring (RCR-Basic)	12/04/14	5/5 (100%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic)	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic)	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Conclusion	12/13/14	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
 Email: citiprogram@miami.edu
 Phone: 305-243-7970
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

Collaborative Institutional
 Training Initiative

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT****

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Karyn Tomkinson (Smith) (ID: 4244716)
- **Email:** kjsmith3@bsu.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Unit:** Special Education

- **Curriculum Group:** RCR FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

- **Report ID:** 13435084
- **Report Date:** 12/19/2014
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Introduction	12/04/14	No Quiz
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic)	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Ball State University	12/04/14	No Quiz
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic)	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring (RCR-Basic)	12/04/14	5/5 (100%)
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Conclusion	12/13/14	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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Collaborative Institutional
Training Initiative
at the University of Miami

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Karyn Tomkinson (Smith) (ID: 4244718)
- **Email:** kjsmith3@bsu.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Unit:** Special Education

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Report ID:** 13435083
- **Completion Date:** 12/16/2014
- **Expiration Date:** 12/15/2017
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score¹:** 92

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction	12/13/14	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research	12/13/14	10/10 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	12/13/14	4/5 (80%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE	12/13/14	4/5 (80%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE	12/13/14	4/5 (80%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	12/15/14	4/5 (80%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	12/15/14	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	12/16/14	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research	12/16/14	2/5 (40%)
Ball State University	12/04/14	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Karyn Tomkinson (Smith) (ID: 4244716)
- **Email:** kjsmith3@bsu.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Unit:** Special Education

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Report ID:** 13435083
- **Report Date:** 12/19/2014
- **Current Score**:** 92

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Students in Research	12/13/14	10/10 (100%)
Ball State University	12/04/14	No Quiz
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	12/13/14	4/5 (80%)
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction	12/13/14	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE	12/13/14	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE	12/13/14	4/5 (80%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE	12/13/14	4/5 (80%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	12/15/14	4/5 (80%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research	12/16/14	2/5 (40%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	12/15/14	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	12/16/14	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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 Email: citisupport@miami.edu
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Appendix B

IRB Approval



Office of Research Integrity
 Institutional Review Board (IRB)
 2000 University Avenue
 Muncie, IN 47306-0155
 Phone: 765-285-5070

DATE: June 2, 2015

TO: Karyn Tomkinson, MS

FROM: Ball State University IRB

RE: IRB protocol # 764251-1

TITLE: INDIANA READING EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION (IREAD-3)
 ASSESSMENT AND THIRD GRADE RETENTION: FINDINGS FROM
 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

DECISION DATE: June 2, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on June 2, 2015 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

Exempt Categories:

	Category 1: Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
X	Category 2: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior
	Category 3: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
	Category 4: Research involving the collection of study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or

	if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
	Category 5: Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs.
	Category 6: Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed which contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Editorial Notes:

1. N/A

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact (ORI Staff) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

Bryan Byers, PhD/Chair
Institutional Review Board

Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/Director
Office of Research Integrity

Appendix C

Participant request letter

Dear “Participants’s name”,

My name is Karyn Tomkinson, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Special Education at Ball State University. I am working on my dissertation as a part of my doctoral program. The title of my dissertation study is “Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment and Third Grade Retention: Findings from School Administrators.” Best instruction in reading and retention for students who do not pass state assessments have been a focus in the United States since the early 1900’s (Guzzetti, Alverman & Johns, 2002). The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and knowledge of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals concerning best practices in reading instruction, grade-level retention, and the impact retention has on gender and minority differences in the State of Indiana.

I am writing to request your participation in this study. For this study, you are being asked to participate in an on-line survey conducted through Ball State University’s Qualtrics software. Questions included in the survey will be related to demographic information, knowledge and beliefs concerning reading instruction and grade-level retention based on state assessments, and open-ended response questions. Participation in this study is voluntary and the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

If you participate in this survey, you will be asked to give your consent in the Qualtrics software. Please click “I agree” on the Informed Consent page at the bottom to participate in this study. The anticipated timeline to conduct this study will be September 14, 2015 to November 13, 2015. If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to discuss any questions with you.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and would be excited to include your views in this meaningful research study. After completion of this study, I would be happy to share the results with you. All data are reported as aggregate data.

Thank you in advance for taking time to assist me in this research project.

Follow this link to the Survey:

Sincerely,

Karyn Tomkinson

Researcher Contact Information
Primary Investigator

Karyn Tomkinson
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Special Education
Ball State University
KJSmith3@bsu.edu

Faculty Advisor
Dr. Michael Harvey
Professor
2000 W. University Ave.
Muncie, IN 47306
Ball State University
Department of Special Education (TC 719)
Ball State University
mwharvey@bsu.edu
765-285-5715

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

Appendix D

Participant reminder letter

Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., ‘Administrator last name’

This email serves a friendly reminder to participate in my dissertation study titled: “Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment and Third Grade Retention: Findings from School Administrators.” This research study is important, as it is the first study in the state of Indiana that pertains specifically to reading instruction, reading assessments, and grade-level retention because of the IREAD-3 assessment. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and knowledge of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals concerning best practices in reading instruction, grade-level retention, and the impact retention has on gender and minority differences in the State of Indiana.

You are being asked to participate in this survey through Qualtrics software and Ball State University. The research study will conclude as of August 17, 2015. If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to discuss any questions with you.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and would be excited to include your district in this meaningful research study. After completion of this study, I would be happy to share the results with you.

Thank you in advance for taking time to assist me in this research project.

Sincerely,

Karyn Tomkinson

Researcher Contact Information

Primary Investigator

Karyn Tomkinson

Doctoral Candidate

Department of Special Education

Ball State University

KJSmith3@bsu.edu

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Michael Harvey

Professor

2000 W. University Ave.

Muncie, IN 47306

Ball State University

Department of Special Education (TC 712)

Ball State University

mwharvey@bsu.edu

765-285-5715

Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment and Third Grade
Retention: Findings from School Administrators
Survey URL link to BSU Qualtrics:

Thank you for your consideration of this research.

Appendix E

Survey

Study Title: Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment and Third Grade Retention: Findings from School Administrators

Study Purpose: This questionnaire is designed to obtain information from superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary principals in Indiana public schools. The purpose of the study is to explore the differences among administrators in their knowledge and perceptions of the Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) assessment and the impacts on reading instruction and grade level retention. This study will provide important data concerning the IREAD-3 assessment results as a determining factor in reading instruction and retention. In addition, this study will investigate participant's perceptions of the impact of retention on gender differences and minority students as a result of the state of Indiana's retention requirement that accompanies the IREAD-3 assessment.

Inclusion Criteria: To participate in this survey you must have an IDOE administrator's license, be 18 years or older, and have responsibilities related to instructional practices in the area of reading, and work in a special education cooperative or school corporation in the state of Indiana.

Participation Procedures and Duration: For this study, you will be asked to complete an on-line survey regarding your current knowledge and perceptions concerning the IREAD-3 Assessment, reading instruction, and gender and minority retention differences. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Data Confidentiality: All data will be stored as confidential and no individual identifying information will be presented in any publication or presentation related to the study. The individual survey link will be coded to assist with survey distribution and follow-up as a part of the data collection procedures.

Storage of Data: All data from the survey will be saved electronically in Ball State University Qualtrics survey software under the researcher's account and files. The data will be protected by using a password. The researcher and the faculty advisor are the only individuals who can access the data. All data will be kept for the duration of the study and will be deleted within two years of the end of the study period. The data will be on Ball State University Qualtrics server and on the researcher's and faculty advisor's computer. All files and computers are password protected.

Risks: There are no predictable risks involved in this study. You may choose to not answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you may stop the survey at any time.

Benefits: This study will provide information concerning the differences in the knowledge and perceptions of the IREAD-3 assessment from the viewpoint of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals concerning the impacts the assessment has had on effective reading instructional practices and retention differences among gender and minority students. The information gathered in this research is important for the state of Indiana as we review and evaluate current assessments that are given to students. This study is the first research study that requests information around the IREAD-3 assessment from superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals.

Researcher Contact Information:

Primary Investigator

Karyn Tomkinson

Doctoral Candidate
Department of Special Education Ball State University
kjsmith3@bsu.edu

Faculty Advisor
Dr. Michael Harvey Professor
Department of Special Education
Ball State University
mwharvey@bsu.edu 765-285-5715

IRB Contact Information: For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306 (765) 285-5070 or irb@bsu.edu

Do you agree to participate?

- I agree (1)
- I decline (2)

Section I: About this Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the knowledge and perceptions of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary principals in the state of Indiana concerning their current knowledge of the IREAD-3 assessment. The study also will examine the perceptions of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary principals in relationship to the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment has had on effective reading practices and differences in gender retention and retention among minority students.

Section II: Demographics

Please provide the following background information about yourself and your current position by selecting the item in each question that best describes you/your position.

1. What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

2. What is your current age?

- A. 20-25 (1)
- B. 26-30 (2)
- C. 31-40 (3)
- D. 41-50 (4)
- E. 51-60 (5)
- F. 61+ (6)

3. What is your current position?

- A. Superintendents (1)
- B. Administrators in Special Education (2)
- C. Elementary School Principal (3)

4. What is the status of your current position setting? (Select the most appropriate descriptor based on your position setting)

- LEA/School Corporation (1)
- Administrator in Special Education in a Cooperative or school district (2)
- Elementary School (3)

5. What best describes your level of educational attainment?

- BA/BS degree (1)
- MA/MS degree (2)
- Educational Specialist degree (3)
- Doctoral Ed.D./Ph.D (4)

6. How long have you been in your current position?

- A. less than 1 year (1)
- B. 1-2 years (2)
- C. 3-5 years (3)
- D. 6-10 years (4)
- E. 11-15 years (5)
- F. 16-20 years (6)
- G. more than 20 years (7)

7. How long have you been employed at your current corporation/cooperative?

- A. less than 1 year (1)
- B. 1-5 years (2)
- C. 6-10 years (3)
- D. 11-15 years (4)
- E. 16-20 years (5)
- F. more than 20 years (6)

8. How long have you been in the field of education?

- A. less than 1 year (1)
- B. 1-5 years (2)
- C. 6-10 years (3)
- D. 11-15 years (4)
- E. 16-20 years (5)
- F. more than 20 years (6)

9. How would you best describe your corporation/cooperative?

- A. Urban (1)
- B. Suburban (2)
- C. Metropolitan (3)
- D. Rural (4)

10. How would you best describe the size of your corporation/cooperative?

- A. Large (10,000+ students) (1)
- B. Medium-Large (5,000-9,999 students) (2)
- C. Medium (1,000-4,999 students) (3)
- D. Small (less than 1,000 students) (4)

11. How would you describe your administrator role in relationship to decisions regarding curriculum in reading instruction?

- I directly oversee the curriculum decisions concerning reading instruction (1)
- I delegate curriculum decisions regarding reading instruction to others (2)
- I am not directly involved in curriculum decisions regarding reading (3)

12. How would you describe your administrator role in relationship to grade level retention?

- I directly oversee the retention of students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment (1)
- I delegate the responsibility to retain students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment to other administrators in our district/school (2)
- The decision to retain a student who does not pass the IREAD-3 assessment is not one of my responsibilities (3)

13. Who is in charge of the reading curriculum in your district/school?

- Superintendent (1)
- Assistant/Associate Superintendent (2)
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction (3)
- Elementary Curriculum Coordinator (4)
- Title I Coordinator (5)
- Elementary Principal (6)
- Lead Teacher (7)
- Other (8) _____

Section III: Key Terms

The key terms section in this survey will provide the survey respondents a common language when answering survey questions. Specific definitions concerning reading instructional practices and retention are commonly used in research literature and are important in this study to gauge the knowledge and perceptions of superintendents, administrators in special education, and elementary school principals in the state of Indiana.

Balanced Literacy: A Balanced literacy program combines both whole language and phonics. The strongest elements are incorporated into a literacy program that aims to guide students toward proficient and lifelong reading. There are five different components of balanced literacy: The read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and word study (Bitter, O'Day, Gubbins, & Socias, 2009).

Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination (IREAD-3) assessment: In 2010 in the state of Indiana, the House Enrolled Act (HES) 1367, also known as Public Law 109, required reading evaluation in third grade was passed. In the state of Indiana, during the 2011-2012 school year, third grade students are required to take the new IREAD-3 assessment (Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), n.d.).

Phonics Instruction: is a system for encoding speech sounds into written symbols and for teaching learners to use the relationship between letters and sounds to recognize words. Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is instruction matched to students' developmental levels and is part to whole word instruction. (Mesmer & Griffith, 2005).

Reading: Reading is the act of constructing meaning from a text. We use skills, strategies, and prior knowledge to understand what we read. The act of reading is supported by reader motivation and positive reader affect. We read to help us achieve our goals, both inside and outside of school (Afflerbach, 2011).

Reading Proficiency: Meeting the states academic achievement standards in reading (NCLB, 2001). In Indiana, reading proficiency is determined by passing the IREAD-3 assessment for students who are in the third grade.

Retention: Grade level retention is defined as requiring a student who has been in a given grade level instruction for a full year to remain in that same grade level and additional year (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1994).

Whole Language: The definition of whole language reading approaches vary in literature but can be summarized as reading instruction which entails a teacher teaching his or her students reading words within the confines of a sentence and then breaking the words into parts. Reading and writing are taught through experiences with connected texts (Dahl & Scharer, 2000).

Section IV: Knowledge of IREAD-3 assessment, federal accountability and state of Indiana accountability around assessments, and the Reading First Initiative. This section is designed to explore your perceptions and knowledge the impacts the IREAD-3 assessment has had on your building and your school district.

Please use this rating scale for all survey questions.

Rating scale: Degree of Agreement with Study Item Statement

1=Strongly Disagree with Statement = 0-25% agreement

2= Disagree with Statement = 26-50% agreement

3= Agree with Statement = 51-75% agreement

4= Strongly Agree with Statement = 76-100% agreement

5= Do Not Know = No knowledge

14. I have comprehensive knowledge of...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
the IREAD-3 assessment. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the Indiana Academic Standards that are assessed (standards 1, 2, & 3) on IREAD-3. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I have comprehensive knowledge of...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
accountability as mandated by No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
state of Indiana Public Law 109 (passed in 2009/implemented in spring 2012) which requires the evaluation of reading ability for third grade students. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how assessments in the state of Indiana impact AYP for schools, teacher evaluations, and the overall A-F school rating. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I have comprehensive knowledge of...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
local school districts' choice to retain a student in the third grade or socially promote the student to fourth grade. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts (without a good cause exemption) must be registered with the state as a third grader. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IDOE requirement for students who do not pass the IREAD-3 assessment as a third grader. These students must retake the IREAD-3 assessment and retake third grade ISTEP the following year. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I have comprehensive knowledge of...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to provide third grade reading instruction the following year for students who did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IDOE requirement for districts/schools to utilize an approved third grade reading curriculum with students who did not pass the IREAD-3 assessment. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. I have comprehensive knowledge of...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
the history of the Reading First Grant that provided additional funding for school districts who utilized scientifically based reading research, proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research, to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the history of how the Reading First Grant has impacted the state of Indiana since the onset in 2004. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the research surrounding the Reading First Grant and the Reading First Initiative that has been published in multiple research reports and on What Works Clearinghouse. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section V: This section is designed to obtain the beliefs of superintendents, special education administrators, and elementary school principals in the state of Indiana concerning the IREAD-3 assessment, federal and state of Indiana accountability around assessments, reading instruction, and the gender and minority differences in retention.

19. I believe that...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
NCLB has had a positive impact on the development of the IREAD-3 assessment. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the Reading First Grant has had a positive impact on reading instruction. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
research on the importance of phonics instruction has had a positive impact on reading instruction. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact on teachers accountability related to reading instruction in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. I believe that...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
the IREAD-3 assessment impacted our district/school by providing valuable information concerning a student's reading level. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IREAD-3 assessment provided our district/school with data specific to a student's reading concerns. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IREAD-3 assessment has had a positive impact by providing our district/school information on areas of reading instruction that can be improved upon in grades K-3. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. I believe that...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
the IREAD-3 assessment positively impacted retention in our district/school by providing us the necessary information to retain a student who is not a developed reader. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the IREAD-3 assessment negatively impacted retention in our district/school by requiring students who do not pass IREAD-3 in two attempts to register as a third grade with the state of Indiana. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. I believe the IREAD-3 assessment has identified...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
gender differences in retention in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
racial differences in retention in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section VI: This section is designed to ask questions concerning the reading instruction that is being used in your district/school in relationship to early literacy development, phonics instruction, whole language instruction, and balanced literacy instruction and the impact the instruction has on students based on gender or racial differences.

23. Our district/school utilizes effective reading programs and instruction for early literacy development (kindergarten-3 grade).

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

24. Our district/school uses targeted reading approaches to support literacy development based on IREAD-3 assessment results.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

25. My district/school uses phonics based reading instruction to support students early literacy development.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

26. Phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

27. Phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact for:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
female students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
male students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Phonics based reading instruction has had a positive impact for:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
female students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
male students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. My district/school uses whole language reading instruction to support students early literacy development.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

30. Whole language reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

31. Whole Language reading instruction has had a positive impact for:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
female students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
male students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. Whole Language reading instruction has had a positive impact for:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
female students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
male students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. My district/school uses balanced literacy reading instruction to support early literacy development.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

34. Balanced Literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact on student outcomes.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Do Not Know (3)

35. Balanced Literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
female students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
male students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. Balanced Literacy reading instruction has had a positive impact for:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
female students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
male students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/Latino students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caucasian students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-racial students' reading/literacy development in our district/school. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. The IREAD-3 assessment has had an overall negative impact on the retention of...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Do Not Know (5)
third grade female students. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
third grade male students. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
our district/school's minority population(s). (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section VII: Focused Questions and Open-ended Response This section is designed to explore your perceptions of the impact of the IREAD-3 assessment, the difference in retention based on gender, and the difference in retention based on racial differences. Please indicate what you believe to be true in answering these open-ended survey questions.

38. Do you believe there are significant challenges in reading instructional practices that have impacted your school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If yes, please explain why:

39. Do you believe there are challenges in gender grade level retention that impacted your school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If yes, please explain why:

40. Do you believe there are challenges in grade level retention for minority students that impacted your school and/or district as a result of the IREAD-3 assessment?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If yes, please explain why:

41. Do you believe there is a gap between a teacher's knowledge of effective reading instruction and implementation with classroom-based instruction?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If yes, please explain why: