

**FROM COMPLIANCE TO COMPETENCE:
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING**

by

Christine M. Alois

An Executive Leadership Portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

In this era of high stakes accountability, educators have been challenged to become highly competent “data consumers.” They are asked to set goals for instruction and other initiatives based on analyses of student data from multiple sources. In order for educators to meet this challenge, districts must provide teachers and administrators with training and other resources to both manage and use data effectively.

My Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP) documents the journey my district took in building the culture and competence of teachers and administrators in using data, focusing specifically on English Language Arts at the elementary grades. Artifacts provide a look into access of data, teachers’ views of assessment results, and training and support provided to sustain a culture of Data Driven Decision Making (DDDM). Over a period of four years, I focused on examining current assessments administered in the district as well as practices around their use. Resources were created to share data, training was provided to demonstrate how to best use data, briefs were written to make data more understandable, teacher leader groups were formed to support teachers and administrators in using data, and reports were generated to share data and its impact on the district. The outcomes of these improvement strategies, as

well as recommendations for future action, are shared to inform our district's continued efforts in sustaining a culture of DDDM.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Though schools today face more pressure to engage in data-driven decision making and may in fact be using data in a more frequent and widespread manner, case studies of schools attempting to enact data-driven inquiry and decision making reveal that implementation is not always successful. Research suggests that effective use of data may depend on several enabling factors, including strong leadership, up-front planning for data collection and use, and strong human capacity for data-driven inquiry (Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006, p. 498).

This Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP) is focused on the use of assessment data within the Caesar Rodney School District (CR). Beginning in the early 1980s, with President Reagan and A Nation at Risk (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), testing and accountability were launched as major foci for school districts. Continuing into the 1990s, districts placed a heavy emphasis on testing. The Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP)-Online Reports (DSTP-OR) provided data to teachers and administrators that had not formerly existed. The passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001 added to the requirements for testing and the use of data to monitor and improve student achievement. In 2010, the Delaware Department of Education (DE DoE) became one of the first states to receive funding from the federal government for a new statewide reform initiative, Race to the Top (RTTT). This funding helped spur the transition from the DSTP to the Delaware Comprehensive

Assessment System (DCAS). In the spring of 2015, Delaware districts will implement the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's (SBAC) summative assessment, creating yet another new set of expectations and data points.

RTTT not only introduced new assessments, but also challenged districts to increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness through a focus on data analysis within individual schools and school districts. As part of the RTTT plan, CR set a goal to accelerate achievement and improve outcomes for all students with sophisticated data systems and practices, with key objectives to improve access to and use of data systems and build the capacity to use data.

Throughout this portfolio, I share the improvement efforts that I led with our teacher leader groups as well as administrators to build the capacity to efficiently collect and use data to support data-driven inquiry and decision making across all members of our school district. This portfolio is organized into five additional chapters, a list of references, and ten appendices. Chapter 2 describes the context for my work, including a description of the district, further explanation of the problem as situated in the district, my role and responsibilities in addressing the problem, and the improvement goals that I strived to achieve. Chapter 3 addresses the strategies, or action steps, that I led to achieve these improvement goals. Chapter 4 discusses the results of the strategies. Chapter 5 draws conclusions about whether the improvement goal was met as well as summarizes what worked well and what needs to be redesigned in order for the organization to improve. In the final chapter, I reflect on my development as a "scholar, problem solver, and partner" after completing the

Ed.D. program. Following the six chapters is a comprehensive list of references used throughout my work. Ten appendices follow the chapters that include my original ELP proposal, located in Appendix A, and then nine additional artifacts developed during my doctoral program.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Located in central Delaware, CR is a comprehensive school district composed of 11 school campuses serving over 7,700 students, including one early childhood center (kindergarten), six elementary schools (grades 1-5), three middle schools (grades 6-8), one high school (grades 9-12), and one countywide school for students with severe disabilities. CR strives to provide an exemplary schooling experience for our diverse population by focusing on the four A's: ARTS, ACADEMICS, ATHLETICS, in a safe and caring ATMOSPHERE. Students are heterogeneously grouped through grade 6 in all subject areas. Student demographics are approximately 58.0% Caucasian, 28.0% African American, and less than 6% for both Asian and Hispanic ethnicities. CR has 14.3% of its students receiving special education services and 32.6% are considered low-income. There is a 4.4% drop out rate and 95.0% daily attendance rate.

As an educator and member of CR for over 21 years, I have been a classroom teacher, district wide academic coach, and a building administrator. In each of these roles, I served on state and national committees. These committees focused on a variety of educational initiatives including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). I lobbied at the state and federal levels for

educational reform, and was an active member and officer of multiple state organizations in order to have a voice in state-led educational policies and practices.

Before starting the 2009-2010 school year, I transitioned from my role as a building administrator to become one of CR's Supervisors of Instruction. This transition, to a district level administrative position, occurred only months before the state decided to take on numerous reform initiatives. Even with all of my experience working at the local, state and national levels around educational reform, it was evident that my learning curve would be steep as a new district administrator. It would also be a challenging time for the teachers and administrators I was responsible for working with throughout the district.

Recent Delaware Educational Reform Issues Impacting the District

In March, 2010, the DE DoE was one of two states to be awarded the RTTT grant. The award of this grant brought substantial changes, including the introduction of data driven professional learning communities (PLCs); the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); the implementation of not one, but two new summative state assessments; and the revision of the Delaware Performance Accountability System (DPAS II) for teacher evaluations.

RTTT. As part of an effort to encourage systemic reform in schools, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funded state level grants to address the following areas:

- Development of rigorous standards and improved assessments,

- Implementation of data systems to make information more accessible to schools, teachers, and parents to make instructional decisions,
- Support for teachers and school leaders to become more effective, and
- Increased emphasis and resources for innovative practices needed to turn around the lowest-performing schools (Gibbs, 2009).

Strengthening both data systems and the proficiency of teachers and administrators to use data are CR priorities (as documented in CR’s RTTT plan in Figure 1). Goal 2 is to “Accelerate achievement and improve outcomes for all students with sophisticated data systems and practices,” with key objectives to improve access to and use of data systems and build the capacity to use data.

Caesar Rodney School District

Acceleration, Enrichment & Remediation!

Race To The Top

June 1, 2011

I. Introduction and Summary

A. [Vision](#)
 B. [Needs Assessment](#)
 C. [Overview ...Implementation Priorities](#)

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II. Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1: Rigorous Standards, Curriculum and Assessments
 Objective 1: Implement College and Career Ready Standards and Assessments

Goal 2: Sophisticated Data Systems and Practices
 Objective 2: Improve Access to and Use Data Systems
 Objective 3: Build capacity to use data

Goal 3: Effective Teachers and Leaders
 Objective 4: Improve the effectiveness of educators based on performance
 Objective 5: Ensure equitable distribution of effective educators
 Objective 6: Ensure educators are effectively prepared
 Objective 7: Provide effective support to educators

Goal 4: Deep Support for Low Achieving Schools
 Objective 8: Provide deep support to low-achieving schools
 Objective 9: Engage Families and Communities effectively

Figure 1 CR’s RTTT Plan Goals

To accomplish these goals and objectives, the district proposed to:

- Implement and support improvement of the state longitudinal data system,
- Develop and implement trainings for district staff using existing capacity in a “train the trainer” fashion for using data sources,
- Provide 90 min. of weekly collaborative time,
- Provide professional training for administrators on PLCs and staff,
- Develop plans from each building for incorporation of data coaches and PLCs,
- Improve the effectiveness of district wide special education data collection and communication practices, and
- Improve the use of data and efficiency of the special education referral/dismissal process by educational level.

PLCs/Response to Intervention (RTI). As part of the RTTT expectations and goals, CR implemented PLCs across all grades 1-12. Teachers were trained using Richard DuFour’s model that focused on teams of teachers (organized by grade level or content area) meeting weekly for 90 min. to address the following cycle of inquiry questions:

- What is it we expect our students to learn?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- How will we respond when some students do not learn?
- How will we respond when some students already know it? (DuFour, 2004)

The state allocated RTTT funds for data coaches to work with PLCs at each school to incorporate data-driven decision making (DDDM) effectively through this cycle of

inquiry. PLCs were expected to engage in data conversations, brainstorm instructional strategies, create and implement action plans, and assess effectiveness of results (Wireless Generation, 2012).

PLCs are organized differently at each of the schools. Table 1 is a sample of one of the elementary school’s PLC schedule.

Table 1 Elementary School’s Weekly Schedule Including PLCs

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools & Offices Reopen • PLCs for Grade 4 @ 8:45 AM for Mathematics Planning – Classroom (208) • Staff Meeting @ 3:45 PM – Gym for WBS Teachers • Staff Meeting @ 3:45 PM – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLCs for Grade 5 @ 8:45 AM for Mathematics Planning – Classroom (211) • PBS Cartoon Breakfast from 8:15 AM to 9:00 AM – Location TBA • PTO Sponsored Holiday “Crafternoon” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLCs for Grade 1 @ 8:45 AM for Mathematics Planning – Classroom (109) • The Jingle Bell Run during related arts periods • Authors Luncheon for Grades 1-3 @ 11:00 AM and Grades 4-5 @ 11:30 AM in GEEP Room • School Health Committee Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLCs for Grade 2 @ 8:45 AM for Mathematics Planning – Classroom (110) • PLCs for Grades 1-5 for Reading Planning in Same Classroom as Floating PLCs • Community Outreach Committee Meeting @ 3:45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLCs for Grade 3 @ 8:45 AM for Mathematics Planning – Classroom (124) • Custodial Team Meeting @ 2:00 PM – Office Conference Room • Adopt-A-Family Raffle Drawing @ 3:35 – Library

PLCs also provide the time and forum needed for RTI meetings every six weeks as mandated by Delaware Administrative Code –Title 14 (Delaware Administrative Code, 2007). According to DE DoE’s *RTI Implementation Guide for Teachers* (2014, p.1), “RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make

decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions.” RTI is not a recent initiative at the elementary level, but it is still in its development phase. Before the inception of PLCs, RTI meetings were scheduled before school, after school, or during teachers’ planning periods. This made it difficult for collaboration and discussion with all grade level teachers. PLCs provided a means to integrate RTI-related discussions into teachers’ data discussions.

CCSS. The adoption of new standards caused curriculum publishers and districts to review and align current curriculum to the new expectations. Although publishers immediately added stickers to the front cover of their materials indicating they were “Aligned to the Common Core,” it was clear that their analyses were superficial. CR quickly learned that it was a waste of time to try to match up the old curriculum and materials to the new, or look for gaps in the old to the new. The new standards would not allow districts to “patch” where needed, it was time to start anew. In addition, CR knew that it would be at least two years before publishers would be able to produce materials that were truly aligned to the CCSS.

Summative Assessments. After districts began working on their RTTT goals, the DE DoE moved away from the current state summative assessment, DSTP, to the DCAS. The DSTP was a paper-and-pencil test with multiple-choice, short answer, extended response, and writing prompt items; the new DCAS would be an on-line, computer adaptive test with all multiple-choice questions (Fletcher & Storandt, 2013). With the adoption of the CCSS, the state moved to a second new on-line computer adaptive assessment called Smarter Balanced created by the SBAC. This test would

again require students to answer multiple-choice, short answer, and extended response questions with the addition of a performance task that incorporated writing prompts (DE DoE, 2015).

DPAS II. Following RTTT expectations, the DE DoE reviewed current teacher and administrator performance evaluations and updated the current version of DPAS to DPAS II (Delaware Administrative Code, 2011). DPAS II included a new component, Component V – Student Achievement. Multiple measures were created to rate teachers and administrators based on student growth data. At the beginning of each school year, teachers and administrators alike meet with their respective supervisors to establish goals and the measures that will be used to assess attainment of each goal. At the end of the year, a rating is assigned to each teacher or administrator based on how well students performed on the identified measures. These measures include, but are not limited to state summative assessment results, internal and external assessments, and teacher created measures.

Challenges in Implementing Recent State Reforms

Given the number of state reforms at play, it was imperative that CR plan ahead for their successful implementation. In reviewing each of these initiatives, the importance of collecting, analyzing and using data to set goals and monitor student achievement was clear. More simply, for CR to be successful, we needed to become a district that relies on DDDM.

Messelt (2004) identifies “knowing where to begin” as one of the greatest challenges in DDDM implementation. One of his suggestions is to begin with a small

pilot rather than districtwide implementation. With the RTI regulations already in place, CR had, in essence, piloted DDDM on a small scale at our elementary schools. The introduction of all the new standards and curriculum, assessments, and district and personal goal setting had the potential to create what Marsh, Payne, and Hamilton (2006) describe as educators “drowning” in too much data (p. 1). As a district, we would need to identify key areas of focus that would support building competence in DDDM practices to avoid being overwhelmed by the new expectations.

Federal and state accountability systems have increased the demand for evidence of student achievement. In response, the focus on using, not just collecting data, has increased. I began my efforts to support building competence in DDDM with a review of the research literature. This literature chosen was related primarily to using student achievement data to support instructional decision making. In reviewing the DDDM literature, five recurring themes emerged. First, in order to support DDDM practices, leadership must establish a clear vision. This vision needs to articulate expectations for using data as part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement (Copland, 2003; Cosner, 2011; Timperley, 2005; Wayman, Cho, Jimerson, & Spikes, 2012). Next, time must be allocated to allow for collaborative DDDM. This time should be structured to focus on using data to improve teacher practice and student learning (Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter 2007; Supovitz & Klein, 2003; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008; Young, 2006). School based facilitators/coaches also emerged as necessary supports in sustaining DDDM. Their guidance during PLC meetings, classroom walkthroughs and feedback, as well as professional development are

integral to enhancing teachers' practices as well as maintaining focus on school data initiatives (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Copland, 2003; Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010). District wide data systems were yet another key feature in successful DDDM environments. With the increased amount of data available to administrators and teachers, data systems provide the mechanism to warehouse as well as manipulate mass amounts of data in a timely manner (Mieles & Fley, 2005; Swan & Maxur, 2011; Wayman, 2005). Finally, providing professional development in both accessing and using data is needed in order to facilitate DDDM conversations. Professional development should be targeted for administrators, coaches, and teachers to build capacity throughout the organization (Knapp, Swinnerton, Copeland, & Monpras-Huber, 2006; Lachat & Smith, 2005; Marsh & Farrell, 2015).

After completing this research I chose three crosscutting challenges to focus my improvement efforts. These challenges were access to data, teachers' views of assessment results, and professional development and support. Each of these challenges is discussed below to inform the selection of improvement strategies that would focus my ELP.

Access. The provision of centralized and timely data to teachers and administrators is critical in developing and sustaining strong DDDM environments. The use of data systems has resulted in more access to real-time data (Wayman, 2005). School districts have a variety of electronic data systems. The majority of districts maintain student information systems that provide basic data on students such as attendance, schedules, and demographics (Lachat & Smith, 2005).

Advances in technology have led to improved electronic data warehouses with the capability of combining data from multiple systems to support (Wayman et al., 2012). Many can now link current and historical data on students with curriculum management systems (i.e., curriculum and instructional resources). They provide the information needed to report student progress across individuals, groups, and subgroups for accountability requirements as well as for instructional decision making. This gives teachers and principals even greater ability to manipulate multiple data points to make instructional decisions (Means, Padilla & Gallagher, 2010).

Access to data is just the first step. Though data systems are integral to the DDDM process, sufficient time must be provided to use these systems in order to have extended discussions to analyze and interpret data and construct appropriate responses (Suppovitz & Klein, 2003). Access to regularly scheduled teacher inquiry sessions is vital to the success of DDDM. On top of having time accessible, this time must be protected. “With multiple, uncoordinated reform initiatives hitting schools, time for teacher inquiry is often sacrificed for competing demands” (Gallimore et al., 2009, p. 549). DDDM is most successful when leadership has set clear policies and practices to facilitate DDDM sessions; these policies and practices articulate the importance and impact of using data to make decisions as well as include expectations linked to data use, focus of conversations, and outcomes of time allocated (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). Time, data, and clear expectations alone do not guarantee successful data conversations. Once access has been addressed, leaders must also allow for

professional development. This will be discussed further as the third challenge related to DDDM practices.

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results. In order to support a successful culture of DDDM, teachers need to view assessment results as valid measures of students' knowledge and ability. Teachers' views of the validity and reliability of assessment measures may vary according to their understanding of the assessment results as well as whether student motivation is attributed to playing a part in assessment scores (Kerr et al., 2006; Marsh et al., 2006).

According to Ingram, Louis, and Schroeder (2004), teachers face several challenges when utilizing data; these challenges arise when addressing teachers' views of data. Teachers often rely on "professional judgment" rather than assessment data. They have difficulty agreeing on what students should know and what data would demonstrate that knowledge (Means et al, 2010). Teams progress through several stages until they develop the trust in one another and the data they are using to make decisions by comparing their own data to that of their teammates (Means et al, 2010).

In order to move teams from one stage to the next, it is essential to provide a "safe environment" for teachers to constructively discuss data with their peers without fear of recriminations and sanctions (Marsh et al, 2006). In order to promote data use to make instructional decisions, districts need to ensure that standardized test data is not the only or primary measure of student achievement (Talbert, 2009). Standardized test data is often linked to accountability measures and therefore the conversations may lean more towards meeting whole school targets rather than individual student

achievement or leading change in teacher practices. Delaware uses the value-added model to allow for a growth score rather than simple cut scores to determine success. Though this model helps to create a “safer” feeling around state and local assessments, teachers still report classroom assessments as better vehicles for trustworthy data (Marsh et al., 2006; Talbert, 2009).

Helping teachers use internal assessments linked to district curriculum materials and interventions rather than only external accountability assessments requires the district to “clean up” its data sources. Cleaning up data sources requires districts to inventory assessments as well as programs used within the district to make sure they have a clear purpose, are aligned with state standards, and provide useful information for both teachers and administrators. This process not only will provide the trust teachers are looking for, but also help develop teams’ collaborative discussions around student achievement and teacher practice (Messelt, 2004).

Professional Development and Support. Having access to data and the time to discuss it does not necessarily ensure that the data will be used to drive decisions or lead improvements (Marsh et al., 2006; Kerr et al., 2006). Teachers and administrators will need professional development and support on using data to make sure their time is used effectively. According to a policy brief written by Miller (2009)

Teacher training and support were essential, because if teachers were not trained properly in DDDM, we risked the chance of students’ learning problems being misdiagnosed, inappropriately attributing data results to a student’s particular ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status, tutoring only those students who are close to passing state tests (also known as the bubble students), tracking students by ability level, engaging in constant drilling on test items as opposed to developing

problem solving skills, and teaching only those subjects that were tested (p. 2).

In an effort to support teachers in DDDM it is imperative to heed Miller's cautions and provide for professional development in the use of data to make decisions regarding student achievement. Professional development should focus on both technical support for data interpretation as well as tools for acting on data. This can be accomplished through internal as well as external support mechanisms. Externally, there are organizations that work to build individual schools' capacity for DDDM in order to create a systemic reform. External supports, such as data coaches, can provide professional development around data literacy and processes/structures to facilitate data conversations.

Teachers need support to become more comfortable with using data systems as well as data interpretation. Districts need to leverage multiple human resources to provide this sustained support. Internally, instructional coaches, can play a large role in supporting DDDM. Instructional coaches' non-supervisory status helps to provide the "safe" environment needed to develop collaborative discussions as well as provide professional development (Portin et al, 2009). In order to keep this type of atmosphere, the instructional coaches' roles must be clearly communicated to teachers (Portin et al., 2009). District and building administrators must also ensure instructional coaches' effectiveness by evaluating their caseloads. There must be time to allow them to follow up on data discussions through walkthroughs or follow up meetings. Coaches must also receive ongoing professional development in analyzing data with

attention to taking action on results with groups of teachers (Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2010).

My Roles and Responsibilities in Meeting These Challenges

As Supervisor of Instruction, I am accountable for developing a district vision and set of procedures to facilitate the systemic implementation of a data system and collaborative discussions across each of our schools. Sustained professional development will provide the support to develop teams whose conversations result in actions to increase student achievement and teacher practices. My current responsibilities include oversight for an array of valuable human resources and programs across the district that include:

- Title I. I oversee the Title I program at CR's seven elementary schools, including reading specialists at each school site.
- Special Education. I work with the Director of Special Education to provide support for special education teachers.
- School-based Teacher Leaders. I coordinate and oversee the work of school-based teacher leaders – Achievement Liaison Teachers (ALTs). Each school has a designated teacher leader formerly funded by ARRA who focuses on student achievement, teacher quality, and parent involvement.
- Initial Licensure Teachers. I provide oversight and support for 50 mentor teachers and over 100 teachers on initial license to attain state mandated “90 clock-hour” professional development required for professional licensure.

- English Language Learners Program (ELL). I am responsible for the development and monitoring of our district's ELL program, including the supervision of 5 ELL staff across 11 schools.
- Advanced Learners. I work with all 11 schools to provide gifted instruction and advanced learning opportunities for our students.
- World Language. CR is one of few districts in the state to offer a Chinese and Spanish immersion program at the elementary, online learning language opportunities at grades 7 and 8, and the choice of seven World Languages at the high school level. I coordinate all curriculum, professional development, and programming for each of these levels.
- Instructional Technology. I supervise two district technology teachers and guide their work in purchasing technology and providing professional development for utilizing technology as a tool in the classroom.
- District Test Coordinator. I am responsible for all workings related to standardized testing in grades K-12.

Moving from the position of a building principal to a district supervisor meant that the focus and scope of my work expanded dramatically. I needed to learn more about current district practices and resources to best support the reform initiatives and challenges they would bring. I realized that DDDM is embedded in each of these initiatives, and to be successful, CR would have to become more proficient in using data. I decided that I needed to focus on teachers' and administrators' proficiency in using data while helping them to see how data could play an integral role in their

current practices. The district was not starting from scratch. Our teachers and administrators are already collecting, analyzing, and using data to inform goal setting, programming, and interventions to enhance student achievement. My goal was to increase their access to data, strengthen teachers' understanding and views of assessment results, and provide professional development and support to increase their skill sets.

The following chapters will describe the improvement strategies employed to address these challenges, their results, and then next steps and recommendations for continued work in building the capacity for a DDDM culture in the CR school district.

Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

With the introduction of a number of statewide initiatives, data collection, analysis, and resulting conversations would become part of our daily responsibilities in CR. These initiatives necessitated additional supports to ensure that CR educators became strong data consumers. As Supervisor of Instruction, I would depend on research focused on DDDM as well as both human and material resources to address three primary challenges:

- access to data,
- teachers' views of assessment results, and
- training and support needed to support a DDDM culture in CR.

To build competence in DDDM as CR addressed these new state initiatives, I implemented multiple improvement strategies. This chapter will introduce the strategies employed to address each of the three challenges.

Access

In order to build a strong DDDM culture, teachers need not only timely, valuable, and teacher friendly data, they also need the time to analyze and make informed decisions with the data provided (Kerr et al., 2006). Addressing two concerns were integral to making this happen. First, I tackled the concern of providing

real-time data for the teachers and principals to have meaningful conversations. Next, I reviewed PLCs scheduled for these conversations, to assess their access issues related to data, time, and available intervention options to take action with the data discussed. Table 2 outlines the concerns addressed and the corresponding improvement strategies to address access.

Table 2 Overview of Access Improvement Strategies

Concerns Facing District	Improvement Strategy
Teachers and administrators need quick access to updated student data. (Wayman, 2005)	Electronic Data Warehouse – I-Tracker
Teachers need time to have conversations around data. Systemic practices need to be communicated. (Gallimore et al, 2009).	Protected Time: PLC/RTI Meetings Appendix B

Electronic Data Warehouse. A variety of data sources is available to CR teachers and administrators including benchmark, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and summative assessments. Assessments are administered at different intervals and by different personnel. Results are reported via program software, state systems, hand written protocols, and teacher grade books. In order to use data effectively and efficiently, teachers and administrators need a way to access all collected data in one place. An even better option would be with one click.

At the start of the 2009-2010 school year, CR contracted with the Data Service Center, that maintains an electronic data warehouse (I-Tracker) owned and operated by the Colonial and Red Clay Consolidated School Districts. As Supervisor of

Instruction, I was tasked with facilitating the initial implementation of I-Tracker with our reading specialists. I also served as the liaison between the district and the Data Service Center to customize its platform for CR.

This warehouse was first used exclusively by our reading specialists at the elementary level to gather data for RTI meetings. It was then released to elementary classroom teachers to input both standardized and classroom based assessments. I-Tracker not only houses data, but also creates comprehensive charts, graphs, and reports for teachers to look at their individual students, classroom, grade level, and whole school data (Data Service Center, 2015). It became the district's first online tool to house, track, and analyze data; it provided real time access to student data in both PLC and RTI meetings.

Protected Time. A district can have all the data and supports in place, but without the allocation of time as well as productive conversations during that time, the supports are for naught (Marsh, 2012; Nelson & Slavit, 2008). As required by RTTT, CR teachers meet for 90 min. a week of common planning time to create common assessments, review student assessment data, and discuss student performance as part of the RTI process. Teachers' collaboration in PLCs resulted in principals forwarding requests to the CR Instruction Division for assistance in three areas: additional assessments to be included in I-Tracker, professional development in instructional practice, and intervention tools to work with struggling students. From my vantage point, these requests confirmed the value of allocating teacher time to collaborate as well as the results of their work.

RTI meetings are primarily led by the buildings' reading specialists.¹ These meetings are held every six weeks, during PLCs, to review data and provide additional support as needed to identified students. Reading specialists help administer benchmark, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments and record these results in I-Tracker to allow everyone to view the results and make data based decisions.

During districtwide meetings for reading specialists, it became apparent that each school was running its RTI meetings in a slightly different manner. To gather more specific information related to the routines at each of our seven elementary schools, observations of RTI meetings were conducted that focused on a series "look fors" (see Appendix B). This list of "look fors" was developed to reflect district wide expectations related to data, time, use of I-Tracker, and to identify which district approved programs were being used at each of the grade levels. Because RTI meetings happen during the same week across all schools, observations were conducted by district and building reading specialists as well as the Supervisor of Instruction.

Open-ended notes were collected in order to record specific observations related to the data, time, use of I-Tracker, and the programming described by the teachers. The observations revealed that even with 90 min. of time, teachers and administrators needed more time to adequately review the amount of data in front of

¹ Through Title I funds, the district hires a minimum of one reading specialist at each of our elementary schools. Two reading specialists are assigned to our elementary school with the largest enrollment as well to our elementary school with the highest free and reduced lunch percentage. Reading specialists meet daily with students identified for intervention by the school RTI team.

them and additional diagnostic assessments to better target students' areas of need. By observing these meetings, we were able to identify supports that teachers and administrators needed to improve the use of our district's electronic data warehouse as well as to facilitate DDDM during RTI discussions.

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results

Moving towards a positive DDDM culture requires attention not only to teachers' access to data, but also to their perceptions of these data. If all DDDM meetings are focused on meeting accountability measures and only use state testing results, PLC participation will not likely be viewed as a true opportunity to improve student performance (Talbert, 2009). As Supervisor of Instruction, I implemented four improvement strategies to address teachers' views of assessment results. First, I took steps to address whether our programs and data are trustworthy and valuable to teachers and administrators through a program evaluation. This evaluation would provide feedback to teachers as to the effectiveness of the program and therefore give them reason to trust the assessment data obtained from its progress monitoring. Second, I aligned data from multiple sources so they are compatible to allow for better understanding by teachers and administrators. Third, I reviewed our current DPAS II Component V practices to ensure that data are used appropriately to assess attainment of goals. Finally, I inventoried programs, assessment and resources throughout the district to compile a list of research based options to provide a list of trustworthy resources for taking action with DDDM. Table 3 outlines the concerns addressed and

the corresponding improvement strategies to address teachers' views of assessment results.

Table 3 Overview of Teachers' Views of Assessment Results Improvement Strategies

Concerns Facing District	Improvement Strategy
Data must be trustworthy and valuable to teachers and administrators. (Kerr et al., 2006; Marsh et al., 2006; Ingram et al. 2004)	Where to Draw the Line? Appendix C Program Evaluation – Read Naturally Appendix D
Need to align data from multiple sources so they are compatible and allow for better understanding by teachers and administrators. (Messelt, 2004)	New Measure – Learning with Lexiles Appendix E
Ensure data is used appropriately to avoid inaccurate decision making (Talbert, 2009)	Teachers' Use of Data to Compose Goals Evaluating the Revised Teacher Evaluation System: DPAS II Component V Appendix F
Programs and Assessments need to be inventoried to ensure they are trustworthy. (Marsh et al., 2006; Messelt, 2004)	Reference Guide: Instructional Needs Resource Chart Appendix G

Trustworthy and Valuable Programs/Data. State testing data is often called into question. How are cut scores determined? Who decides what meets the standard? How will the scores be used once they are compiled? Found in Appendix C, “*Where to Draw the Line,*” is a personal reflection of my concerns with the use of state testing results to measure student achievement as an administrator at the beginning of my ELP. I built on my own past experiences, as well as my colleagues’ in the district, in

working on state committees related to setting cut scores for the former DSTP. It highlights my perspective on the limitation of multiple-choice based standardized testing and its use for high-stakes accountability and student/educator evaluation. This personal reflection paper's message to the DE DoE would also serve as a starting point for my quest in ensuring that I would minimize other educators' mistrust of data in our district. As supervisor, I needed to provide transparency and rationales for data use within our own district. This artifact anchors my work on building capacity for data use, as it brings out the foundational question shared by not only myself, but also fellow educators when looking at data, "What does all of this data really mean?" If data is trustworthy and valuable to its consumers they are more apt to use the information to make informed decisions rather than simply go through the motions (Talbert, 2009).

Program Evaluation. In an effort to ensure the data provided to teachers through district interventions were trustworthy and valuable, I started a review of district programs. As part of this review, I conducted an evaluation of the Read Naturally program used in CR to increase fluency and comprehension for our struggling readers (Appendix D). The results of this evaluation would help to determine the effectiveness of the program. This was the first full-fledged program evaluation I had conducted. The Read Naturally evaluation revealed that when implemented and monitored with fidelity, the program yielded excellent results. This report was shared with the schools that participated in the evaluation as well as our reading specialists in order to put credence in its use, not only as an intervention but as

a source of data to measure student progress towards enhanced fluency and comprehension.

Correlating Measures. The CCSS heavily emphasize utilizing Lexile bands as part of its text complexity model. Our elementary schools traditionally use text gradient scales rather than Lexiles. This will require a substantial shift at the elementary level to ensure that teachers understand and effectively use the new measure to guide their instructional decisions.

Appendix E, “Utilizing Lexiles to Monitor Student Growth and Guide Instruction,” informs both my own learning as well as other CR staff about Lexiles. This document compiles information gained from research on Lexile use in schools to serve as a guide to: (1) discuss the difference between the Guided Reading Text Gradient Scale and Lexiles, (2) explain how Lexiles fit into the Common Core’s Text Complexity model, (3) discuss how Lexiles and other readability measures may be used interchangeably, (4) share how Lexiles are obtained in CR, and (5) explain how Lexiles may be used to guide instruction and measure growth. Each of these areas of focus is integral in strengthening our teachers’ and administrators’ understanding of the appropriate integration and use of Lexiles as the district transitions to the Common Core. Development of this document helped me prepare presentations for our teacher leader groups and administrators on Lexiles. It helped me to explain concretely that we are not reinventing what we do, but simply utilizing a new form of measurement that can be correlated with current measures.

Teachers' Use of Data to Set Goals. Teachers working in Delaware schools are evaluated using the DPAS II. The newly adopted evaluation system includes five components. The first four components focus on planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Component V evaluates a teacher's performance through the monitoring of a cohort of their students over one school year. "In a standards based environment, the ultimate goal is to move all students toward the standard. It is reasonable to expect that all students will move further toward the standards during the school year" (DE DoE, 2013, p. 36).

Evaluating Goals Linked to Student Achievement: DPAS II Component V, Appendix F, examined the goals set by 12 teachers (i.e., two first grade teachers and two fifth grade teachers from each of three elementary schools). Reviewing teachers' growth goals for student achievement helped me learn more about how teachers select and analyze student data.

The analysis identified types of goals set (product/process) and rigor of goals (expected growth). It sought to determine whether teachers were able to establish goals that were measurable and likely to improve student achievement as well as to identify suggestions for more effective goal writing and data monitoring. Principals of the identified schools were also interviewed about their approach in working with teachers through this process.

Out of 36 goals reviewed, only six were clearly written to align with classroom instruction and were able to be progress monitored throughout the year. Educators were attempting to work within the parameters of the goal choices they were given by

the DE DoE as well as create goals aligned with curriculum standards. However, many of the goals were not specific and therefore difficult to measure. For example, one goal addressed reading non-fiction text. The goal was to show improvement in identifying key components, structures or features. The three areas of focus were broad and therefore difficult to measure accurately from the beginning of the year to the end. The inability to progress monitor goals demonstrated teachers' lack of understanding of assessment data to be used and in some cases, the lack of assessments available.

My analyses suggested that teacher goal writing would be stronger if the data measures available yielded valuable information for both the teachers and administrators. Due to the poor match between the measures and the goals, the current goals could provide a false indication of student success or area of need. Increased value would result from identifying assessments that demonstrate a stronger connection to the standards and curriculum expectations. These assessments needed to be diagnostic in nature and allow for progress monitoring. Without assessments that yield data that can be linked to specific instructional needs and then instructional strategies, completing the DPAS II Component V process will reinforce educators and administrators feelings of "jumping through hoops" when asked to monitor student growth. Adding the STAR assessment during the 2014-2015 school year was a positive move towards providing more targeted data and progress monitoring opportunities. With STAR benchmark and progress monitoring embedded "goal wizard" capability, teachers are now able to create goals that are specific to a target

area and can be monitored through scaled scores or even percentile ranks compared to students nationally in their grade level.

Each of the strategies above are working towards helping teachers see value in the interventions and assessments they are using and therefore see the resulting data as worthwhile in goal setting, monitoring and instructional decision making.

Reference Guide. In order to maximize conditions for DDDM, the district needed mechanisms in place to provide basic knowledge and frameworks for our teachers and administrators. In order to identify what resources were available in the district as well as when to use each one, resources were inventoried and the *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* (Appendix G) as well as its corresponding *ELA Resources* document was created. The *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* identifies resources and materials available in the district to meet different instructional needs of students. To support our intervention efforts, resources were vetted by both district personnel and outside consultants. We referred to the Florida Center for Research and the What Works Clearinghouse websites, program specific evaluations, and DE DoE's DPAS II Component V approved internal and external assessment list to ensure the programs, assessments, and references compiled were research based and aligned to the standards. This chart helps guide PLC/RTI meeting participants to select more targeted and meaningful assessments as well as interventions to support the identified student needs. The chart also provides a list of professional books that have been used previously in district book studies; they are available to enhance teacher knowledge in the identified area.

The *ELA Resources* document provides a comprehensive list of all programs and support materials available for teachers to use to support English Language Arts instruction. In an effort to make these resources more accessible, the document provides a brief overview of each item and the location where it can be found. As with the *Instructional Needs Resource Chart*, materials have been vetted through the Florida Center for Reading Research. Professional development is provided regularly to teachers to support implementation. Moving to the CCSS and new summative assessments will undoubtedly require the addition and possible deletion of items from the current chart.

Training and Support

Once data is made accessible and teachers trust and have a better understanding of the data provided, training and supports should be provided to facilitate the DDDM process. As part of RTTT, the state provided development coaches at several of our schools to work with principals on improving skills related to conducting and writing teacher evaluations. Teachers were provided with support from state data coaches to support effective data use in PLCs. Both support mechanisms provided frameworks, such as Taking Action with Data (TADA) for administrators and teachers to use when working with DDDM. The TADA framework takes teachers and administrators through the cycle of inquiry when utilizing data. This cycle includes six phases (Wireless Generation, 2012):

Phase 1: Understanding Data/Adjusting Whole Class Instruction,

Phase 2: Progress Monitoring/Introduction to Small Group Differentiation,

Phase 3: Adjustment and Individualization of Instruction,

Phase 4: Measuring Effectiveness of Aggregate Data,

Phase 5: Action Planning for Subgroup Populations, and

Phase 6: Transparent Data Culture.

Although this framework served as a tool to collect and discuss data, we still needed to address teachers' understanding of the data sources they were using in the meetings. At the district level, we conducted summer training linked to one of our primary data sources, the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), identified and trained teacher leaders to provide site-based support at each of our schools, and created lessons and assessments to help our teachers transition to the CCSS. Together, these strategies provide the sustained professional development and support needed to build and maintain a DDDM culture. Table 4 outlines the concerns addressed and the corresponding improvement strategies to address professional development and support.

Table 4 Overview of Training and Support Improvement Strategies

Concerns Facing District	Improvement Strategy
Teachers need professional development to enhance DDDM practices. (Miller, 2009)	Summer DIBELS Training Appendix H
Targeted, sustained professional development needs to be provided to individual school sites (Portin et al., 2009; Marsh et al., 2010)	Site Based Teacher Leaders – ALTs Appendix I
New curriculum and assessment needs to be paired with training to support implementation. (Miller, 2009; Kerr et al., 2006)	Transition to the CCSS Appendix J

Summer DIBELS Training. During my summer internship, I worked with our district resource teachers to create professional development and support materials to guide teachers in using Good and Kaminski's (2015) DIBELS data. CR administers DIBELS to collect both benchmark and progress monitoring data in grades K-5. The goal of the training was to help teachers use DIBELS' data to differentiate instruction within the classroom.

Teachers were asked to analyze student data and place students appropriately in the Four Types of Readers chart (Hall, 2009). Once placed into one of four potential reading groups (fast and right, slow and right, fast and wrong, slow and wrong), the chart guides educators through the next steps in diagnostic assessment, results-based lesson focus, and use of a tool for progress monitoring. This tool helps teachers to link assessment data collected with instructional practice in their classrooms. Appendix H contains products/tools that were used during the summer professional development and provided to teachers in grades K-5.

Site Based Teacher Leaders. Districtwide professional development is one mode of delivery to push information out to teachers and administrators across the district. However, this approach cannot be used regularly as it must either happen in the summer and be voluntary, or require a large number of teachers and administrators to be pulled from their classrooms and buildings. The latter disrupts classroom instruction and heavily taxes the district's budget to pay for substitutes. Our district has found that relying on strong teacher leaders to "bring back the message" to the buildings is a more viable option.

Over the four-year period of my ELP, three teacher leader groups emerged as support to our RTTT goals and CCSS transition. Their participation and impact was chronicled throughout my work in an effort to document these supports and the impact they had on our efforts. Reading specialists and their role in facilitating RTI meetings was discussed previously. Though our reading specialists work directly with teachers, the ALTs' and the CCSS transition team's work supported the majority of professional development linked to the district's new initiatives.

ALTs. Arguably one of the strongest groups of teacher leaders in our district emerged with the inception of the ALTs. CR has always prioritized the use of funds to support “people” rather than “programs.” With this being said, the district used Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) monies received through the ARRA to create ALTs. ALTs focus on student achievement, teacher quality and parent involvement in an effort to increase the secondary schools' performance as well as maintain the elementary schools' success. As a primary source of professional development and support, their performance responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Utilize data analysis to improve instruction, student achievement, and school climate,
- Assist individual classroom teachers with the design, delivery and assessment of instruction,
- Assist in the design and implementation of intervention programs,
- Participate in and help facilitate professional learning communities,

- Develop and lead professional development at the school and district level,
- Serve as a resource person to assist in supporting district initiatives as it pertains to the individual school sites,
- Develop and coordinate parent engagement activities at the building site,
- Attend workshops, conferences, meetings, etc., as necessary to support building and district initiatives around student achievement, teacher quality, and parent engagement,
- Collaborate with other building ALTs to ensure vertical articulation of best practices, and
- Perform such other assignments and accept such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the building principal.

Due to the current funding source of this position, it is likely that within the next year, the district will no longer be able to support this teacher unit in each building. In Appendix I, "Ensuring the Continuation of Teacher Leadership: Achievement Liaison Teachers in CR," I chronicled the work and shared the necessity of continuing the ALTs in our district. It has been shared not only with district leadership, but also with state leadership since establishing teacher leader positions was one of the state's original RTTT goals. It also documents the evolution of the ALTs in CR by tracing their growth in responsibilities and focus on data to maintain and/or increase student achievement across all schools in CR. With close to one million dollars in salaries connected to the ALT positions, it is difficult to fathom where the funding will come from once current monies are depleted. Options include re-evaluating current positions

for further funding instead of immediately eliminating ALTs to lobbying legislators for assistance. As a district, we are currently looking at all options.

CCSS Transition Team. Our second group of teacher leaders was formed to support the transition from the Delaware State Standards to the CCSS. Our CCSS transition team's work on lesson and assessment writing was an ever developing and time-consuming process. Grade level teams, composed of teachers from all of our elementary schools and our district resource teachers, worked over a four-year period to create our transition lessons for grades 1-5. These lessons were created to replace our current Harcourt anthology lessons with a focus on the implementation of CCSS expectations. Lessons were created not only to transition students, but also to provide a closer look at the new standards for our teachers as we waited for publishers to create more comprehensive programs for future adoption. The lessons, assessments, and corresponding monthly PLC notes for implementation (Appendix J) would serve as professional development and support for the transition to the CCSS. The new expectations linked to these lessons and assessments would be the focal point of DDDM conversations in our schools' PLC meetings.

As writers, this group of teacher leaders piloted the lessons they developed before moving to districtwide implementation. This allowed teachers to share their experiences with administrators as well as colleagues within their buildings. Once the units were deployed across the district, they served as "go to" teachers in each building for additional support. ALTs, and in some cases reading specialists, were also exposed to "train the trainer" models so that they could turn-key information and best

practices in their respective buildings on the instructional shifts found in these lessons: balancing informational and literary texts, building knowledge across disciplines, staircase of complexity, text based answers, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary. Groups of teachers and specialists were sent to a variety of state trainings to build understanding and capacity to lead professional development around the standards.

In the first year of implementation of the new lessons, CR schools allocated one monthly PLC meeting to focus on ELA and one to focus on Math. During these two allocated weeks, as ELA Supervisor of Instruction, I created and provided PLC agenda and activities that focused on long range planning, assessment, mini CCSS professional development sessions, video viewing, and feedback requests. Samples of lessons, assessments, and communication tools are found in Appendix I. ALTs, reading specialists, administrators and teachers would facilitate these PLC agendas and activities as part of our efforts to provide sustained professional development and support for the new CCSS expectations.

Chapter 4

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES RESULTS

With the new expectations and goals linked to RTTT and other reform efforts, the district was thrust into developing a new set of competencies across our schools. Over the past four years, strategies to build these competencies (i.e., improvement strategies) were refined multiple times. In a time of great change for the nation, state, and district, our work on the improvement strategies was as much a catalyst for change as change itself.

Developing this portfolio helped me to build the expertise I needed to lead as a district administrator. At times, it felt as if I were just ahead of the teachers and administrators I was trying to support. However, our district has benefitted from the experience of working with multiple initiatives while building a culture of collaboration and DDDM. This chapter will discuss the results of the improvement efforts made to address access, teachers' views of assessment results, and training and support.

Access

Electronic Data Warehouse. When the district first contracted with Data Service Center for I-Tracker in 2009, there were fewer than 25 users. The only users were elementary reading specialists and district administrators. Reading specialists

were not required to use the system, just familiarize themselves with its functionality. Less than six years later, the district now has 777 registered users (Data Service Center, 2015). All building and district administrators, classroom teachers, specialists, and many paraprofessionals have the ability to access the data warehouse. In reviewing log reports, over a one month period of time 469 users logged into I-Tracker at least once.

Not only have the users increased, but the system itself evolved with feedback from our district team as well as others across the state. Teachers are now able to utilize I-Tracker for “one stop shopping” when looking at a student’s data set. Figure 2 below demonstrates a screen shot of an I-Tracker screen when we first started using it in 2009; Figure 3 is a screen shot of the same report tab in 2015.



Figure 2 Teacher Tab for Data Benchmark Reports 2009

Benchmark

1. [DIBELS Next - Subtest Report](#)
2. [DIBELS Next - Growth Summary By Class](#)
3. [DIBELS Next - Growth Summary By Grade](#)
4. [DIBELS Next - Disaggregated Growth Summary](#)
5. [DCAS - Growth Summary By Class](#)
6. [DCAS - Growth Summary By Grade](#)
7. [DCAS - Avg Scores by Class](#)
8. [DCAS - Subtest Report](#)
9. [AYP - DCAS Summary By Cell](#)
10. [AYP - DCAS Growth Summary By Cell \(Growth Model\)](#)
11. [STAR - Growth Summary By Class](#)
12. [STAR Reading - Growth Summary By Grade](#)
13. [STAR Math - Growth Summary By Grade](#)
14. [STAR EL - Growth Summary By Grade](#)
15. [MAP - Subtest Report](#)
16. [Benchmark Assessment Correlation Summary](#)

Figure 3 Teacher Tab for Data Benchmark Reports 2015

In comparing the two screen shots, the number of reports and data points has increased exponentially. More targeted data is accessible in specific report form for teachers and administrators to support PLCs, RTI meetings, and other data use opportunities, including DPAS II goal setting and review.

Comparisons of student data pages also show substantial changes. In the past, DSTP and DIBELS were the two primary data points recorded. Screenshots of student data pages taken now show regular benchmarking and progress monitoring of students in RTI through multiple data points. Teachers now input both classroom based and diagnostic assessments, including teacher created curriculum assessments, DIBELS, Words Their Way, Fluency Monitor, phonics inventories, cold reads, Early Literacy

Survey, Read Naturally, Gates MacGinitie, Diagnostic Assessment of Reading, and the Independent Reading Inventory.

Protected Time. Completing the observations of the PLC/RTI meetings provided information specifically to support the access to data and interventions needed for teachers and administrators to engage in collaborative DDDM conversations.

Though the RTTT requirement for PLC time is scheduled at each of the district's buildings, the manner in which it is scheduled varies. Due to scheduling conflicts, the 90 min. period is often broken into two 45 min. segments per week. Data from the observations reflected a range of 20-120 min. spent on RTI discussions during the PLC meetings. With a range of 69-111 students in intervention groups across individual schools, it is not possible to discuss all students in one team meeting. After observing and reflecting on the amount of time accessible, as Supervisor, I worked with schools to schedule additional RTI meetings to allow for more time. Larger schools were provided with substitute funding for teacher coverage to extend meetings past the 90 min. allotted.

Having valuable data accessible to teachers and administrators was also a focus of the observations. Table 5 indicates the data used to support collaborative discussions across the schools observed.

Table 5 Data Used to Support Discussion

<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Number of Time Used in Sessions</u>
DIBELS	25
Curriculum Based Assessments	25
DCAS	14
Walpole Inventories	9
Other	8
Read Naturally	4
K-2 Literacy Assessment	4

At the time of the observations, the two primary sources of data were DIBELS and curriculum based assessments (CBAs). The CBAs used were the Harcourt end of selection tests. Participants in the meetings were concerned that these were not an accurate measure of student ability as these tests focused on stories that had been read multiple times throughout the week. Since the time of the observation, the district has instituted cold reads where students are given a selection they have not read in the past and evaluated on their comprehension linked to the skills and strategies learned in the unit. The district has also added additional assessments. The first, Renaissance Learning’s computer adaptive *STAR* assessment allows for a more comprehensive view of reading skills in students. The second is 95 Percent Group’s lesson assessments as well as the *Phonological Awareness Screener for Intervention* (PASI) and the *Phonics Screener for Intervention* (PSI) that also provide more access to individualized, actionable data for DDDM.

The variety of targeted interventions was also observed to ensure teachers and administrators had the appropriate tools to address students’ needs. Walpole’s lessons

(Walpole, 2007) were observed being used most frequently. Use of other interventions varied. Although Walpole's lessons provided a solid foundation, the district found the need for a more scripted approach to intervention and provided training and materials to implement 95 Percent Group's *Blueprint for Intervention*. 95 Percent Group's mission is to ensure that 95% of students are reading at grade level. The program contains diagnostic screeners that are aligned with the instructional materials. This allows teachers to identify a student's starting point and then build mastery of concepts and skills across a continuum (95 Percent Group, 2014). This intervention has been supported with two years of on-site professional development and is now used by both reading specialists and reading paraprofessionals at all school sites.

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results

After composing "Where to Draw the Line," I knew I had to ensure that our teachers viewed the data as valuable and trustworthy. Throughout the ELP process, I have not changed my views on the use of state assessments as data points in our DDDM practices. I have learned instead to ensure that state assessment data is paired with other data from multiple sources and that state assessment data should not serve as the primary source of information. As Talbert (2009) states, "Districts' use of state assessment data often reflects a stronger focus on meeting accountability targets rather than looking at specific student competencies and areas for growth" (p. 562). I believe this is why DPAS II Component V continues to be held in low regard by teachers and administrators as the assessments are contrived. Until teachers see specific data as valid and reliable, they will view its use as contrived and perfunctory.

Observations and feedback from the RTI meetings as well as the DPAS II goal setting were integral in identifying teachers' views related to assessment and its practical use. Both improvement efforts led to the recommendation to review additional assessments to measure student achievement. In response, the district began a pilot of the STAR assessment published by Renaissance Learning at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. As stated on Renaissance Learning's website (2015)

STAR assessments include new skills-based test items and in-depth reports for screening, instructional planning, progress monitoring, and standards benchmarking. Educators have immediate access to skill-specific, actionable data to target instruction and practice, select students for intervention, and predict state-test performance. (p. 1)

This online assessment is a likely replacement for DIBELS in our intermediate grades and supplement for DIBELS in our primary grades.

By completing my research on Lexiles as well as compiling the *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* and corresponding *ELA Resources* document, I was better equipped to talk with CR teachers about the assessments used within the district. Taking inventory and therefore "tightening up" measures helped the Instruction Division to focus on what data and interventions should be used as well as determine what was still needed.

Training and Support

After completing the district training on reader types, our reading specialists began using the chart to group students into the four reader types and sharing this information with teachers during RTI meetings. This allowed for greater focus on specific strategies linked to each type of reader and more efficient use of time during

RTI meetings. Three years later, I observed few sites still using this chart on a regular basis. Upon reflection, I realized that teachers moved on to “the next thing” as additional initiatives were developed. This is an important lesson for me to learn; as a supervisor, I must provide sustained professional development to support the ongoing use of tools that have been found to be helpful in the DDDM process.

Over the past four years, our three teacher leader groups (ALTs, reading specialists, and CCSS transition team) played a critical role in achieving our RTTT goals and transition to the CCSS. They have facilitated professional development linked to many RTTT initiatives, led data driven discussions through PLC and RTI meetings, and created curriculum and assessments aligned to the CCSS. Though it is difficult to attribute specific data to support each of the group’s impact on our transition over the past four years, examining the work they have done helps to provide anecdotal support of their influence moving forward.

In reviewing the impact of ALTs in our buildings, the most powerful support of this position comes from our building principals. A simple Google survey was sent to each of the five elementary principals in the district (Attachment I.2). The survey asked questions related to the ALTs’ work with data and support to the CCSS. Table 6 below documents the important roles ALTs play in supporting data use in CR schools.

Table 6 ALT Responsibilities Related to Data Use (N=5)

<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Percent of ALTs Holding Responsibility</u>
Facilitates RTI meetings	60
Analyzes classroom/school data	80
Works with administration to set goals based on data	100
Facilitates PLC meetings	100
Works with individual teachers and PLCs to analyze their data	80

Principals were then asked to comment on how their ALTs have supported efforts in their school's transition to the CCSS. In each of the principal's responses, ALTs provided professional development as well as coached individual teachers. They helped novice teachers "catch up" on the state, district, and building initiatives that started years before they were hired. The ALTs were described as an integral member of Leadership and School Improvement Teams. The ALTs attend PLCs to assist teachers in analyzing student formative data, prescribe strategies differentiated by student needs, and monitor the effect of the strategies on student achievement. They also planned and facilitated parent information nights and created documents specific for teachers and parents to share CCSS updates.

Principals were also asked to describe the impact of having ALTs in their buildings. "The best thing since sliced bread," was one principal's response in relation to her school. Overall, principals indicated that without the service of the ALTs, they would not be as far along. Principals noted how self-motivated their ALTs were in providing quasi-administrative support to both teachers and parents as needed.

There is also evidence of the impact of ALTs in *Achievement Liaison Teachers: Sustaining a Teacher Leadership Model that Works* (Appendix H). The ALTs have helped CR schools win awards such as Delaware Superstars in Education, National Blue Ribbon, National Distinguished Title I Schools, and the Lieutenant Governor's Parental Involvement, many of which depend on analyses of our DCAS data. As noted above, it is difficult to attribute these accolades directly to the work of the ALTs. The comments above are evidence of their value as a teacher leaders and impact on their individual school communities.

The classroom and resource teachers participating as our transition writers have produced critical curriculum resources, crucial in our district's transition to CCSS. As a group, they have created full year, grade specific, curriculum maps. Corresponding standards checklists ensure all standards are addressed and provide long range goals for teachers. To support the full year curriculum maps, the writing teams also created unit curriculum maps to flesh out their specific focus and full lesson plans and all corresponding support materials (e.g., graphic organizers, video clips, posters, text selections, grammar practice). Each unit was planned for approximately 30-45 days with individual lesson implementation ranging from 5-15 days, depending on the unit focus and grade level, with 220 lessons created for grades 1-5. Teachers were also provided with unit specific documents to help plan guided reading group and foundational skills lessons as well as year-long calendars to help pace instruction and assessment. Informal formative assessments were embedded within unit lesson plans and formal cold reads and a unit summative assessment were

provided for each unit per grade. Each unit averaged five formal assessments with a total of 153 assessments created over the four year period. Parent letters were created and sent home with each unit in each grade level to inform them of the unit focus and ways to support their children at home.

In order to house all of the curriculum, lessons, and assessments, CR worked with Data Service Center to create Curriculum Tracker. Linked to I-Tracker, Curriculum Tracker allows for 24/7 access to all curriculum materials for teachers and administrators. Teachers can also provide feedback by entering comments on lessons and assessments. During the first year of implementation, over 160 comments were submitted. They were used to review and enhance lessons and assessments throughout the year. Teams were convened this past summer to review these comments and enhance units and assessments as necessary.

Teacher leaders worked with their colleagues to modify test rubrics and support teacher scaffolding for students. For example, they facilitated teachers' conversations about student assessments to determine the effectiveness of the rubrics as well as the level of student understanding. CCSS requires students to include evidence found in the text in generating their short answer, a practice not emphasized in the past. At the primary grades, this was especially a challenge. Teachers now provide students opportunities to practice by inserting sentence stems to help guide their answers. Assessments continue to be revised and others will be added to SBAC's online Digital Library for the 2015-2016 school year. Though the transition was rapid and has been difficult, teacher representatives who have served on benchmarking

committees for SBAC have reported that our students are moving in the right direction and will be equipped to handle the questioning expectations on the SBAC summative.

When transitioning to a new test or instructional materials there is always concern that there will be the inevitable drop in student performance. This drop is usually associated with the learning curve as individuals involved in the implementation are trained and “figure out” the new expectations. Teacher leaders were tasked with working individually with teachers as well as in PLCs to support the transition to new lessons and assessments to help minimize the impact of the change on student achievement. A review of state level summative data revealed that when comparing the first year of implementation, grade level to the same grade level the previous year, our students’ performance demonstrated a minimal drop (see Table 7). A t-test revealed no significant change in scores.

Table 7 DCAS Reading Summative Data for Grades 3-5

<u>Grade</u>	<u>% Meeting Standard 2012-2013</u>	<u>% Meeting Standard 2013-2014</u>	<u>Difference in Performance after Transition Year</u>
3	79.87	78.68	-1.19
4	84.59	80.03	-4.56
5	86.08	85.02	-1.06

It also should be noted that when comparing the same cohort of students from one year to the next, there was no significant change. (see Table 8). CR views these data as

evidence that that the relatively rapid change had not adversely affected student performance.

Table 8 DCAS Reading Summative Data for Cohorts

<u>Grade</u>	Percent Meeting the Standard <u>2012-2013</u>	Percent Meeting the Standard <u>2013-2014</u>	Difference in Performance after <u>Transition Year</u>
Cohort A (Grade 3 to 4)	79.87	80.03	0.16
Cohort B (Grade 4 to 5)	84.59	85.02	0.43

The real test will be to look at student performance on the new SBAC assessment to determine modifications needed for future implementation. Once the summative is in place with its corresponding Interim Comprehensive Assessment and Block Assessments and our own curriculum-based assessments, we may finally see an assessment system where all data points are working together and leading us to the same target.

Conclusion

By addressing the three challenges of access, teachers' views and understanding of data, and professional development and support, CR has created new systems, knowledge, resources, and practices that will support the district in building a culture of DDDM.

Chapter 5

REFLECTION ON IMPROVEMENT EFFORT RESULTS

Evidence in Chapter 4 demonstrates progress in building a culture of DDDM in the areas of access, addressing teachers' views of data, and providing professional development and support. Each of these challenges was addressed through specific improvement strategies; recommendations have also been made to make them even stronger. There were limitations with the improvement strategies. For example, though training and supports were provided, the extent to which teachers' and administrators' views and understanding have changed was not measured; and while observations provided recommendations and next steps, those suggestions have not been fully implemented by the individual schools or the district at this point. Supporting a culture of DDDM is an evolving process within our district and schools. This culture is vital to the success of the many state and district led initiatives and will continue to be monitored and supported through observational as well as student assessment data.

Due to my transition from building principal to district supervisor, many of the improvement strategies built on observation, analysis, and reflection on current practices in the district. These efforts allowed for a deeper look at what was already working and what needed to be revised in order to enhance DDDM practice.

The improvement strategy that worked particularly well was the development of teacher leader groups (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yuon, & Boatright, 2010; Portin et al, 2009). Due to the sheer number of initiatives involved in the implementation of RTTT and the adoption of the CCSS, being able to rely on a group of individuals with whom I could brainstorm, plan, and disseminate information across all of the schools in the district was instrumental. The ALTs, reading specialists, and CCSS transition team were critical in moving the district forward during this time of rapid change. I have always believed that we have to work with those who are in the classroom when implementing new procedures and policies. Time was well spent in developing their skills in order to support the over 1,000 professionals in the classrooms across the district. As indicated in Chapter 4, the ALTs in particular were not only valued at the district level, but were also considered invaluable at the building level by their principals.

As a former principal, I know that the strength of any new initiative is only going to be as strong as the leaders in the buildings. Ironically, my experience led me to implement the improvement strategies on my own rather than include other administrators in the process. Farley-Ripple and Buttram (2013) examined collaborative data use in PLCs in Delaware during this same time period. Three of their four conclusions were linked to the influence of the district and school leadership in developing a vision and expectations to support collaborative data use. As a new supervisor, my scope of responsibilities included multiple teacher groups and therefore my improvement strategies primarily focused on teacher leaders. For those trying to

address a similar challenge, I would suggest starting first with the building administration. Though my improvement efforts resulted in an increased capacity for teachers to lead DDDM initiatives, it became evident that our teacher leaders, in many cases, were more informed than building principals. This was acknowledged later in the improvement process and prompted the creation of district PLCs to include both teachers and administrators. Further efforts must be made to provide more opportunities for principal development.

As a district leader, I learned the most from the development and work of the CCSS transition team. This team took on a tremendous workload. I am not sure we would take this challenge on again. RTTT literally created an atmosphere of “racing” to keep up with the curricular and assessment demands created by the adoption of the CCSS and the SBAC assessment. The amount of work our district accomplished in the time provided is remarkable. This work continues as lessons and assessments are refined.

Although the district does not regret making the decision to create its own curriculum and assessments, we would make several changes if this work was to be repeated. First, we would not roll out the new ELA curriculum at the same time as the new math curriculum. This was incredibly overwhelming for everyone involved and did not allow for true understanding of either curriculum until the second year of implementation. The professional development provided to building administrators and ALTs at district PLCs was well conceived, aligned to the new units, and provided targeted support to the teachers. However, alternating weeks of professional

development between ELA and math never gave the participants time to dig deeper into the content. With time being one of the key elements to successful collaborative discussion, we knew that the professional development modules would not have the impact intended.

The creation of assessments linked to the newly developed units was an integral part of the CCSS transition team's work. The assessments were being developed as new information was being released by DE DoE and other state and national organizations. Writers worked furiously to use the new CCSS expectations and question stems to develop paper and pencil assessments that would align with unit expectations as well as mirror future state assessment demands. The need to produce these assessments so quickly presented several obstacles for the writing team.

First, there was little time and resources to train the writers in assessment writing. As a district we relied on veteran teachers as well as teachers with past experience with assessment writing. As mentioned previously, there were few resources related to assessment expectations, stems, or basic formatting to allow writers to model their assessments after SBAC's future blueprint. From the first to the fifth unit, in each grade, assessment format and expectations changed as more information was released. This necessitated going back to the original assessments to make changes.

Second, our teams of teachers were currently classroom teachers with responsibilities outside of writing assessments. This meant that we were always working to keep up with the demands of the units in progress. If time had allowed we

would have benefitted from having weeks set aside to work solely on writing, however that was not a reality that could be scheduled.

Lastly, was the difficulty of finding passages that met the text complexity demands as well as length necessary to provide for a stimulus that warranted more complex text based answers to test questions. The team was limited to using current assessment passages from the old Harcourt and Benchmark series. They also searched online and were able to procure several passages that had no copyright restrictions and even wrote to several authors to gain permission for use.

For those attempting to address a similar improvement goal related to assessment writing, I would recommend first starting with professional development for teachers on assessment writing. The majority of our writers participated in training in the past during the DSTP and DCAS era. However, with the amount of work that needed to be accomplished, several other teachers were brought on board and their learning curve was greater.

Time and access to test stimuli is also a necessity. The teams will need extended periods of time to construct assessments using quality passages to allow for more complex questioning and student responses. Now that the CCSS have been in place for a longer period of time, there are many more resources available with performance tasks as well as multiple choice and short answer questions that could be purchased and then modified to assess each of the units' focus standards.

Furthermore, I would hold off on implementing assessments to allow for more time to field test items and get feedback from teachers and students. Though we field

tested many of the assessment in the pilot year of the curriculum assessment, another year would have allowed for even more feedback and time for revisions. Much of the feedback was obtained through monthly PLCs or through the online feedback function on Curriculum Tracker.

This leads to my final recommendation related to the assessment writing. Each month we asked teachers to review assessments as a team during PLCs before administering them. We also asked them to collaboratively score and provide feedback and samples of student work to the district. Due to the press for time, this initiative did not meet its fullest potential. With a well-defined process we would have received more specific feedback not only about the structure of the test, but also the student responses to each question. This would have allowed for better evaluation of test question quality as well as more information for unit development. In the future, I would provide teachers with dedicated time to focus solely on collaborative scoring and feedback. This would not only enhance the assessments, but also our teachers' understanding of the new expectations of the CCSS.

Professional development plays a large role in the successful implementation of DDDM. The improvement effort focused on DIBELS training to enhance teacher understanding of the assessment and its results as well as provided tools to facilitate what was learned in PLCs to discuss and take action on student data. This process was facilitated for the first year in PLCs and then faded away with the new demands placed on PLC time. As a district leader, I have learned that all professional development must have ongoing, sustained support. With DIBELS serving as one of our primary

data points for collaborative discussions, the data analysis model shared during the initial professional development should have been integrated into PLC routines in order to provide district expectations for use across the schools. Planning long range, to our best ability, will allow for models that work to be sustained as new models and expectations are introduced.

Through my improvement efforts, I observed administrators, classroom teachers, and teacher leaders interacting with data. The focus of their conversations, perceptions of data, and application of data results to inform instruction made it clear that the district needed to address several areas. These areas included:

1. how teachers judge themselves and their effectiveness using data,
2. why teachers rely on professional judgment rather than assessment data,
3. what we want our students to be able to do and then how we measure that,
and
4. how to continue to support DDDM practices that foster using student data to improve teacher performance.

To accomplish this, we need to address a recurring theme that was evident throughout almost all of the improvement efforts. This theme was related to the lack of appropriate assessments or the perceived need for different assessments. Reflecting on the results of these efforts as well as reading research on DDDM, it is evident that we need to develop and share an assessment plan for the district.

According to Means et al. (2010), “Based on case study data, interim assessment for generating actionable data is one the most powerful strategies districts

have for getting teachers to use data.” Currently, the majority of assessments available to teachers and administrators are benchmark and summative rather than formative or progress monitoring. The improvement strategy that developed the *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* and corresponding *ELA Resources* chart took the first step by inventorying assessments and support programs already existing in the district. If I were to develop these charts again, I would maintain the *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* with the addition of a calendar charting when the assessments should be administered and to whom.

The district has come a long way in understanding the new CCSS and assessment expectations. We are beginning to receive more information about interim assessments directly linked to the summative assessment that will help to align our current units and support materials. New assessment documents are being released by SBAC and DE DoE that will require teachers to work together to choose which ones to use and when to use them, decipher results, and use the results to make informed instructional decisions. PLCs will play a large part in this transition.

The improvement strategy of reviewing our current practices in PLC/RTI meetings provided the information needed to address the logistics of data discussions throughout the district. Teachers no longer sit around the table at PLC’s “admiring the problem.” They use the I-Tracker data system to compile data as well as discuss how the various data points are interrelated. They still put credence in intuition and anecdotal information but also rely more on what the data is telling them to support their beliefs. Dissatisfaction with using DPAS II to measure student growth reinforces

the need to review what assessments to use as well as how to use the data from these assessments to develop measureable goals. As the district moves forward, our improvement strategies need to focus on data literacy among both teachers and administrators.

I have learned that having a number of initiatives happening at once can cause districts and schools to be reactive. As a district leader, I need to continue to filter state initiatives to ensure mandates are being met, but in a way that the new activities fit within the scope of district goals and initiatives. This will help to keep the trust and buy in of both teachers and administrators. As a district, we need to continue to look at long range goals related to DDDM practices. It is imperative that district and building leaders work together to support teachers' DDDM. This support can be provided through the actions listed below.

Access

- Increase number of users for I-Tracker to include all district and building administrators, specialists, teachers, and paraprofessionals.
- Work with principals to ensure PLC time is allocated during the transition away from RTTT funding and expectations.
- Investigate and invest in ways to ensure all data sources are able to stream directly to I-Tracker to maintain a single location for data retrieval.

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results

- Create district/school visions and expectations related to data collection so that data is valued within our district.

- Search for and vet assessments that are aligned to student proficiency targets and the CCSS to facilitate analysis and conversations linked directly to instruction and student achievement.
- Participate in data conversations through PLCs and RTI meetings to further identify teachers' perceptions of meaningful data as well as intended student outcomes.
- Focus DPAS II Component V goal setting conferences in the fall 2015 on using data sources and outcomes to demonstrate growth in student achievement and teacher quality.

Professional Development and Support

- Build on PLC conversations mentioned previously to develop and provide additional professional development and support on the CCSS and assessments.
- Review, align, and train teachers in the use of the new Interim Comprehensive Assessments as well as the Interim Assessment Blocks. Both assessments are being released by SBAC and could provide well-aligned benchmark and progress monitoring opportunities for our students and teachers.
- Advocate for the continued funding for the ALT position as well as actively seek funding sources outside of the state's consolidated grant process.
- Provide support from outside entities, such as Delaware Association of School Leaders (DASL), to supply development coaches for our principals

related to using DPAS II to its fullest capacity and data coaches to train our teachers and administrators in data literacy.

For Every Answer a New Challenge Arises

As educators, we cannot be satisfied with simply “going through the motions” when it comes to DDDM. The implementation of the improvement strategies over the past four years has built capacity for a positive and productive culture by addressing access, teachers’ views of assessment results, and professional development and supports. Every effort has been made to follow up on the recommendations of each improvement strategy and plans have been made to continue these efforts long range.

With the culture of DDDM developing in the district, a new challenge arises. This challenge revolves around the fundamental reason behind building a culture of DDDM, “To what extent do these data conversations impact instruction in the classroom and therefore increase student achievement?” As a district supervisor, I must ensure that we not only communicate a vision and expectations for what we want to see in DDDM collaborative discussions, but also what outcomes should occur when they are done effectively. Together, teachers and administrators in CR will continue in their “Tradition of Excellence” by refining practices while assessing how these practices make a difference for our students.

Chapter 6

REFLECTION ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

It seems as if it were just yesterday when I began the ADPO program at University of Delaware. My Doctoral studies began in the same year that I became a district supervisor. My work as a student in the ADPO program was invaluable in helping me develop in my new position as well as in my profession as a scholar, problem-solver, and partner.

Development as a Scholar

I will never forget my first class. We started immediately with a tutorial on how to write using scholarly sources. This practice continued throughout the doctoral program in all of our assignments, papers, reflections, and research. This program truly helped to expand my scope of resources. Though the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the National Association for Elementary School Principals periodicals help to keep administrators informed on latest trends and research conducted by the “big names” in education, such as Robert Marzano, the wealth of knowledge gained by reading actual research papers allowed for more targeted evaluation and deeper analysis throughout my studies. I have learned to better seek out information rather than wait for it to be presented and have learned how to look at what I am reading with a more analytical eye. We do not work with widgets in

education. We work with children. Finding studies that best match the demographics and needs of our district allows us to replicate previous research findings. Instead of only “Googling” for information, I use online databases in order to access research studies and briefs to provide a more scholarly approach to building my knowledge base for decision making.

My skills for using data in planning and decision making have also improved. As a building principal, I worked primarily with disaggregating and analyzing student achievement data. As a district supervisor, I am faced with implementing and monitoring a variety of state and district reform initiatives. These initiatives require the skillset to generate, retrieve, manipulate, and analyze data for both planning and evaluation purposes. In EDUC 827, Dr. Archbald gave us our first introduction to manipulating data by creating pivot tables, scatter plots, frequency tables, and t-tests, to name a few. Though I would not claim to be an expert in manipulating my own data, I have increased my skills in reading and then making inferences using data provided from outside sources. I am now better able to access data and make informed decisions. Though I-Tracker creates data reports for immediate use in collaborative discussions, I am equip to download data from I-Tracker and manipulate the information myself, as well as show others, to provide for more targeted discussions.

My work in EDUC 863, Principles of Educational Evaluation, was probably most beneficial to me in my current position. Working in the Instruction Division involves constant evaluation of programs throughout the district. Though they are not all formally conducted as in my ELP, understanding evaluation terms and being able

to assess the strengths and weaknesses of evaluations conducted by others is integral to reviewing our current programs as well as looking at future possibilities. This class helped me to understand how program evaluation contributes to program development, implementation, and improvement. The implementation of the CCSS has created a constant need to evaluate data and programs and the reinforcement of these skills across my UD classes have helped to enhance my skills and confidence in using data.

Finally, the inclusion of several courses that focused directly on instructional design as well as content, such as reading strategies, helped to enhance my skills as an instructional leader. In order to best lead teachers and provide quality instruction for our students it is imperative that we study not only leadership actions, but also best practices in instructional leadership. Being part of the ADPO program afforded me the opportunity to work with experts in the field such as Dr. Walpole and Dr. Lewis. The knowledge imparted by their research as well as training helped to guide our district in its initial implementation efforts. This, even more than learning how to use scholarly resources, helps to make me a true scholar.

Development as a Problem-Solver

Education is a field in constant flux. Working on a problem over multiple years allowed me to develop a new perspective of the role of politics and the timing of educational initiatives. My initial ELP focus was quickly steered in another direction with the award of the RTTT grant and its impact in all Delaware districts. Perseverance became a common theme as districts struggled to understand the

reasoning behind many of the reform efforts. Though many of the policies and practices are still not always well received, there is an underlying hope for improvement. As a problem solver, I have become well versed in using multiple perspectives and aligning strategies to specific goals. These skills are vital in leading a district with a variety of stakeholders and needs.

One of the most powerful models introduced during my program was Harvard's PELP Coherence Framework (Childress, Elmore, Grossman, & Moore, 2007). As a cohort, we spent class time working with real world problems through the lens of this framework. It helped me to develop a better sense of how culture, systems and structures, resources, stakeholder relationships, and environment work together to support the implementation of an improvement strategy. I often refer to this framework when working through initiatives associated with RTTT. In the same token, a small group of our cohort members participated in a summer book study around several professional resource books including Sharatt & Fullan's *Realization: The Change Imperative for Deepening District-Wide Reform* (2009). This book study took place as we were moving into the implementation of our RTTT plan and reinforced my instinct to focus on ensuring that teachers had tools and strategies rather than packaged programs. The introduction to targeted professional resources and the discussions that followed helped me to develop further as a problem solver.

As mentioned previously, having courses taught by professors who were experienced in these fields was highly beneficial. A former Delaware superintendent led one of our classes. We had many discussions around politics directly related to

issues we were all familiar with and were able to discuss them with someone who had first-hand experience dealing with them in our context. This weekly dialogue created background knowledge that would benefit future decision making.

As discussed earlier, my prior experience as a building principal revolved primarily around using quantitative data. Working through the initiatives related to RTTT involves constant goal setting and use of data to assess improvement efforts. The majority of my ELP improvement efforts relied on qualitative data obtained from observations and/or anecdotes. Coursework throughout my program has helped me to grow as a problem solver by exposing me to a variety of data collection methods. In each class I was expected to use different means to support my reflections on leadership efforts allowing for more robust analysis of data.

I have also developed as a leader by considering multiple perspectives in defining and solving problems. By incorporating teacher and administrator groups in the development and implementation of improvement efforts, I was better able to gauge the potential impact and plan long range for the various supports needed for success.

Development as a Partner

One of the requirements of EDUC 890 was to interview a leader in a field other than our own. I chose to interview my husband's supervisor, a Senior Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force. My husband had always spoken very highly of him and I was interested in seeing what made him stand out as a leader. He shared that he was only as strong as the mentor in front of him and the mentee behind him.

He based his leadership on mentoring the right person behind him to ensure he was always supported. He truly understood that success was a partnership and that by ensuring he had built a strong rapport and sense of trust with his successor, he would continue to be supported as he moved ahead.

As part of this program, I was able to build relationships with faculty members at the university who had expertise in areas that were directly related to the RTTT and CCSS initiatives blossoming in our district. Working together, these colleagues helped to bring valuable information to our teachers through not only my studies, but through their direct professional development in our district. I attribute our ability to stay out in front of the state to the partnership we built four years ago.

One of my strengths as a leader is my ability to build consensus as well as work collaboratively with others. I thoroughly enjoyed EDUC 839 focused on K-12 policies. We focused on the political aspects of education and read the book *Political Savvy*. I have shared this book with quite a few aspiring teacher leaders as it focuses on the importance of working with people and forming relationships to move your initiatives forward. As a district supervisor, I work with multiple stakeholder groups. As I have developed as a leader, I have learned how to better work with these groups in order to create a more cohesive system within the district. Instead of looking at them as separate entities, I have worked to find ways each group can influence and collaborate with others and therefore build a more unified approach to improvement initiatives. There are far too many working parts in a district and trying to address

each one individually, instead of as a part of the whole, will only lead to plans with no outcomes.

I have learned that moving from a building to the district level involves partnerships across multiple groups to include both teachers and administrators from within as well as outside the district. Our colleagues from throughout the state as well as those we can converse with and learn from online have provided information and guidance necessary to move my improvement efforts forward. The implementation of initiatives such as the CCSS, SBAC, and DPAS II Component V would be much more difficult without networking and sharing of ideas with multiple stakeholders. As a principal, I had a vast network of building administrators I could rely on for support and now. As a district supervisor, I have learned the importance of helping to expand that network not only for myself, but also for my principal colleagues as we work together to advance our efforts related to RTTT expectations.

Most important are the relationships I built with my professors and members of my UD cohort. As my husband's supervisor shared, the best resources are human resources. Our program was full of a variety of human resources. We had the opportunity to work with program evaluators, published reading researchers, school superintendents, and experts in data analysis, just to name a few. Each of the classes included in the program brought its own menu of new skillsets and allowed me to grow as a professional as well as build a strong network of "no-cost consultants."

Our cohort was comprised of educators who had clearly dedicated themselves to our profession and worked cohesively in all facets of the program. We watched as

some left the classroom to become administrators and others were promoted to higher levels of administration both inside and external to their original districts. Throughout all of the changes, we were there for one another to celebrate and then most of all, to support as new challenges arose. These individuals will forever be my “first line of defense” both professionally and personally. Working in such a small state has many benefits. We are all just a phone call away and in reality, just a quick drive away to share best practices in our districts or band together to work towards bettering education at the state level. Our shared experiences over the past four years have allowed us to get to know one another’s strengths and know that we can call on one another to put them to use when needed.

Developing as a scholar, problem solver, and partner is my responsibility in order to lead the best teachers in the state of Delaware. After completing my program at the University of Delaware, I feel better prepared to lead initiatives, view challenges as opportunities, and build the capacity for change at the district level. I have gained not only the knowledge, but also the support system, from my professors and cohort, to continue to grow as a leader and make a difference for the teachers and students in CR.

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Appendix A

FROM COMPLIANCE TO COMPETENCE BUILDING CAPACITY FOR DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING INITIAL PROPOSAL

The following artifact contains my initial proposal as well as the revised artifacts approved by the committee in 2013. Challenges as well as improvement strategies are included. Short descriptions of each artifact are provided.

ELP Proposal by
Christine Alois, Supervisor of Instruction
Caesar Rodney School District

Organizational Context

The Caesar Rodney School District is composed of eleven school campuses serving over 7,500 students to include one early childhood center with kindergarten only, six elementary schools serving grades 1-5, three 6-8 middle schools, one 9-12 high school, and one countywide school for students with severe disabilities. The Caesar Rodney School District (CR) strives to provide an exemplary schooling experience for our diverse population by focusing on the four A's: ARTS, ACADEMICS, ATHLETICS, in a safe and caring ATMOSPHERE. The district has maintained a Superior status at all of the elementary schools and one middle school. Currently there is one middle school with a rating of Academic Watch, and the other middle school as well as the high school, have raised their status to Commendable over the past year. Students are heterogeneously grouped through grade 6 in all subject areas with homogeneous grouping occurring infrequently until grade eleven. Student demographics are approximately 59% Caucasian, 29% African American, and less than 6% for both Asian and Hispanic ethnicities. CR has 15.7% of its students receiving special education services and 40.8% are considered low-income. There is a 4.2% drop out rate and 94% daily attendance rate.

Organizational Role(s)

My position encompasses a broad set of responsibilities as Supervisor of Instruction. Some of the main groups and programs that I have oversight responsibility for are:

- Title I. I oversee the Title I program at CR's seven elementary schools to include reading specialists at each school site.
- Special Education. I work with the Director of Special Education to provide support for special education teachers.
- School-based teacher leaders. I coordinate and oversee the work of school-based teacher leaders – Achievement Liaison Teachers (ALTs). Each school has a designated teacher leader formerly funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that focuses on student achievement, teacher quality, and parent involvement.
- Initial licensure teachers. I provide oversight and support for 50 mentor teachers and over 100 teachers on initial license to attain state mandated “90 clock-hour” professional development required for professional licensure.

One responsibility that cuts across all groups and programs is to help teachers and administrators understand better how data should play an integral role in their practice and to become more proficient in data-driven decision making. Improving teachers' and administrators' proficiency with data has become a major priority in CR and in the state.

My focus for this ELP will be on the teacher leaders I work with, ALTs and Title I reading specialists, to become more knowledgeable and proficient users of data in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA) for monitoring student progress, identifying needs, and planning instruction. As teacher leaders, their comfort and competence in the area of data analysis will allow them to provide assistance to their peers in a variety of venues such as professional learning communities, faculty meetings, in-service days, Response To Intervention (RTI) meetings, and summer workshops. This in turn will lead to a critical mass of data driven decision makers as well as build a more positive culture towards utilizing data to enhance student performance.

Reforms Emphasizing Data Use and Goals for CR

Though schools today face more pressure to engage in data-driven decision making and may in fact be using data in a more frequent and widespread manner, case studies of schools attempting to enact data-driven inquiry and decision making reveal that implementation is not always successful. Research suggests that effective use of data may depend on several enabling factors, including strong leadership, up-front planning for data collection and use, and strong human capacity for data-driven inquiry (Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006, p. 498).

Federal and state initiatives have made testing and accountability a major focus for all schools and districts in Delaware. In Delaware this began in the 90s with standards-based reform, the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP), and accountability policies. DSTP-OR made many types of data available to teachers and administrators for data-driven decision making. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) added

to the requirements for testing and the use of data to monitor and improve student achievement. Now with the new Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) system creating even more assessment data and Race to the Top (RTTT) reforms placing a stronger emphasis on performance measurement and other forms of data use for instructional planning and improvement, Delaware districts are facing even greater pressure to become data-based organizations.

Currently in CR, strengthening data systems and teachers’ and administrators’ proficiency with data continues to be a major priority. This is shown in the main goals of Caesar Rodney’s “Race to the Top” plan as shown in Figure A1.

Caesar Rodney School District *Acceleration, Enrichment & Remediation!*

Race To The Top

I. Introduction and Summary June 1, 2011

A. [Vision](#)
 B. [Needs Assessment](#)
 C. [Overview....Implementation Priorities](#)

II. Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1:	Rigorous Standards, Curriculum and Assessments
Objective 1:	Implement College and Career Ready Standards and Assessments
Goal 2:	Sophisticated Data Systems and Practices
Objective 2:	Improve Access to and Use Data Systems
Objective 3:	Build capacity to use data
Goal 3:	Effective Teachers and Leaders
Objective 4:	Improve the effectiveness of educators based on performance
Objective 5:	Ensure equitable distribution of effective educators
Objective 6:	Ensure educators are effectively prepared
Objective 7:	Provide effective support to educators
Goal 4:	Deep Support for Low Achieving Schools
Objective 8:	Provide deep support to low-achieving schools
Objective 9:	Engage Families and Communities effectively

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Figure A1 Caesar Rodney’s Race to the Top Plan Goals

Goal 2 is to “Accelerate achievement and improve outcomes for all students with sophisticated data systems and practices,” with key objectives being to improve access to and use of data systems and build the capacity to use data. Here are some of the main strategies the district describes:

- Implement and support improvement of the state longitudinal data system,
- Develop and implement trainings for district staff using existing capacity in a “train the trainer” fashion for using data sources,
- Provide 90 min. of weekly collaborative time,
- Professional training for administrators on professional learning communities (PLCs) and staff,
- Plans from each building for incorporation of data coaches and PLCs,
- Improve the effectiveness of district wide special education data collection and communication practices, and
- Improve the use of data and efficiency of the special education referral/dismissal process by educational level.

Implementing these goals and strategies will be a large and long term initiative for CR and will bring many challenges. Research has shown that there are many challenges and barriers faced by schools and districts trying to use data more effectively.

Challenges In Implementing Data-based Decision Making

Teachers and administrators in CR are used to the “old” assessment window when DSTP testing was once a year, in March. It was a “once and done” task. Now, CR staff members are faced with assessment “windows” that span an entire school year and require additional testing and other forms of assessment, ongoing review of assessment data, and documented use of data to plan and evaluate instruction and personnel.

While CR educators understand the importance of data driven decision making (DDDM), many have struggled to keep up with the growing amount of testing, supply of assessment data, and the demands of analyzing and using data to improve instruction. Often educators at the building level continue to view assessment requirements and data analysis as something to comply with – tasks to check off a list, rather than important tools to help guide and improve instruction (Dembosky, Pane, Barney, & Christina, 2005; Ingram, Louis, & Schroeder, 2004).

As other research has shown, teacher training and support is essential. As stated by Miller (2009)

We risk the chance of students’ learning problems being misdiagnosed, inappropriately, attributing data results to a student’s particular ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status, tutoring only those students who are close to passing state tests (also known as the bubble students), tracking students by ability level, engaging in constant drilling on test items as opposed to developing problem solving skills, and teaching only those subjects that are tested (p. 2).

According to Ingram, Louis, and Schroeder (2004), these barriers can be categorized into three types of challenges: cultural, political, and technical. The cultural barriers revolve primarily around teachers’ mindsets toward how they judge

themselves as well as their students. They often rely on “professional judgment” rather than assessment data, have difficulty agreeing on what all students should know and then what data would demonstrate that knowledge, and take personal ownership over how they gauge effectiveness, yet may not associate their own performance with that of their students. Technical barriers often fuel cultural barriers as they create tension for data consumers. Teachers are bombarded with data coming from a variety of sources and often need to make decisions using data that they feel may not accurately reflect what they value. On top of looking for the “right” data sources, they are given little time to actually collect and then analyze the data individually, let alone as a group of professionals. And finally, data’s use and misuse has created a political barrier where teachers and administrators view data less as a means to providing support for children and more as a means to avoiding punitive action. This leads to data use sometimes being done as a matter of compliance as much as anything.

In 2004 the RAND Corporation completed a study on the data driven decision making preparedness of school districts in Southwestern Pennsylvania who, like most districts across the nation, were being held to new standards of school performance and data use. This report reiterated the barriers shared amongst other literature related to districts developing their skills to become more effective as data users to enhance teacher practice and student performance. It was noted that teachers lacked adequate data analysis skills and a process for systematically using data. Most of the districts did not have data systems and, as a result, teachers and principals did not have access

to the appropriate data. Most importantly, there was a lack of time to collaborate about data once it was collected (Dembosky, Pane, Barney, & Christina, 2005).

What these studies show is that there are three recurring challenges schools must address in creating better use of data for improvement: (1) difficulties of staff access to data; (2) incomplete staff understanding and expertise with data; (3) lack of time. The next section describes recent steps to help address these and more specifically some of my goals.

Recent Steps and Continuing Challenges in Caesar Rodney to Strengthen Data Use

As mentioned previously, CR has placed data driven decision making as a high priority on our list of short and long term goals. The district has begun breaking down barriers mentioned in the literature that could inhibit the success of our initiative.

Challenge #1: Access to Data and Data Analysis Tools. CR teachers have a variety of data sources available to them to include benchmark, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and summative assessments. Assessments are administered at different intervals, by different personnel, and results are reported via program software, state systems, hand written protocols, and teacher grade books. In order to use data effectively and efficiently, teachers needed a way to access all collected data in one place. An even better option would be with one click. CR adopted a Response to Intervention Data Tracking System called I-Tracker in the 2009-2010 school year. Over the past two years, various stakeholders in the district have worked to create modules specific to our buildings' need to not only house, but also track, student

assessment and progress related to those assessments through this data system. Every administrator, teacher and the majority of paraprofessionals have access to the system both at work and at home via the internet. It is used extensively at the elementary school for RTI and has recently been picked up by the middle and high schools to track student performance. Teachers have started asking for specific teacher created common assessments to be loaded to use as talking points in their weekly collaborative discussions. Just about every piece of data the district collects is loaded on and viewable from this system.

My Proposal. I-Tracker has given the district the vehicle to house, track, and analyze data, but we are still far from having all stakeholders on the site regularly and using it to its full capacity. The district has followed the model, “I do, we do, you do” in the initial stages of I-Tracker implementation. Last year I took the lead for promoting the program and providing support for implementation, but this year I have stepped back more from being the sole I-Tracker expert and am working with our teacher leaders to strengthen their confidence with the system during PLC and RTI meetings at their building sites. Several of my ELP artifacts will reflect my communications and professional development in the area of data collection utilizing I-Tracker in RTI and PLC meetings, choosing the appropriate assessments to track, and then having resources to link the assessment results to the appropriate instructional practice/intervention program. The Artifacts table summarizes the artifacts related to improving teachers’ ability to use I-Tracker.

CR Challenge #2: Staff Knowledge and Expertise with Data. Though teachers in CR have been expected to use data since the inception of DSTP testing, expectations have increased as data systems have improved and especially recently with Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) testing and the I-Tracker system. There are growing demands to individualize instruction and monitor student growth within classrooms as well as across grade levels and at the school level. Also, teachers need to use data from multiple sources. Teachers' skill sets with data must continue to improve.

It is imperative that our teachers not only become more confident and competent in addressing student needs, but they must also be able to analyze data in a way that they are able to address their own teaching practices and how they influence student achievement. This necessitates competence in understanding what each test is evaluating, how to read the results, and then how the results impact student learning.

ALTs and reading specialists have important roles at the building level. ALTs not only collect, analyze, and share data with the building administrators, they also work with the district data system to provide teachers with data to discuss in their PLCs. The building Title I reading specialists do the same by helping teachers to review data and provide students with additional interventions. I meet with both groups monthly to build their skills in collecting, reporting, and analyzing data at each of their school sites. Their monthly meetings address the basics of data collection, utilizing the district data system, developing action research plans, and reviewing district wide data to identify trends. By working with the ALTs and reading

specialists, it helps them to model, train, and support classroom teachers and paraprofessionals at each building site. A total of 20 teacher leaders have the potential to impact over 1,000 colleagues across the district.

My Proposal. As I work through the artifacts for my Executive Leadership Portfolio (ELP) I will not only be providing assistance to the teacher leaders and therefore the entire staff in CR, I will also be increasing my skills and knowledge. The continued research and analysis of assessments and programming helps to make more informed decisions when rolling out initiatives across the district. If the district hopes to build knowledge and expertise of data, it is the Instruction Division's responsibility to ensure the data teachers have access to be valid, reliable and meaningful to its consumers. Working to communicate regularly with all stakeholders and provide targeted professional development will be vital. The Artifacts table illustrates the proposed artifacts that will be used to increase communication through monthly newsletters, monthly professional development meetings with teacher leaders, observation of teachers' interactions with data in RTI meetings, and provision of expectation documents to unify conversations around and use of data and interventions in ELA instruction across the district.

Challenge #3: Increasing the Time Allocated for Data Collection and Analysis. All schools have developed schedules to create common planning time for work in PLCs. Typically; this is 90 min. per week. This time is structured to allow for teams of teachers to create common assessments, review data, and address student performance as a result of data collected.

The Instruction Division is receiving requests from principals that are related directly to conversations held within building PLCs. Requests have been specific to adding assessments on the district data system, need for additional professional development in instructional practice, and inquiries for ideas for additional interventions. These requests evidence the value of allocating the time for teachers to work collaboratively as well as demonstrate the focus of the teams involved. It also indicates the district's need to continue to train teachers in effective data discussion and use.

My Proposal. The extra planning time created by PLCs is just the first step. Making good use of the time is the next. At this point, all stakeholders are working through the process of building effective PLCs. As noted above, they are already starting to inquire about additional training and support to move their groups' goals forward. My ELP will help to provide the necessary access to data, documents to guide data use, and professional development to ensure time is used wisely as data is analyzed to best address the needs of our students and to enhance professional practice. My artifacts include specifying expectations for ELA, preparing a data analysis piece for stakeholders, examining correlations among reading assessments, and reviewing literature to choose the best assessments and matching interventions.

Focus of ELP and Artifacts to Support the Effort

I will focus my improvement initiative for this ELP on ELA at the elementary level. It is my intention, that by building the competence of teacher leaders, both Title I and ALT, they will be able to lead their teacher colleagues in moving away from the

use of data as a compliance measure and move more towards the use of data to enhance student achievement.

My ELP will document my journey over the past two years related to increasing student achievement. My efforts began with a focus on the achievement gap between regular and special education students in CR. I soon became aware that the issue of how students are assessed and then what is done with the assessment data played a large part in addressing the problem of achievement gaps across all subgroups. Were we actually looking at achievement data in the right way? What were we doing with data once we had it in our hands? Subsequent research and papers were focused on assessment and the pros and cons related to its use. Further work then resulted in ways to identify programs related to assessment results and then being able to communicate best practices related to assessment and programming to teachers and administrators in an effort to enhance instructional practice and therefore raise student achievement.

Delaware's RTTT mandate for weekly teacher collaborative meetings has helped our entire state address the third challenge of increasing the time allocated for data collection and analysis. Though our district has made strides over the past two years in providing access, we must now focus on competence in accessing data through our data system as well as then utilizing the data. The artifacts listed below provide research and analyses resulting in products and tools as well as informed communication to all stakeholders to overcome challenges of access and knowledge of data use. The newly proposed artifacts as well as those already completed will support

and document our district's goal of moving from compliance to competence in
DDDM.

Summary of Artifacts

Artifact	Type	Audience	Action Steps	Timeline	Status	
1	EDUC 879 – Summer Internship – “I’ve Dibel’ed, What’s Next”	Product and Tool	Teachers K-5	Complete	Complete	Complete
2	Evaluating Goals Linked to Student Achievement: DPAS Component V	Evaluation	District Administrators	Complete	Complete	Complete
3	Where to Draw the Line – EDUC 891	Argument	Committee	Complete	Complete	Complete
4	Read Naturally Program Evaluation – EDUC 863	Empirical Analysis	District Instruction Division	Complete	Complete	Complete
5	Assessment and the Common Core State Standards Current Reality and Future Implementation	Product and Tools	Teachers and administrators grades 1-12	Work on district plan for roll out and expectations for teachers /administrators in relation to ELA.	August 2014	Combined artifact 5 and 9 – Not started yet
6	Ensuring Continuation of Teacher Leadership: Achievement Liaison Teachers in CR	Account	Director of Instruction/ Neighboring Districts	Complete	Complete	Complete
7	Instructional Needs Resource Chart -RTI	Product and Tools – Leadership Communication	District reading specialists, teachers, administrators	Complete	Complete	Complete
8	Observation and Analysis of Effectiveness of RTI Meetings Across the District	Account	Director of Instruction/ Director of Special Education	Complete	Complete	Complete
9	Assessment and the Common Core State Standards Current Reality and Future Implementation	Leadership Communication	District Administrators/AL Ts	Introduction complete – work on Coherence Framework	August 2014	Combined artifact 5 and 9 – Not started yet
10	Use of Lexiles – Research Brief	Argument/ Account	District Administrators/Sp ecialists	Resubmitted to Bill week of October 6 th	Will finalize before end of October with feedback from Bill	Revised

1. “I’ve DIBEL’ed What’s Next?”

This artifact was created during the summer internship. It contains products/tools that were used during a summer training provided to teachers in grades K-5. The goal of the training was to provide teachers with a more in depth knowledge of the data measures within the DIBELS testing protocol as well as guide them in using the data to differentiate instruction within the classroom. Teachers analyzed students’ data and then placed them appropriately in the Four Types of Readers chart. This chart provides a visual of four potential reading groups and then guides educators through the next steps in diagnostic assessment, results-based lesson focus, and use of a tool for progress monitoring. This tool allows teachers to link the assessment data collected with instructional practice in their classrooms.

2. Evaluating Goals Linked to Student Achievement: DPAS II Component V

Teachers working in Delaware schools are evaluated using the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II). The newly adopted evaluation system includes five components. Component V evaluates a teacher’s performance through the monitoring of a cohort of their students over one school year. As mentioned in the DPAS II manual (2013), “In a standards based environment, the ultimate goal is to move all students toward the standard. It is reasonable to expect that all students will further toward the standards during the school year (p.36).” The structure that is the basis upon which the performance of a teacher is evaluated includes three different measures: Measure A, B, and C. This evaluation will focus on teachers falling into the category of either Measure A or B below.

Measure A: DCAS Scores

Measure A is based upon DCAS instructional scale scores for reading and/or mathematics in grades three (3) through ten (10).

Measure B: Content Assessments

Measure B is comprised of two types of content measures:

1. Internal assessments that are educator-developed and DDOE-approved specific to subjects and grade levels
2. External measures that are DDOE-approved and can be used at the discretion of each district.

The proposed artifact will examine the goals set by 2 teachers in grades 1 and 5 during the 2012-2013 school year at three elementary schools in CR. (Total of 12 teachers) The analysis will identify types of goals set (product/process), rigor of goals (expected growth), and goals' intended impact on student achievement. Effectiveness of the goal setting process will be evaluated by a review of end of year student data obtained through the district's data warehouse as well as DOE's growth data in each of the 12 classrooms. Principals of the identified schools will also be interviewed as to their approach to working with the teachers through this process. The data collected will provide evidence of whether the goals were met by the individual teachers and whether the children were successful in district (DIBELS) or state (DCAS) expectations. The analysis will also seek to answer questions related to the impact of goal writing on student achievement and make suggestions as to whether the goals were appropriate or provide suggestions for

more effective goal writing and data monitoring. This evaluation will help to guide the district administrators in supporting teachers in creating goals that guide instruction and move students further towards obtaining mastery of the standards.

3. Where to Draw the Line

This document from EDUC 891 highlights the limitation of multiple-choice based standardized testing as practiced in Delaware (and most other states) and its use for high-stakes accountability and student and educator evaluation. The paper articulates a critical view of current high stakes testing policies and the perspective that leads to these policies.

4. Read Naturally Program Evaluation

I evaluated the Read Naturally program utilized within our district to address fluency with our struggling readers. This evaluation provides information related to the effectiveness of the program and fidelity of implementation.

5. Transitioning to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA – Creating Assessments to Evaluate Student Understanding of CCSS

CR has adopted the CCSS and is now engaged in the multi-year process of implementation. A key element of this process is developing and implementing common assessments. The common assessments will be used to evaluate quality of newly written curriculum, teacher implementation and student acquisition of the new CCSS. The proposed artifact will document the steps taken to create the common assessments, a review of the first unit's assessments in relation to student achievement and teacher satisfaction, and will conclude with lessons learned. The

report will document next steps in providing the professional development needed to produce quality assessments linked to the CCSS expectations by both the district assessment writing team and classroom teachers as they produce their own supplementary assessments. Lessons learned will be linked to artifact #9 documents.

6. Ensuring the Continuation of Teacher Leadership: ALTs in CR

State funding for ALTs will expire when the RTTT as well as the EdJobs funding expires, in 2014-2015. These positions have been valuable within the district and continued funding for these positions is desirable. Accordingly, Artifact #6 will consist of a rationale and a plan to district and state leadership to sustain these positions. This artifact will document the evolution of the ALTs in CR. It will trace The ALTs growth in responsibilities and focus on data to maintain and/or increase student achievement across all school sites in twelve buildings in the CR school district. It will also include documentation of the evaluation of current funding resources in CR and a plan for the use of current funding as well as possible outside sources to provide support once current funding is expended. Having documented the impact of this position on our schools and district, the artifact will seek to provide guidance to other districts to replicate the position and obtain the necessary funding.

7. Instructional Needs Resource

I propose a new artifact that will identify assessments linked to core elements of reading, potential interventions, and additional teacher resources. This chart will

help teachers to obtain more targeted and meaningful data as well as interventions to support the results. Core elements will include: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, text comprehension, and vocabulary. This artifact will require the continued analysis of and new research related to assessments already utilized in the district as well as identifying areas where additional assessments and then interventions may be warranted. The *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* will be accompanied by an introduction to the use of the chart for all stakeholders.

8. RTI Meeting Observations

I propose a new artifact that will synthesize two rounds of observations of the elementary schools' RTI meetings. Currently, other than feedback at monthly meetings from Title I teachers, I am not aware of what occurs during school based RTI meetings. By attending these meetings I will be better able to support the teacher leaders in the use of data and our district's data system to facilitate meetings as well as provide guidance for them to take back to grade level PLC's therefore influencing the use of data with all grade level teachers. A checklist will be developed in order to report the various approaches the seven schools take in analyzing and then utilizing data to hold RTI meetings in six week intervals.

9. PLCs – The Forum for Communicating DDDM Around the CCSS

This artifact will compile the monthly communication tools given to building principals and teacher leaders for ELA in grades 1-5. Each month the schools within with CR have allocated one focus week for ELA and one for Math. During these two weeks, the district's Supervisors of Instruction in the respective areas

create a PLC agenda that focuses on: long range planning, assessment, mini CCSS professional development sessions, video viewing, and feedback requests.

Feedback from teacher leaders and principals on the usefulness of the communication tool as well sample agendas and artifacts linked to the agenda's activities will be included to document this communication tool. This artifact will be linked to the transition document #5. Lessons learned will be evident in documents.

10. Using Lexiles to Monitor Student Growth and Guide Instruction: A Research Brief

As districts move forward with implementing RTI at our secondary schools, it has become necessary for middle and high schools to look closer at ways to benchmark and then monitor progress in student achievement. The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is now administered to all students in grades 6-9 in CR. Not only has this measure been adopted for use in our identification process in CR, but it has also gained momentum across the state as it provides students' Lexile, or reading level. The CCSS heavily emphasize utilizing Lexile bands as part of their text complexity model. DE DoE added students' Lexile scores to the DCAS assessment reports.

The purpose of this artifact is an information piece for CR staff to help them learn more about the concept of Lexiles. I will put this in the form of research brief that can be disseminated within the district. This will provide information gained from research on Lexile use in schools to provide teachers and administrators with

a greater understanding of the measure, its use in identifying students for intervention and acceleration, as well as application in planning for classroom instruction.

While there are existing research papers and briefs on Lexiles, it is important for me to create a brief for dissemination within CR for the following reasons:

1. The fact that someone in a central office supervisory position is taking the effort to create this brief communicates the priority of understanding Lexiles and being informed by research,
2. Most staff are unlikely on their own or even at our direction to find and read lengthy research papers, whereas I can distill the most critical information for teachers and administrators in our district,
3. I can tailor the brief to our own needs and organizational culture, and
4. It is important for my own learning to be informed about the Lexile concept and its uses to review the literature and write this brief on this subject.

References

- Delaware Department of Education. (2013). DPAS II Guide for Teachers. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib09/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/103/DPAS Teach Full Guide.pdf>
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- Ingram, D., Louis, K. S., & Schroeder, R. (2004). Accountability policies and teacher decision making: Barriers to the use of data to improve practice. *Teachers College Record*, 106 (6), June, 1258–1287.
- Kerr, K., Marsh, J., Ikemoto, G., Darilek, H., & Barney, H. (2006) Strategies to promote data use for instructional improvement: Actions, outcomes, and lessons from three urban districts. *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 112 (4), 496-520.
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Appendix B

OBSERVING RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION END OF CYCLE REVIEW MEETINGS

Access: In order to address the effectiveness of teachers' collaborative data conversations during their protected time, observations were conducted over two RTI cycles at our elementary schools. The observations focused on the access to data and interventions. Observation findings will allow the Instruction Division and members of the school teams to evaluate their practices and look at ways to better systemize the process across schools.

According to Title XIV of the Delaware Code, school districts in the state of Delaware were required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) for all elementary school children no later than the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year. From the date of inception to the present day, the RTI process has undergone several revisions. The purpose of this paper is to observe and review current practices involving End of Cycle (EOC) review meetings and make recommendations for further improvement.

At the end of each six week RTI cycle, there is a week scheduled before the next cycle to allow schools to hold EOC review meetings. These meetings include a review of data related to students in intervention, analysis of student progress, and then a group decision on tier movement according to Delaware Regulations to support student achievement. During this one week period, the Supervisor of Instruction and two English Language Arts (ELA) Resource Teachers divided 27 meetings between the three of them and then attended the meetings as silent observers. Observations were recorded on tablets via a Google Docs survey with a series of nine questions and one open-ended notes field (see Attachment B.1). The purpose of the observations was to monitor how the EOC review meetings were being facilitated within the district to provide feedback on areas of further support and enhancements. Once the data was collected, the Google Docs survey program was able to synthesize the observation notes from all three observers across the 27 sessions. Notes were reviewed by the Supervisor of Instruction and assigned to one of three categories for further examination: Process, Intervention, and Student Progress.

Grade Levels Observed

RTI teams meet by grade level to discuss student data and progress. Grade levels include kindergarten through fifth. A random sampling of grades K-5 across six elementary schools was selected: a total of 27 grade level EOC meetings were observed (see Table B1 below). Response to Intervention EOC meetings were focused on ELA only.

Table B1 Grade Levels Observed

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Number of Sessions Observed</u>
K	2
1	7
2	4
3	5
4	3
5	6

Length of Meetings and Number of Students Discussed

Twenty-six observations resulted in 1,370 min. utilized for RTI meetings. Meetings ranged from 20 to 180 min. with 1 to 24 students discussed. Teams averaged about 6.4 min. per student discussion.

With a range of 69-111 students in intervention groups across individual schools, it is not possible to discuss all students in one team meeting. Due to this volume, grade levels often hold meetings outside of the scheduled RTI meetings to ensure all students’ progress is reviewed. Notes during this observation indicated that

meetings had been held previously to discuss students not counted in the observation numbers. Students discussed in prior meetings include those who have met benchmark expectations and those who show growth and/or are on trajectory to benchmark status. These discussions are conducted with the building administration, reading specialist and individual classroom teachers as these students are showing progress and do not require full team brainstorming and review. During the observed data review/student progress meetings, these students were mentioned so that the team was aware of their progress and tier placement.

Meeting Participants / Leads

Each of the schools observed has classroom teachers, two building administrators, one Achievement Liaison Teacher (ALT) or lead teacher, a minimum of one reading specialist, a minimum of one reading paraprofessional, and a school psychologist available to participate in RTI meetings. Schools may also have speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and English Language Learner (ELL) teachers depending on the programs housed within their building. A 50 min. shared planning period is used once each intervention cycle per grade level for EOC meetings. This allows for all grade-level teachers to be available at the same time to meet as a group if needed. One of the elementary schools has over 600 students so the administration extends its meetings to 100-120 min. rather than 50 min. Table B2 indicates the frequency of attendance for each of the possible participants.

Table B2 Meeting Participants

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Number of Times Served as Participant in Meeting</u>
Administrator	25
Reading Specialist	23
Individual Teacher	16
Psychologist	16
Grade Level Team (i.e. all fifth grade teachers in the building)	11
ALT	8
Parent/s	1
Speech Therapist	0
Other	0

In 25 of the 27 observations, an administrator was present. Reading specialists also demonstrated a high rate of participation. Though the intention is for grade levels to discuss RTI EOC together, this does not always happen; in 16 of the 27 observations, only the classroom teacher of the students being discussed was present rather than the entire grade level team. Speech therapists were not included in any of the observations, yet many of the students discussed were receiving speech therapy or were demonstrating deficiencies in areas in which the input of a speech therapist would have been helpful. In the meetings where the school psychologists were in attendance, notes indicated their active participation in providing feedback and suggestions.

The low number of parents attending the RTI meetings was due to the fact that Parent Teacher Conferences were held building wide prior to the end of cycle review for the RTI process. Parents with struggling learners discussed their interventions and

tier placement with the classroom teacher at the Parent Teacher Conference rather than the RTI meetings.

In each of the observed meetings, either the administrator or reading specialist was the primary lead. In two meetings, an individual teacher of the grade level team served as lead. In one instance, the administrator and the reading specialist co-facilitated the meeting.

Table B3 Meeting Leads

<u>Lead</u>	<u>Number of Sessions Served as Leader</u>
Reading Specialist	16
Administrator	12
ALT	2
Grade Level Team	1
Individual Teacher	1
Other - Shared Leadership	
Administrator and Reading Specialist	1
Psychologist	0
Speech Therapist	0

Using Data on I-Tracker

In the observations conducted, 26 of the 27 sessions utilized I-Tracker. The move from traditional Child Study Team meetings to RTI requirements created a dramatic shift when identifying students and then addressing their needs. Teams moved away from “admiring the problem” and were forced into data driven decision making that then required teachers to return to meetings every six weeks with data points indicating their students’ progress, or lack of, utilizing identified progress

monitoring tools. When this shift started, one of the district's lead psychologists created tracking sheets, known as the "bubble sheets," where teachers bubbled in data points to create a line graph to measure whether the student was showing growth and/or was on trajectory to the benchmark by the end of the year. Though this was a giant leap in helping to utilize student data during RTI meetings, teachers would arrive with multiple sheets and the team would shuffle through the paperwork in order to make an assessment of what to do next. This became cumbersome and time consuming leading the psychologist who created the forms as well as the administrators working with them to look for ways to create a digital version.

In 2011, CR started working with Data Service Center. Data Service Center provided the district with an RTI management system called I-Tracker. I Tracker serves as a digital cumulative student folder that houses all academic and behavioral data on every child in CR. Some of the data is entered by specialists and teachers, such as progress monitoring and curriculum-based Assessments, while other data is streamed directly from E-School (grade book) and the Delaware Department of Education (DCAS scores). See Attachment B.2 for a sample of a current data screen related to a student in an intervention group.

In its initial stages very few assessments were pre-loaded and the RTI module was used only sporadically by our district's reading specialists. It is now used extensively by all reading specialists, classroom teachers, administrators and various other specialists across the district. This system is customizable and the district has added a variety of assessment fields to ensure all data needed during RTI EOC

meetings is accessible through the system and can be projected via a SmartBoard or projector for an entire group to view and manipulate when reviewing a particular student or group.

Data Used to Support Discussion

A variety of data was utilized to lead discussions around student achievement as seen in Table 5 below. The two primary sources included the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and curriculum-based assessments. Both of these assessments are administered almost weekly allowing for regular progress monitoring. Other data used included Words Their Way Spelling Inventory, Emerging Literacy Survey, running records, and writing prompts.

It was noted in multiple sessions that there was a need for cold reads, or comprehension assessments, that utilize a passage that has not be read by the student before. This concern was brought up because students who were struggling in class seemed to do fairly well on their weekly End of Selection tests because it was based on a story that could have been read up to five times and discussed as a group before administering the assessment.

Table B4 Data Used to Support Discussion

<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Number of Times Used in Sessions</u>
DIBELS	25
Curriculum Based Assessments	25
DCAS	14
Walpole Inventories	9
Other	8
Read Naturally	4
K-2 Literacy Assessment	4

Focus of Intervention

The focus of intervention was equally represented across the four primary areas of comprehension, fluency, word recognition, and word study. As would be expected, grades 3-5 had a primary emphasis on comprehension and fluency while K-2 focused primarily on fluency, word recognition and word study.

Table B5 Focus of Intervention

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Number of Times Discussed as a Focus</u>	<u>Number of Times Discussed in Primary Meetings (K-2)</u>	<u>Number of Times Discussed in Intermediate Meetings (3-5)</u>
Comprehension	18	5	13
Fluency	16	7	9
Word Recognition	13	11	2
Word Study	10	9	1
Other	6	1	5

Interventions Utilized

Dr. Sharon Walpole conducted a yearlong training with specialists the year before the observations. Her training was focused on differentiated strategies and lesson plans from her books *Differentiated Reading Instruction: Strategies for the Primary Grades* (2007) and *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction in Grades K-3* (2009). This accounts for the large number of groups utilizing this intervention as indicated in Table 7. Other interventions included Fountas and Pinnell Phonics kit, acceleration model (previewing), Harcourt Intervention Kit, SOAR to Success, and Reading Success from the Start (RSS). Each of these interventions are linked to

student needs and data acquired through the assessment data noted earlier. Notes also indicated one school used the *Schools Attuned* recommended documents to provide teachers with a variety of techniques and strategies to address needs.

Table B6 Interventions Utilized

<u>Intervention</u>	<u>Usage Across Observations</u>	<u>Grades Used In</u>
Walpole Lessons	20	1,2,3,4,5
Other	12	K,2,3,4,5
Read Naturally	4	3,4,5
My Sidewalks	3	2,4
LLI	1	4
System 44	1	3
Comprehension Toolkit	1	5

Notes from Observations

Seventy notes were recorded throughout the 26 observations. They were recorded by the observers and later coded by the following categories: Process (logistics pertaining to how meetings ran), Intervention (key points noted in reference to how interventions were provided and additional needs identified), and Student Progress (questions or concerns noted outside of the general conversations related to student progress through the RTI process). Notes do not include the specific conversations surrounding each of the students discussed See Table B7 for a breakdown of the coded notes and Attachment B.3 for recorded notes.

Table B7 Breakdown of Coded Notes by Category

<u>Category of Notes</u>	<u>Process</u>	<u>Intervention</u>	<u>Student Progress</u>
Number of Notes Recorded	28	21	21

Throughout the Process notes, 12 of the 28 recorded were related to the meetings’ logistics. It was noted that the meetings ran smooth and efficient, they were well organized, routines were evident, and teachers knew each other’s students and data. It was encouraging to also note that the remaining comments were related to data conversations around student performance as well as requests for additional data fields to record other types of data related directly to interventions being utilized.

Out of the 21 Intervention notes coded, 13 were related to the various stakeholders involved in providing the interventions. It was evident that in many team discussions the teachers were willing to work collaboratively to provide support for students by sharing students across classrooms as well as creating groups in coordination with the reading specialist, ALT, and paraprofessionals. Very few comments were recorded in reference to needs in the area of intervention. Two observations were related to training needed to ensure that teachers new to the school were made aware of classroom-based interventions initiated before their hire. This would enable the entire staff to provide the same level of Tier I support. Three comments alluded to the need for more or better assessments to review as indicated by comments such as “need cold reads” and “need common assessments.” Only one comment referenced a specific student need. This comment referenced “difficulty with

non-fiction text” and would necessitate a change in intervention. Therefore, it was recommended that this specialist’s group focus more heavily on non-fiction compared to fiction.

Student progress notes reflected a consistent conversation across grade levels and schools focused on ELLs. There were questions focused on where this group of students fell when it came to the RTI process as it was often difficult to separate the language barrier from a potential learning disability. Notes also indicated tier movement of students through comments such as, “All students continued with current plan, tier 3 student a concern, tier 3 from last year, dismissed 4 students due to consistently increased scores and classroom performance, wait for winter DCAS to determine whether student moves or not, some remained in tier, others moved.” This is an important function of RTI and indicates that teams are moving students fluidly through tiers according to data and team conversations. Two of the comments recorded reference student motivation and “de-mystifying” a student. These comments indicate emphasis and use of qualitative data when discussing student progress.

Recommendations

After reviewing the observation results and comments provided, the following items are recommended for further improvement of the district RTI meeting process:

- 1. Provide scheduling support for speech therapists to participate in RTI meetings.**

When looking at the participants in the current RTI meetings, it was disappointing to see that the speech therapists were not represented. Our elementary

schools report an average of 7-10% of their total population receiving speech services. These services are often misunderstood by teachers as articulation only. In reality, the speech therapists' role also includes a focus on language skill work. Processing deficits requiring this type of therapy can be related to students' difficulties in reading. Efforts to intervene by the reading specialists, paraprofessionals, ALTs, and classroom teachers should be combined with the other specialists in the building. The speech therapists' schedules are often overloaded due to the fact that in many cases they are shared between schools. It is recommended that the Director of Support Services, who oversees district specialists; look at scheduling time each month for the speech therapists to officially confer with the building administration as well as the building intervention facilitators. It is also recommended that the Supervisor of Title I, responsible for working with the reading specialists, speak with the specialists as well as their building administrators to encourage them to include their speech therapists in the meetings as often as possible. The therapists work with some of the students being discussed as well as their expertise in recognizing specific language deficiencies would only enhance the process.

2. Provide additional assessments to allow for demonstration of transfer of skills.

One area noted several times in the observations was related to the validity of the assessments being used (i.e., were they true indicators of students' transfer of skills?). It is recommended that additional assessments be acquired or created to allow for cold reads to better allow students to demonstrate competency.

3. Provide for additional formal and informal opportunities for parents to participate.

As noted earlier, there were few parents in the observed meetings due to the recent scheduling parent teacher conferences before the EOC review meetings. However, it is important for parents to be more formally involved in each step of this process. It is recommended that the district create a specific protocol for parent involvement in the RTI process to ensure consistency across the six elementary schools. It is also recommended that informative letters be created to send to parents explaining the individual results of each of the EOC meetings; these should be sent home to parents when their children are placed in one of the tiers of support. Schools should continue to schedule conferences and make phone calls; this letter will serve as an additional communication tool. The use of Data Service Center's RTI monitoring software will allow the district to mass print and personalize each of these letters. Letters should be sent home after each cycle and include information on ways parents could support their child while in additional intervention services.

4. Enhance support for teachers in relation to ELL students.

The confusion and frustration around support for ELL students must be addressed in an effort to provide appropriate intervention for all students. It is recommended that the Supervisor of Instruction responsible for ELL services look into resources/training linked to identifying learning disabilities in students who speak English as a second language. Obtaining a deeper understanding of district test results linked to the ACCESS test administered to all ELL students would also allow for a

better understanding of student language acquisition surrounding possible reading difficulties. Similar to working with speech therapists, teachers would benefit from a better understanding of how students acquire language as well as a better understanding of where each of their students is in the continuum of acquiring a stronger command of the English language. Therefore, regularly scheduled time to confer with the ELL teacher is also recommended.

5. Discuss ways to schedule more time to allow for grade levels to meet collaboratively.

Though the use of I-Tracker and holding RTI EOC meetings during shared team meeting times was intended for group data driven decisions making, the results of the observations indicated that there are still schools meeting separately with teachers. Though it is not discouraged for specialists and administrators to meet independently with teachers on occasion, the strength of a team decision is greater when working through the RTI process. It is recommended that the Supervisor of Instruction responsible for reading specialists, meet with building administrators to review their current schedules. Together they should look for ways to allow for more time (as noted one school has requested and received) for grade levels to have deeper conversations about identified students as well as for a team of experts to participate. This may require extending the End of Cycle Review meetings to two weeks.

6. Continue observations to allow for leads to observe other schools' meetings.

It is important for the district supervisor and resource teachers to continue attending meetings across the district in order to best support teachers, specialists, administrators, parents, and most importantly, students as the district continues to implement RTI. It is also recommended that time is allocated for lead facilitators from each of the schools to attend other schools' RTI meetings in an effort to observe additional practices to bring back to their own meetings. Schedules of RTI meetings will be collected by the Supervisor of Instruction responsible for reading specialists and will then be shared with building administrators to plan visits as able. Follow-up conversations will be held at monthly district reading specialist meetings as well as monthly district principals meetings.

References

- Walpole, S. & McKenna, M. (2007). *Differentiated reading instruction: Strategies for the primary grades*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Walpole, S. & McKenna, M. (2009). *How to plan differentiated reading instruction in grades K-3*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Attachment B.1 – Observation Questions

Reviewing RTI Process - Observation Questions

1. What grade level was discussed?

2. How long did the meeting take?

3. How many students were discussed?

4. Who were the meeting participants?

Principal, Grade Level Team, Individual Teacher, Reading Specialist,
Psychologist, Speech Therapist, ALT, Parents, Other

5. Who led the meeting?

Principal, Grade Level Team, Individual Teacher, Reading Specialist,
Psychologist, Speech Therapist, ALT, Other

6. Was I-Tracker utilized to share data?

7. What data was used to support discussion?

DCAS, DIBELS, Read Naturally, Walpole Inventories, K-2 Literacy
Assessment, Curriculum Based Assessments, Other

8. What was the focus of interventions provided to students?

Comprehension, Fluency, Word Recognition, Word Study, Other

9. What interventions are being utilized?

Walpole Lessons, My Sidewalks, LLI, Read Naturally, System 44,
Comprehension Toolkit, Other

10. Open ended notes were allowed. Notes were coded as follows: Process,

Intervention, Student Progress

Attachment B.2 – Data Service Center Screen Shot

Student Intervention Detail

Student ID: [REDACTED] **Special Ed Code:** No **Parent/Guardian:** [REDACTED]
School: Star Hill Elementary School **Choice:** N **Home Phone:** [REDACTED]
Grade / Homeroom: 03 / 3 **Carr** **Programs:** 504 **Work Phone:** [REDACTED]
Sex / Race: M / Black **Entry Date:** 8/23/2013 **Language:** [REDACTED]
Birthdate: 1/7/2005 (Age: 8) **Team:** [REDACTED] **Country:** [REDACTED]
Next Year School: Star Hill Elementary School **Spanish Corr:** N

Current Tier: 2 / **Start Tier:** 2 **School Year:** 2013/2014

Intervention Plan Information [Add New Plan](#)

View	Tier	Cycle	Date	Interventionist	Group Name	Start Date	End Date	Setting	Mins/Week	Attended Mins	Plan Status
View	Tier 2	2	11/1/2013	Lyon	grade_3	11/6/2013	1/10/2014	Pull-Out	150	465	Active
Subject: Reading											
Target Areas: Phonics/Decoding, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency, Vocabulary, Word Recognition											
Team Decision:											
View	Tier 2	1	9/10/2013	Lyon	grade_3	9/16/2013	11/5/2013	Pull-Out	150	590	Completed
Subject: Reading											
Target Areas: Phonics/Decoding, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency, Vocabulary, Word Recognition											
Team Decision: Continue Tier 2 Intervention											

Screening Assessment Information

[Add/Edit Screener](#)

Test Year	Test Grade	School	Season	PL	Reading				Math			
					Accountability Score	Instructional Score	Lexile	PL	Accountability Score	Instructional Score		
2013/2014	03	618	Fall	1	613	613	490	2	606	608	View Chart	
2012/2013	02	618	Spring	3	678	678	690	4	833	833	View Chart	

DIBELS Next

8/27/2013	Test Year	Grade	School	Assessment	Composite	FSF	LNF	PSF	NWF-CLS	NWF-WWR	DORF-WC	DORF-Accuracy%
	2013/2014	03	618	DIBELS Next 03 BOY	161						51	91
	2012/2013	02	618	DIBELS Next 02 EOY	258						78	98
	2012/2013	02	618	DIBELS Next 02 MOY	261						83	98
	2012/2013	02	618	DIBELS Next 02 BOY	163				68	17	48	91
	2011/2012	01	618	DIBELS Next 01 EOY	158				44	12	47	94
	2011/2012	01	618	DIBELS Next 01 MOY	121				40	2	23	79
	2011/2012	01	618	DIBELS Next 01 BOY	150		60	54	36	0		
	2010/2011	KN	611	DIBELS Next KN EOY	192		62	71	59			
	2010/2011	KN	611	DIBELS Next KN MOY	180	53	50	57	20			
	2010/2011	KN	611	DIBELS Next KN BOY	19	11	8					

Diagnostic Assessment Information

[Add/Edit Diagnostic Data](#)

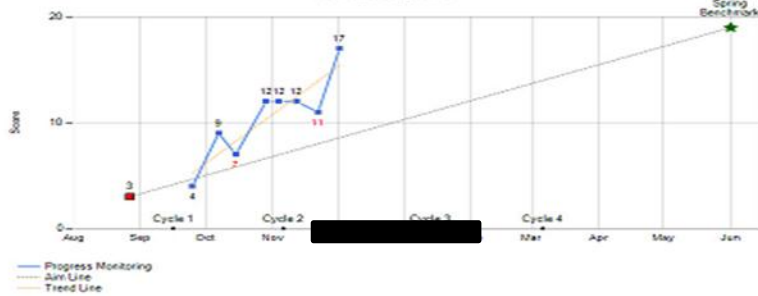
There is currently no Diagnostic data

Progress Monitoring Information

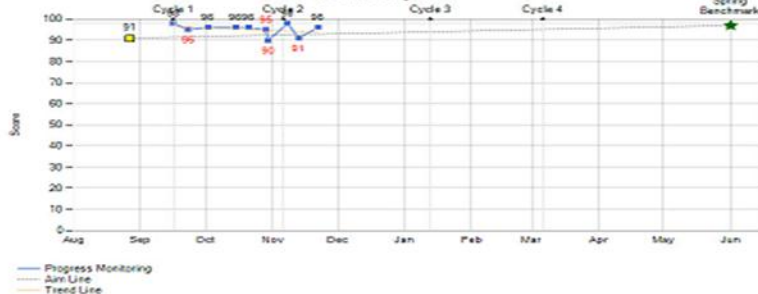
[Add/Edit/View Progress Monitoring Data](#)

Views: [View Axis Line & Trend Line](#)

DIBELS Next - Daze-Adjusted Progress Chart
Jordan Baynard



DIBELS Next - DORF-Accuracy % Progress Chart
Jordan Baynard



Attachment B.3 – Coded Notes from Observations

Process	Intervention	Student Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used Schools Attuned checklist • Schools Attuned on-line data base • Made decisions as a group • How do you look back in gradebook in I-tracker? • Some conversations held ahead of time • Data utilized to show strengths and weaknesses • All teachers shared resources • Instructional strategies discussed • Discussed adding notes in I-tracker • Started on time, clearly established routine • Teachers shared one at a time • Reading specialist and ALT shared info • Team decisions made • Need Walpole inventories on I-tracker (2) • Needs discussed • iPad used to view data • Very productive meeting • Organized • All teachers shared resources • Triangulated data • Clarified what scores meant • Looking at trends over time • Each student discussed with data • Meeting ran smoothly and efficiently • Meeting ran quickly • Teachers used data • Meeting ran efficiently and smoothly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to train new teachers in classroom based interventions • Walpole inventories update for new teachers • Special education teacher is providing instruction • Need cold reads to better track performance • All hands on deck • Work with para • After school intervention • Assessments used • All team resources being used, sped teacher • Discussed ways teachers can be intervention • Psych shared ideas on what to do with two students • Tracked students' performance on fiction/nonfiction (2) • Schedule to maximize intervention time • Need common assessments • TAM partners shared responsibility of students accommodations going through RTI • Para shares responsibility • Reading specialist takes responsibility • Breakfast buddies • Specials teachers used as 1-1 coaches • Para as reader model instead of using headphones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL students? • All students continued with current plan • Concern with assessments not able to give accommodations • Conversation around ELL students being serviced by need instead of grade level • Tier 3 student a concern, tier 3 from last year • Dismissed 4 students due to consistently increased scores and classroom performance • Written responses inconsistent • Student motivation • De-mystifying student • Wait for winter DCAS to determine whether student moves or not • Spotty student enrollment difficult to follow trend line • Clarify ELL student services • Possible retesting of ELL students • Some remained in tier, others moved • Teachers stated positive comments • Intensive and strategic students discussed • Teachers knew each other's students • Student behaviors discussed • ELL students need frontloading? • OT teacher will look into how regular ed students may get services • Discussed interventions

Appendix C

WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results: This document, highlights the limitation of multiple-choice based standardized testing as practiced in Delaware (and most other states) and its use for high-stakes accountability and student and educator evaluation. This personal reflection paper's message to the Delaware Department of Education (DE DoE) would also serve as a starting point for my quest in ensuring I would build trust in the data our district uses. As a supervisor it would be important for me to provide transparency and rationales for data use within our own district. State summative test data should not be the only data available, nor should it be used to drive all data conversations related to accountability.

We begin to measure a child's growth by having him stand against a wall and then drawing a line directly above his head. Every few weeks the child returns to the same spot and we watch as the lines inch slightly higher each time. Once the child enters school, we continue to measure growth, but this time we draw lines to represent correct letter sounds, fluency rate, numerical reasoning, comprehension, and the list goes on. Five years ago, Delaware adopted a growth model to measure students' proficiency utilizing the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP). Individual students and schools as a whole were measured by their ability to show growth in their DSTP scores from one year to the next.

What is interesting is that in the end, a student's achievement and the school's accountability were not measured by the child's and school's growth, but rather by their ability to reach "proficiency," a different line set by the federal government and No Child Left Behind mandates. At a town hall meeting held last month, Governor Markel told his audience, "It is time we start telling parents the truth about their children's performance." Though schools have been teaching towards standards set by the state and utilizing a test mandated by the state, Governor Markel insinuates in his statement that these measures have not been valid. He bases this opinion on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a voluntary national exam given to fourth and eighth grade students proficiency scores. Though NAEP refers to itself as the nation's yardstick for student performance, the state of Delaware is making a grave mistake relying solely on this metric when setting student proficiency expectations.

The Truth

The public has been told in several forums and media that the NAEP indicates Delaware students' scores are less than competitive across the nation. This is troubling considering a review of data reveals that since the 2002 administration of NAEP, Delaware students in grades 4 and 8 have reported scale scores higher than the national average in both reading and math. Though the public is shocked by reports indicating 35% of our students in fourth grade reach Proficient on the NAEP, they are unaware that the national average is only 33%. Though Delaware may not be ranked first, many of the states ranked higher only had scale scores between .09-1.0 point more than Delaware with the number one ranked state's scale score coming in only five points higher.

It is important to note that the test items on NAEP are not aligned to the Delaware State Standards and provide results only at a state level. Delaware has recently adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of standards created for use across the nation. School districts in Delaware will be realigning their instruction to match these standards and the current Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) is moving towards measuring student competency towards these standards. As of January 2011, NAEP has not demonstrated alignment to the CCSS either. A hard and fast rule of assessment dictates that you should assess what is taught. Why then, are we changing our cut scores on DCAS to match results from a test that clearly does not align with our standards, let alone the newly created national standards?

Delaware has decided to ignore this uncertainty and heed the Governor's advice by reporting what is believed to be more accurate indicators of our students' proficiency levels. In one year, Delaware has changed the state test format, decreased allowable accommodations for special needs students, and has drawn higher lines on the wall that even the State of Delaware has said will be impossible for the majority of our students to meet. Compared to last year's DSTP percentages meeting the standard in English Language Arts (ELA), it is projected that there will be an 18-31% drop, and in math a 10-25% drop across grades three, five, and ten. With percentages projected to range between 46-53%, there will be a slim chance that schools will meet state accountability measures, let alone federal measures that increase this year to 84% in reading and 75% in math.

Governor Markel, we don't have a problem telling parents the truth about their children's performance. Let's start by honestly sharing the state's current practices of measurement and how accurately it reflects individual student growth.

The Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS)

A DE DoE press release (2010) had the following headline:

New test to better track student progress towards college and career readiness debuts in Delaware classrooms. Schools start administering more rigorous comprehensive assessment system this week.

DE DoE continued to report:

Schools will begin administering the new Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) online to replace the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) this week. Based on higher student proficiency standards, DCAS will more accurately and more closely measure each student's academic performance throughout the course of the year—not just at the end of the year— so schools can quickly identify areas of strengths and weaknesses to tailor instruction appropriately for each student.

Let's focus first on the fact that DE DoE believes DCAS will more accurately and more closely measure student academic performance based on higher proficiency standards (a.k.a. cut scores). It is difficult to understand how raising cut scores correlates with utilizing a more "rigorous assessment" as indicated in their headline. In reality, the DCAS has limited our students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge while providing minimal feedback to teachers due to limited test items.

The DCAS is made up of 40 multiple choice on-grade level questions. There are *up to* ten additional questions that will adjust either at a higher or lower level to address the specific student's ability level as determined by their proficiency on the first forty questions. The DSTP required students to answer 67 questions in reading and 66 in math. Not only was there a larger question bank, but students were also expected to complete multiple choice, short answer and extended response in reading and multiple choice and short answer in math.

DE DoE also said that the DCAS would help to tailor instruction appropriately for individual students. The DSTP provided individual student scores and instructional needs reports. With the DCAS, teachers and administrators are only able to access

class wide reports that give an overall list of instructional needs according to how well the class did as a whole. Individual student scores are being reported with standard deviations of up to +/-50. We may receive results quicker, but at what expense?

How do we draw the line?

This new test gives parents, teachers and schools a better barometer of student academic progress so we can better prepare them for the tougher demands and challenges that await them in future college courses and the workforce. Delaware's children deserve the highest quality education. We must set higher expectations for our students and provide our teachers with timely and useful information about student progress.

-Governor Markel

During this past summer, panels of "experts" were brought together at the state level to set the new cut scores for the DCAS. They were charged with raising the standards to bring Delaware's assessment more in line with NAEP and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international exam given to samplings of 15 year old students, as well as help drive school improvement. The experts in this group were composed of Delaware educators, administrators, and constituents from the community. Each panel was given a book of 66 sample test items arranged by level of difficulty (as determined by the spring field test) as well descriptions of the state standards. They were then asked to think about the lowest performing students who would just barely meet the standards and identify the question that they would get correct two-thirds of the time. This was where they would set the cut score for the bottom of a performance level 3. Performance level 3 indicates a child has met the state standard or is Proficient. Test developers often utilize a study similar to this

process to determine cut scores for a test. This process is called the Angoff method. The Angoff method relies on subject-matter experts to evaluate content of test items and then make a judgment of how many minimally qualified candidates would answer them correctly. A process of averaging scores and gathering sums of these averages results in a recommended cut score. The process itself would seem to help keep groups from arbitrarily assigning cut scores and allow for more empirical data to support choices made. However, an interesting twist in Delaware's process arose when panels went through this method, announced cut scores, and then were asked by DE DoE officials to adjust their cut scores again when theirs did not match what NAEP performance would indicate. Once shown the percentage of students who would meet the Proficient range on NAEP compared to the higher projected number of students who would meet Proficient on the DCAS, the groups arbitrarily increased cut scores on DCAS.

Measuring Up

Though our system of creating cut scores to measure student proficiency is quite obviously flawed and politically charged, there is hope. Delaware's growth model has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for approval. It focuses primarily on individual student growth on a trajectory. This system is similar to the DSTP, but now would allow us to measure and report a student's growth from September to June each year.

The focus needs to be away from "proving" what our kids can do and more on "improving" our current practices. We know that measuring student growth is much

more complex than simply drawing a line on the wall above their heads. It is our responsibility to share the truth with parents about their children's performance and to do so we must be honest with ourselves about how we measure students' growth. All will be right when we circle back to measuring students by watching as their individual lines inch higher and higher.

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Appendix D

PROGRAM EVALUATION FOR THE READ NATURALLY PROGRAM TIER II READING INTERVENTION

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results: In an effort to ensure the data provided to teachers through district interventions was trustworthy and valuable, I started a review of district programs and resulting data. An evaluation was conducted of the Read Naturally program used in the Caesar Rodney School District (CR) to address fluency and increased comprehension for our struggling readers.

Executive Summary

A program evaluation was conducted to gather information related to the fidelity of implementation and the effect of the Read Naturally intervention program. The Read Naturally program addresses fluency and comprehension deficiencies in students in grades two through five at the elementary schools in the CR. Read Naturally uses research-based strategies—teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring to improve students' reading skills. The program evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. Process Question: Are the students following the correct program sequence required by the Read Naturally program?
2. Outcome Question: Do the students' fluency scores increase as a result of the Read Naturally program?

The first question was measured by observations of the program recorded on a checklist incorporating the appropriate Read Naturally steps as well as conversations with the literacy paraprofessionals/students and a folder review. The results suggested fidelity of implementation at all program sites. The second question was measured by a pre and post oral reading fluency measure as well as a sample of individual student “cold” reads compared to their “hot” reads with the program materials. The results suggest the Read Naturally program improved the sample's fluency at a rate comparable if not higher than their same grade peers. Thirty-three percent improved to the point of meeting grade level benchmark which would dismiss them from the

program. The implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations are provided.

Introduction

Purpose of the Evaluation. In an effort to provide appropriate interventions for students in Tier II of the RTI process, the focus of the evaluation is on the effectiveness of the Read Naturally program for increasing fluency with a target population. This report also provides the district with data on program fidelity as a variable to expected outcomes. This will allow the district to provide appropriate interventions, more focused training for program facilitators, and direction for principals in assigning students to the intervention.

Research Behind the Program. Research demonstrates a strong correlation between fluency and comprehension. Comprehension is the ultimate goal for reading. Therefore, students in Tier II interventions may require fluency practice in order to enhance their comprehension. Practice with reading helps fluency, however, the National Reading Panel suggests that just encouraging students to read more does not result in more reading. Actually, students who have difficulty reading read fewer words independently and instructionally than their peers (Read Naturally, 1998). This creates an even wider gap in words read per minute. The Read Naturally program advertises structured, repeated reading with motivational factors such as goal setting and self-monitoring for struggling readers to accelerate their reading fluency.

Evaluation Questions. As part of my evaluation, I addressed one process and one outcome question as follows:

1. Process Question: Are the students following the correct program sequence required by the Read Naturally program?
2. Outcome Question: Do the students' fluency scores increase as a result of the Read Naturally program?

The process question is measured by a checklist that I developed. The limitation of this method is that not all steps of the process are completed in each session because students are all at different levels and passages vary during each session according to individual needs. The checklist is supplemented with informal conversations with both the students and literacy paraprofessional to gauge how the program is being implemented outside of the observation periods. A review of the students' individual work folders also serves as an indicator of program fidelity. The outcome question was measured by the pre and post data retrieved from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) subtest on Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). This test requires the students to read a timed passage to measure word count per minute (WCPM). As the student reads the passage, the teacher keeps the time and marks miscues. At the end of one minute, the child is asked to stop and miscues are subtracted from total words read. As part of the evaluation, I also reflected on the last three "cold" and "hot" readings completed within the program by the students. Students start with reading a passage without practice (cold) and record their words read per minutes. After seven repeated readings, they then receive a "hot" timing that is recorded on the student's personal data chart.

Organization of the Report

The report begins with a description of the Read Naturally program to include past history within the district. Then I describe how I went about conducting the evaluation and how the data was analyzed. Charts are provided for various pieces of data analysis. After that, I present the findings of the report, along with my analysis and recommendations. An appendix contains instruments and reference materials mentioned in the report.

Description of Program

For several years CR has implemented the Read Naturally program to address fluency and comprehension deficiencies in students in grades two through five as a Tier II intervention. Outcomes have been mixed and there has been little documentation of fidelity of use. In past years the program was used primarily in after school programs or in-school one of two days a week. This year it is implemented in the same format in each of the elementary schools allowing for a more accurate evaluation of its effectiveness. A “Logic Model” in AttachmentD.1 provides a graphic representation of the Tier II intervention process utilizing Read Naturally. A description of each of the steps taken with the students can be found in Attachment D.2. An overview of the steps is listed below:

1. Select a Story
2. Read Along to the Key Words
3. Write a Prediction
4. Cold Timing
5. Graph the Cold Score

6. Read Along to the Story
7. Practice Reading the Story
8. Answer the Questions
9. Pass Timing
10. Graph the Pass Timing Score
11. Retell the Story

Design and Methodology

Sample. Though all six of the elementary schools in the district are utilizing the Read Naturally program, in an attempt to make the evaluation more manageable in its short time frame, I have chosen three of the six schools to use as the representative sample. Initial screenings, utilizing the DIBELS, were conducted to identify students in grades 2-5 with either Strategic or Intensive scores. (See Attachment D.3) From there, the Intensive students were assigned to work with the reading specialist in small group and students with DIBELS DORF scores (fluency) that were Strategic were assigned to work with the Read Naturally program. The suburban district's schools all share very similar demographics. The three selected schools accurately represent the slight diversity among the remaining three schools' student populations. School names were not identified to keep the evaluation focused on the entire sample's progress and not individual schools. The three schools and their demographics are described in Table D.

Table D1 Demographics of School Populations (N=3)

<u>School</u>	<u>Total School Population</u>	<u>African American %</u>	<u>Caucasian %</u>	<u>Low Income %</u>
School One	400	44	48	51
School Two	485	32	61	32
School Three	443	31	60	46

Within each of the three schools, students participating in the Read Naturally program were identified. A breakdown of the sample size and grade representation for each building is in Table D2 on the following page:

Table D2 Student Sample by School (N=49)

<u>School</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>	<u>Grade 4</u>	<u>Grade 5</u>
School One	24	7	6	4	7
School Two	14	0	2	12	0
School Three	11	0	3	6	2

Instruments. The process question was measured by an evaluator-created checklist (see Attachment D.4). The checklist lists all eleven steps of the Read Naturally program. Due to the nature of the program, it may not be possible to view all eleven steps during the observations. Conversations with the literacy paraprofessional and/or students as well as a review of the contents of the students' individual Read Naturally folders served as anecdotal notes on the fidelity of the program.

The outcome question was measured by review of data retrieved from a district wide data base called I-Tracker. The DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Benchmark results as well as the November DIBELS DORF progress monitoring results were charted on a spreadsheet. Also included on this spread sheet were the last three cold/hot read scores the student accrued in the program. These scores were extracted from the students' individual folders. (See Attachment D.5)

Data Collection Procedures. Most of the data for this evaluation was obtained from DIBELS DORF benchmark and progress monitoring results. The DIBELS subtest for DORF was administered by the classroom or reading specialist to all students in the sample. These results were input weekly by the school site on the I-Tracker web based data tracking system. This allowed me to pull scores directly from the data system rather than collecting them at each school. As data was compiled, students' identity was kept anonymous by replacing names with student numbers. I also scheduled two visits at each school to conduct the observations of the Read Naturally program to evaluate program fidelity. A checklist was used during the evaluation to identify if the appropriate steps were facilitated by the literacy paraprofessional. While visiting the schools for observations I also viewed each of the student's Read Naturally data folders and recorded the last three cold/hot read scores for further data analysis. These folders are kept with each student so they were accessible during the scheduled observations.

Data Analysis Procedures. Data related to fidelity to the program was analyzed first by gathering the observation checklists and checking the categories that were

observed in at least one of the two observations at each site on a master chart. Children may take one to three sessions to complete all eleven steps. Therefore, for those sessions where steps were not witnessed, I talked about the steps with the literacy paraprofessional and/or children in the group to assess whether or not these steps were accomplished outside of the visit. I also looked through each of the students' personal Read Naturally folders. These folders contain all completed passages as well as their individual hot/cold reading charts. These documents were another indicator of whether or not the steps were taken outside of my observation. Blocks were colored in green on the master chart if the step was not observed during the observation but evident from the conversations and/or folder inspections.

Data related to student growth was calculated in a variety of ways. Students' September Benchmark DIBELS DORF scores were compared to November's progress monitoring scores to obtain average words per minute. I also analyzed the last three cold/hot reads for each student to obtain individual average words per minute growth after seven repeated readings and then calculated a whole group average word per minute growth. After looking at the average group as a whole, I decided to break that down to reflect the percent of how many students demonstrated growth, the range of words per minute demonstrated when growth was made on both the DIBELS and the hot/cold reads, and I reviewed the students cold reads to see if they increased along with their hot reads. This was accomplished by a review of each student's data on the data sheet and checking off those students who demonstrated an increase not only in the hot reads but in previous

cold reads too.

Findings

Table D3 Observation Results – Fidelity to Program

<u>School</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>RAKW</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>CT</u>	<u>GCT</u>	<u>RAS</u>	<u>PRS</u>	<u>AQ</u>	<u>PT</u>	<u>GPTS</u>	<u>RS</u>	<u>I</u>
School One	X	X	X	O*	O*	X	X	X	X	X	O*	I
School Two	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	I
School Three	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O*	O*	X	I

Key: SS – Select Story, RAKW – Read Along Key Words, WP – Write Prediction, CT –Cold Timing, GCT – Graph Cold Timing, RAS – Read Along to Story, PRS – Practice Reading Story, AQ – Answer Questions, PT – Pass Timing, GPTS – Graph Pass Timing Score, RS –Retell Story,O* = observed through alternative measures such as conversations with literacy paraprofessional/students and/or folder review

Description. The results of the individual site observations show that each of the steps was not observed during all of the observations. However, those that were not observed were accounted for via conversations with the literacy paraprofessionals and students as well as a review of the students’ individual folders. All three schools implement the program Monday through Friday with 30 min. sessions.

Analysis. The data reflects fidelity to the program structure at each of the three sites. It demonstrates that students are working through all eleven steps of the process and that it is individualized per student placement. Both paraprofessional-led and independent student components were observed at all sites illustrating active involvement of all parties. All three sites have comparable programs due to implementation, days available for intervention, and time of sessions.

Table D4 Average Words Read Per Minute

<u>Grade</u>	<u>2 (n=7)</u>	<u>3 (n=11)</u>	<u>4 (n=22)</u>	<u>5 (n=9)</u>
DIBELS DORF Benchmark	48.7	63.2	57.8	94.8
DIBELS DORF Progress Monitoring Nov.	63.4	83.1	75.5	107.4

Table D5 Cold and Hot Timings Average Growth – Word Count per Minute

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Average Growth</u>
Second	66.1
Third	46.2
Fourth	41.6
Fifth	42.5

Description. Each of the three grades demonstrated a 12.6-19.9 words per minute growth in oral reading fluency scores with the third grade demonstrating the greatest growth on the DIBELS. The Read Naturally “cold” and “hot” timings resulted in each of the three grades reflecting no less than 41 words per min. average improvement from the “cold” to “hot” timings. Sixty-one percent of the total sample also demonstrated a growth in the cold timings from the first to third selection.

Analysis. According to Hasbrouck and Tindal’s (2006) list of Oral Reading Fluency the average child in grade two should show an average words per week growth of 1.2 words, grade three 1.1 words per week, and grades four and five .9

words per week. (See Attachment D.6) This data demonstrates benchmark testing from the second week of September to the progress monitoring data from the third week of November. This nine week period would account for an estimated growth of 10.8, 9.9, and 8.1 words respectively. Each of these grade’s average words read increased above the expected outcome. The 61% of the sample that also demonstrated growth in the cold timings even further illustrates fluency growth with students able to increase time on an unfamiliar passage. The growth in average words read per minute on the “hot” reads also demonstrates the effectiveness of repeated reading for these students. It should be noted that two students in the sample did not show growth on either measure. This is an area that should be explored to make further decisions in continued student placement in the program.

Table D6 Percent of Students Who Improved Oral Reading Score from Pre to Post

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Percent Improved</u>
Second	71
Third	91
Fourth	91
Fifth	67

Table D7 Percent of Students Who Improved Oral Reading Scores Across Cold Readings

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Percent Improved</u>
Second	57
Third	82
Fourth	45
Fifth	67

Description

Each of the grade levels demonstrated 67%-91% of the students increasing their scores from the benchmark in September to the November progress monitoring on the DIBELS DORF. An impressive 82% of the students increased their “cold” reading scores with no less than 45% demonstrating growth across the grade levels.

Analysis. Small sample sizes account for the variances between the percent improved in each grade. Less than four students in each grade did not demonstrate growth. It is noted that there were no less than 45% of any grade that showed growth in their “cold” readings. This demonstrates at least 45% of the students have increased fluency before repeated readings. Thirty-three percent of the students met the progress monitoring expectations for their grade level according to the 95% Group’s chart. This chart was created to help educators track and set goals for students in-between benchmark DIBELS tests. (see Attachment D.7)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Interpretation. It is evident that the Read Naturally program demonstrates consistent data when implemented with fidelity. Data reflects consistent implementation of both process and number of days and time students are involved in the intervention. Program professional development, as indicated in the “logic model”, was successful in maintaining fidelity to the program components. All three sites were able to demonstrate and articulate appropriate steps in the process and student work reflected adherence to these steps across the board.

Data in reference to increasing fluency reflects positive growth both on standardized and program based measures. Students actually demonstrated a greater rate of anticipated growth from the pre to the post test compared to their grade level peers not participating in the program. The fact that previous years' data was inconclusive in relation to the effectiveness of the program only reinforces the importance of daily sessions for 30 min. rather than the past practice of utilizing the program primarily in after school programs one of two days a week. Overall, data reveals a positive effect on students' fluency scores.

Limitations. As noted previously, there are several limitations to this evaluation. First, the sample size represents a total of 49 students across three schools. The sample size is not large and is even smaller if analyzed by individual school. Three of the five schools were found to have success with fluency rates. Though the observations were conducted and conversations were held, only two informal observations may not account for the true picture of the implementation of the program and do not address student placement and dismissal from the program. The following recommendations are made:

1. Gather and analyze data for the remainder of the year in order to monitor student performance against winter and spring norms and make further recommendations in reference to use as a Tier II intervention.
2. Provide follow up professional development to literacy paraprofessionals to maintain program fidelity and continue to enhance appropriate placement and data collection.

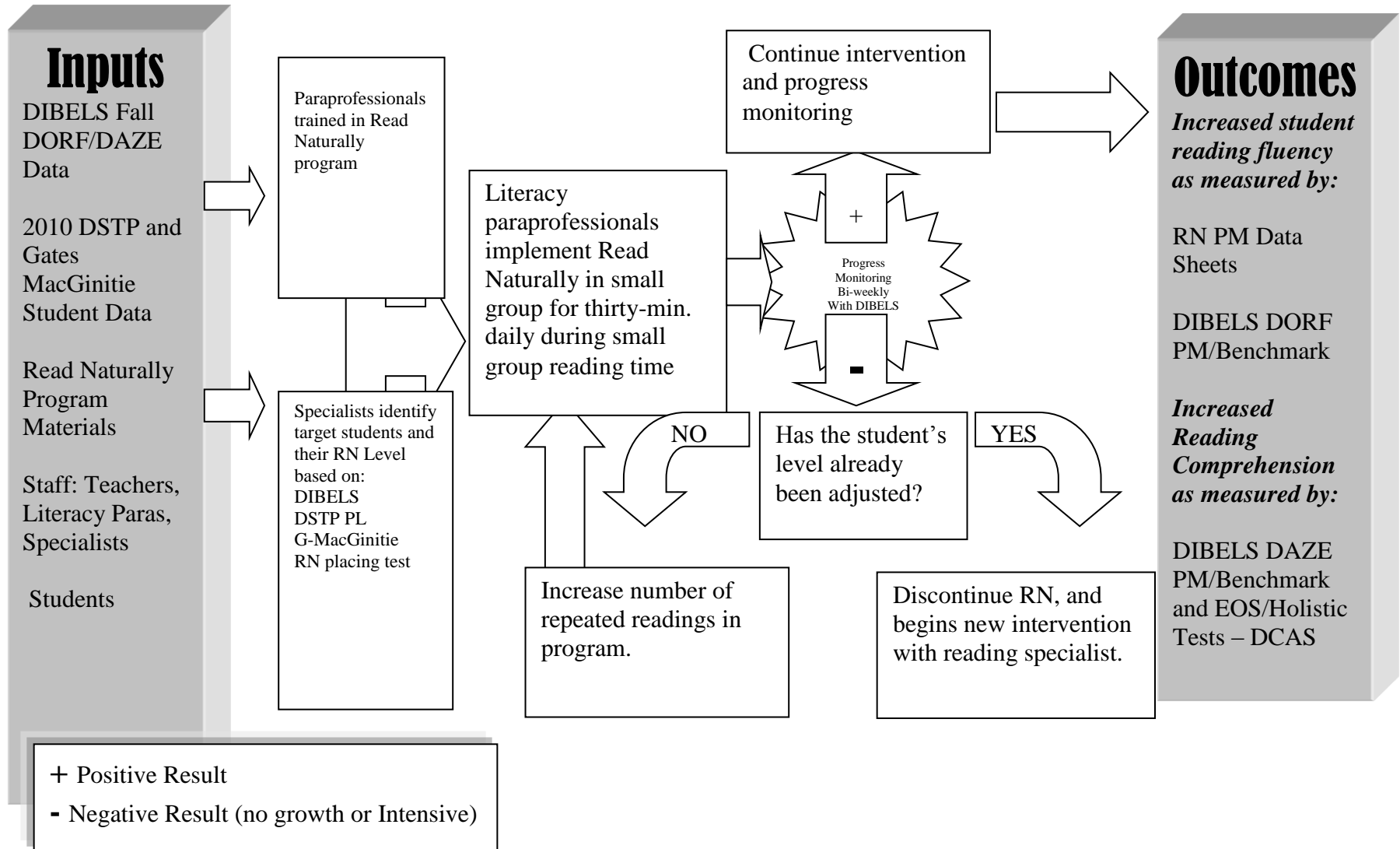
3. Collect data in the area of comprehension by examining the vocabulary and questioning components of the program in relationship to student performance on curriculum and state based assessments. This will provide further support for decision making for programming for fluency with comprehension as the ultimate goal.
4. Share the results of this evaluation with literacy paraprofessionals and principals at each site to:
 - a. celebrate success and reflect on future practice.
 - b. review students who are currently in the program that may be better served in a more intensive program (the few that did not show growth in DIBELS or cold reads.)
5. Share the results with classrooms teachers to:
 - a. illustrate progress of their students
 - b. support the impact of repeated readings in the regular classroom.
6. Conduct the data analysis and observations at the remaining three elementary schools to assess their success rate with the program in relation to fluency scores and program fidelity.

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**Attachment D.1 - Logic Model
Read Naturally Tier II Intervention Program**

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Attachment D.2 Read Naturally Steps for Implementation (www.readnaturally.com)

1. Select a Story Students choose from any of the stories within their assigned level. Because students are allowed to select which stories they want to read, they develop a sense of ownership of their own learning.
2. Read Along to the Key Words Students listen and read along as key words and their definitions are read aloud. This practice helps developing readers learn how to pronounce the words and understand what they mean.
3. Write a Prediction Students use the story title, key words, and pictures to write a brief prediction of what they think the story is about. Using this action step, students become prepared to read by first thinking briefly about the topic.
4. Cold Timing This step establishes a baseline for measuring improvement. As students read the story for the first time, they time themselves for one minute, marking unfamiliar or difficult words. This process increases a student's awareness of unknown words and alerts teachers to words or word patterns they may need to teach.
5. Graph the Cold Timing Score Students graph the number of words read correctly in one minute. Cold timing scores—total number of words read correctly minus the number of difficult words—are typically marked in blue. In the Software Edition, the computer calculates and graphs the cold timing score automatically.
6. Read Along to the Story Students read along while listening to a recording of the story, repeating the step several times. Using teacher modeling, students learn new words, proper pronunciation, expression, and phrasing. To get the most out of this step, students should 'subvocalize' quietly as they read along to make sure they aren't just listening to the audio recording.
7. Practice Reading the Story Students time themselves as they practice reading the story several times without the recording. They continue to reread the story until they achieve or exceed their predetermined goal rate.
8. Answer the Questions Students answer up to nine quiz questions about the story, a process that encourages students to read for comprehension and ensures that they understand what they are reading.
9. Pass Timing The teacher times the student as he or she reads the story. As with the cold timing, the teacher subtracts the number of errors from the number of words read in a minute to get the correct words per minute score. To pass a story, students must read at their goal rate, make no more than three errors, read with good expression, and answer the comprehension questions correctly. If a student does not pass, the teacher points out areas that need more work, and, if necessary,

assigns some remedial action, such as reading along again or continuing to practice.

10. Graph the Pass Timing Score

When students pass a story, they graph their pass timing score in red above the blue bar representing their cold timing score. In SE, the computer graphs the pass timing score automatically. When students see their progress, they build self-esteem and feel motivated to continue improving.

11. Retell the Story (Sequenced and Spanish Series)

By retelling information from the story, either in writing or orally, students are required to think about the ideas in the story, rather than just the words. If time is limited, teachers may choose to skip this step.

Attachment D.3 DIBELS Reference Guide



DIBELS® Next Composite Score - Quick Reference Guide

DIBELS® Next Composite Score Level and Need for Support

Beginning of Year

Score Level/ Need for Support	Well Below Benchmark/ Intensive Support	Below Benchmark/ Strategic Support	At or Above Benchmark/ Core Support
K	0-12	13-25	26-170
1	0-96	97-112	113-334
2	0-108	109-140	141-480
3	0-179	180-219	220-812
4	0-244	245-289	290-886
5	0-257	258-356	357-910
6	0-279	280-343	344-938

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Attachment D.4 Checklist

Checklist for Read Naturally Implementation Observations

School Site: _____

Number of Students: _____

Time: Start _____ Finish _____

Steps completed are indicated with a check mark.

- _____ Select Story
- _____ Read Along to the Key Words
- _____ Write a Prediction
- _____ Cold Timing
- _____ Graph the Cold Timing
- _____ Read Along to the Story
- _____ Practice Reading the Story
- _____ Answer the Questions
- _____ Pass Timing
- _____ Graph the Pass Timing Score
- _____ Retell the Story (Sequenced and Spanish Series)

Attachment D.5 – Student Data

Student #	Grade	School	DIBELS Fall Benchmark ORF	PM ORF	Diff.	Wcpm	Wcpm	wcpm	Diff	Diff	Diff	Avg.
1	2	Brown	68	64	-4	56/110	51/126	67/119	54	75	52	60.3
2	2	Brown	41	57	16	44/81	29/114	65/73	37	85	8	43.3
3	2	Brown	48	58	10	55/130	58/132	58/127	75	74	69	72.7
4	2	Brown	45	68	23	45/144	39/151	78/115	99	112	37	82.7
5	2	Brown	63	55	-8	57/114	51/130	49/141	76	79	92	76
6	2	Brown	48	66	18	62/126	66/130	61/145	64	64	84	70.7
7	2	Brown	28	76	52	73/113	68/112	61/148	40	44	87	57
8	3	Star Hill	64	92	28	89/124	113/147	101/127	35	34	26	31.7
9	3	Star Hill	61	47	-14	79/112	52/122	85/113	33	70	28	43.7
10	3	Brown	46	63	17	76/141	74/139	88/135	65	65	47	59
11	3	Brown	67	89	22	65/142	77/167	88/135	77	90	47	71.3

Attachment D.6 Hasbrouck and Tindal Oral Reading Fluency Data Chart

2006 Hasbrouck & Tindal Oral Reading Fluency Data					
Grade	Percentile	Fall WCPM*	Winter WCPM*	Spring WCPM*	Avg. Weekly Improvement**
1	90		81	111	1.9
	75		47	82	2.2
	50		23	53	1.9
	25		12	28	1.0
	10		6	15	0.6
2	90	106	125	142	1.1
	75	79	100	117	1.2
	50	51	72	89	1.2
	25	25	42	61	1.1
	10	11	18	31	0.6
3	90	128	146	162	1.1
	75	99	120	137	1.2
	50	71	92	107	1.1
	25	44	62	78	1.1
	10	21	36	48	0.8
4	90	145	166	180	1.1
	75	119	139	152	1.0
	50	94	112	123	0.9
	25	68	87	98	0.9
	10	45	61	72	0.8
5	90	166	182	194	0.9
	75	139	156	168	0.9
	50	110	127	139	0.9
	25	85	99	109	0.8
	10	61	74	83	0.7
6	90	177	195	204	0.8
	75	153	167	177	0.8
	50	127	140	150	0.7
	25	98	111	122	0.8
	10	68	82	93	0.8
7	90	180	195	202	0.7
	75	156	165	177	0.7
	50	128	136	150	0.7
	25	102	109	123	0.7
	10	79	88	98	0.6
8	90	185	199	199	0.4
	75	161	177	177	0.5
	50	133	151	151	0.6
	25	106	124	124	0.6
	10	77	97	97	0.6

* WCPM = Words Correct Per Minute

**Average words per week growth

Attachment D.7 DIBELS Next Interim Benchmark Chart K-3



DIBELS® Next Interim Benchmark Charts for Grades K-3

Grade: K

Fall Benchmark	PM Oct		PM Nov		PM Dec		Winter Benchmark			PM Feb		PM Mar		PM Apr		Spring Benchmark				
	COM 26+	FSF 10+	FSF 15+	P SF	FSF 20+	P SF	FSF 25+	P FS	COM 122+	FSF 30+	P SF 20+	NWF 17+	P SF 25+	NWF 20+	P SF 30+	NWF 23+	P SF 35+	NWF 26+	COM 119+	P SF 40+
COM 26+	FSF 10+	FSF 15+	P SF	FSF 20+	P SF	FSF 25+	P FS	COM 122+	FSF 30+	P SF 20+	NWF 17+	P SF 25+	NWF 20+	P SF 30+	NWF 23+	P SF 35+	NWF 26+	COM 119+	P SF 40+	NWF-28+

Grade: 1

Fall Benchmark	PM Oct		PM Nov		PM Dec		Winter Benchmark			PM Feb		PM Mar			PM Apr		Spring Benchmark													
	COM 113+	NWF-CLS 27+	NWF-WWR 1+	NWF-CLS 31+	NWF-WWR 3+	NWF-CLS 35+	NWF-WWR 5+	NWF-CLS 39+	NWF-WWR 7+	COM 130+	NWF-CLS 43+	NWF-WWR 8+	DORF-AC 78%	NWF-CLS 47+	NWF-WWR 10+	DORF-AC 29+	DORF-AC 81%	NWF-CLS 51+	NWF-WWR 11+	DORF-AC 35+	DORF-AC 84%	NWF-CLS 55+	NWF-WWR 12+	DORF-AC 41	DORF-AC 87%	COM 155+	NWF-CLS 58+	NWF-WWR 13+	DORF-AC 47+	DORF-AC 90%
COM 113+	NWF-CLS 27+	NWF-WWR 1+	NWF-CLS 31+	NWF-WWR 3+	NWF-CLS 35+	NWF-WWR 5+	NWF-CLS 39+	NWF-WWR 7+	COM 130+	NWF-CLS 43+	NWF-WWR 8+	DORF-AC 78%	NWF-CLS 47+	NWF-WWR 10+	DORF-AC 29+	DORF-AC 81%	NWF-CLS 51+	NWF-WWR 11+	DORF-AC 35+	DORF-AC 84%	NWF-CLS 55+	NWF-WWR 12+	DORF-AC 41	DORF-AC 87%	COM 155+	NWF-CLS 58+	NWF-WWR 13+	DORF-AC 47+	DORF-AC 90%	RETELL 15+

Grade: 2

Fall Benchmark	PM Oct		PM Nov		PM Dec		Winter Benchmark			PM Feb		PM Mar		PM Apr		Spring Benchmark																
	COM 141+	NWF-CLS 54+	NWF-WWR 13+	DORF-AC 52+	DORF-AC 90%	RETELL 16+	DORF-AC 57+	DORF-AC 93%	RETELL 18+	DORF-AC 62+	DORF-AC 94%	RETELL 19+	DORF-AC 67+	DORF-AC 95%	RETELL 20+	COM 190+	DORF-AC 72+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 21+	DORF-AC 76+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 23+	DORF-AC 80+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 25+	DORF-AC 84+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 26+	COM 238+	DORF-AC 87+	DORF-AC 97%	RETELL 27+
COM 141+	NWF-CLS 54+	NWF-WWR 13+	DORF-AC 52+	DORF-AC 90%	RETELL 16+	DORF-AC 57+	DORF-AC 93%	RETELL 18+	DORF-AC 62+	DORF-AC 94%	RETELL 19+	DORF-AC 67+	DORF-AC 95%	RETELL 20+	COM 190+	DORF-AC 72+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 21+	DORF-AC 76+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 23+	DORF-AC 80+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 25+	DORF-AC 84+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 26+	COM 238+	DORF-AC 87+	DORF-AC 97%	RETELL 27+	RETELL-OR 2+

Grade: 3

Fall Benchmark	PM Oct		PM Nov		PM Dec		Winter Benchmark			PM Feb		PM Mar		PM Apr		Spring Benchmark															
	COM 220+	DORF-AC 95%	RETELL 20+	DAZE 8+	DORF-AC 74+	RETELL 22+	DAZE 9+	DORF-AC 78+	RETELL 24+	DAZE 10+	DORF-AC 82+	RETELL 25+	DAZE 11+	DORF-AC 90+	RETELL 26+	COM 285+	DORF-AC 86+	RETELL 28+	DAZE 15+	DORF-AC 93+	RETELL 28+	DAZE 13+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 27+	DORF-AC 99%	RETELL 29+	DAZE 17+	COM 330+	DORF-AC 100+	DORF-AC 97%	RETELL 30+
COM 220+	DORF-AC 95%	RETELL 20+	DAZE 8+	DORF-AC 74+	RETELL 22+	DAZE 9+	DORF-AC 78+	RETELL 24+	DAZE 10+	DORF-AC 82+	RETELL 25+	DAZE 11+	DORF-AC 86+	RETELL 26+	COM 285+	DORF-AC 86+	RETELL 28+	DAZE 15+	DORF-AC 93+	RETELL 28+	DAZE 13+	DORF-AC 96%	RETELL 27+	DORF-AC 99%	RETELL 29+	DAZE 17+	COM 330+	DORF-AC 100+	DORF-AC 97%	RETELL 30+	DAZE 19+

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Appendix E

LEARNING WITH LEXILES

Teachers' Views of Assessment Results: This document compiles information gained from research on Lexile use in schools to serve as a guide to: (1) discuss the difference between the Guided Reading Text Gradient Scale and Lexiles, (2) explain how Lexiles fit into the Common Core's Text Complexity model, (3) discuss how Lexiles and other readability measures may be used interchangeably, (4) share how Lexiles are obtained in the Caesar Rodney School District (CR), and (5) explain how Lexiles may be used to guide instruction and measure growth. Each of these areas of focus is integral in strengthening our teachers' and administrators' understanding of the appropriate integration and use of Lexiles as the district transitions to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The field of education is notorious for all of its “buzz” words. With the adoption of the CCSS, Lexile has become the topic of conversation when talking about reading comprehension and college and career readiness. Lexile is one of multiple scales available to help measure reading ability and quantitative text difficulty. Up to this point in time, the elementary schools within CR have not used Lexile when referring to student reading levels. Students’ reading levels have been measured by Fountas and Pinnell’s Guided Reading Text Level Gradient Scale (2014) which indicates book levels from A-Z+, rather than a numeric scale of BR-2000 used by Lexile.

Now that both measures will be utilized, it is important to understand the similarities and differences between the Guided Reading Text Level Gradient Scale and Lexile level as well as the applications of using both to inform instruction. The following paper will serve as a guide to: (1) discuss the difference between the Guided Reading Text Gradient Scale and Lexiles, (2) explain how Lexiles fit into the CCSS’ Text Complexity model, (3) discuss how Lexiles and other readability measures may be used interchangeably, (4) share how Lexiles are obtained in the CR, and (5) explain how Lexiles may be used to guide instruction and measure growth. Each of these areas of focus is integral in strengthening our teachers’ and administrators’ understanding of the appropriate integration and use of Lexiles as the district transitions to the CCSS.

Guided Reading Text Gradient Scale vs. Lexiles

Fountas and Pinnell’s (2014) Text Gradient Scale has been in existence for over thirty years. It was developed in coordination with teams of classroom teachers to

match books to readers and to provide differentiated instruction for struggling students. Book levels were developed according to text characteristics. These characteristics include, but are not limited to number of lines of text, spacing between words, sentence structure, sentence patterns, level of vocabulary, picture support, topic selection and level of familiarity, chapters and cognitive demand. Using the Text Gradient Scale, teachers are able to identify what the reader needs to be able to do according to each level to read with accuracy, understanding, and fluency. Fountas and Pinnell suggest that by utilizing book levels, teachers are able to pinpoint where students are able to access text at an independent level and therefore allow them to focus on reading strategies rather than accessing the text in front of them. Due to the nature of how the Text Gradient Scale was derived, it is considered more of an intuitive scale. Lexile, on the other hand, is considered to be a scientific scale.

The Lexile looks at the readability of text. It specifically takes into account syntactic and semantic characteristics such as sentence length and word frequency. Lexile scores are not intended to be linked to specific grade levels; rather, they provide a range. The second column in Table E1 illustrates ranges aligned to each grade level. The chart indicates typical readers and therefore it must be understood that 50% of students are reading higher or lower than the ranges provided. It is possible for students in grade 4, for example, to be 250L above or 250L below the typical reader in that grade. Lexile levels measure where students can read with “moderate” success or with approximately 75% comprehension (Metametrics, n.d.).

Table E1 Typical Text Measures, by Grade (Metametrics, 2015)

Grade	Text Demand Study 2009 25th percentile to 75th percentile (IQR)
1	230L to 420L
2	450L to 570L
3	600L to 730L
4	640L to 780L
5	730L to 850L
6	860L to 920L
7	880L to 960L
8	900L to 1010L
9	960L to 1110L
10	920L to 1120L
11 and 12	1070L to 1220L

In Williamson’s (2006) white paper on student readiness for postsecondary options, Gary L. Williamson notes that reading difficulty from high school texts to university texts has a gap of 305L. Therefore a student reading at 1090L in high school would enter college already at a disadvantage when comprehending freshman level text. In an effort to help our students meet the demands of text beyond high school and therefore prepare our students to be college and career ready, the authors of the Common Core increased the text complexity requirements across the grade level bands. Where the original model indicated that a high school senior should be reading between a 900L to a 1010L, the CCSS increased the Lexile span to 1195L to 1385L.

Table E2 represents Text Measures linked to grade levels 1-12. The second column indicates the original Lexile levels and the third column indicates the CCSS Lexile expectations.

Table E2 Typical Text Measures, by Grade (Metametrics, 2015)

Grade	Text Demand Study 2009 25th percentile to 75th percentile (IQR)	2012 CCSS Text Measures
1	230L to 420L	190L to 530L
2	450L to 570L	420L to 650L
3	600L to 730L	520L to 820L
4	640L to 780L	740L to 940L
5	730L to 850L	830L to 1010L
6	860L to 920L	925L to 1070L
7	880L to 960L	970L to 1120L
8	900L to 1010L	1010L to 1185L
9	960L to 1110L	1050L to 1260L
10	920L to 1120L	1080L to 1335L
11 and 12	1070L to 1220L	1185L to 1385L

Lexiles and the Common Core’s Text Complexity Model

Elementary schools have traditionally used intuitively derived readability scales (For example: Reading Recovery and Fountas and Pinnell). As mentioned previously, these readability scales focus more on qualitative text characteristics rather than quantitative characteristics such as word count and sentence length measured by Lexiles. In August of 2012, information related to the three legs of text complexity

was released. This model has three legs that are factored together to determine text complexity. The legs serve as “steps” in identifying grade level text for students. Each leg serves a specific function. First, the text is examined quantitatively to identify its Lexile or readability level and then determine where it fits within the CCSS grade level Lexile band. Next, texts are reviewed for specific structural considerations to identify where they fit within a specific grade band. Finally, educators use what they know about their students as learners to make professional decisions as to the texts’ use within the prescribed lesson and standards. The legs have equal importance and work together to combine Lexile expectations, text characteristics, and cognitive demand when choosing reading materials for students. The following three sections will describe each of the three legs of the text complexity model: quantitative, qualitative, and reader and task considerations.

Quantitative Measures. The quantitative measure is simply the Lexile. As discussed earlier, this measure helps to determine the readability of the chosen text. Lexiles are a measure of text difficulty or readability. They cannot determine the literary or informational content of a text. Lexiles are derived from both semantic and syntactic means. Both the difficulty of words and complexity of sentence structure are reflected in a Lexile number. Lexiles are reported between BR-2000. If a child’s Lexile comes out below 200 it is recorded as BR or Beginning Reader. When viewing text level correlation charts it is common to see a BR measure for students up to beginning first grade. Lexiles are often reported on standardized assessments such as the Stanford Achievement Test, TerraNova, and the Iowa tests (Metametrics, n.d.).

Starting in the 2012-2013 school year, Lexiles were reported to students in Delaware through the reading portion of the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS).

Qualitative Measures. Unlike the quantitative measure which can be acquired through a computer based process, qualitative features are more subjective and are best identified by a human reader. Qualitative measures look primarily at the complexity of features such as meaning, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. Student Achievement Partners (2014), a non-profit organization created by the authors of the Common Core, provides additional documents to support the transition to the Common Core Standards. One of the documents included is titled, “Qualitative Features of Text Complexity Explained.” (Attachment E.1) This document provides the reader with specific features in the areas of structure, language demands, knowledge demands, and levels of meaning. Provided within the document are identifiers in each demand that trigger a range of levels of rigor when looking at a piece of literature. For example does the piece have: simple or complex structure, literal or figurative language, simple or complex theme, everyday knowledge, single or multiple levels of meaning? Attachment E.1 illustrates the entire chart of qualitative features.

The State of Delaware, as well as many other states across the country, has adopted the Kansas Department of Education’s rubrics (KSDE, 2015) for both literary and informational text to help identify qualitative measures. A sample can be found in Attachment E.2. Similar to Student Achievement Partner’s chart, these rubrics help

teachers identify the qualitative features mentioned above more explicitly on a continuum from very complex to slightly complex in the areas of meaning, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. One piece of literature may have areas deemed very complex while others are slightly complex allowing for professional conversation among educators as to its demands on the reader. The rubric is meant to help make informed decisions, along with the quantitative and reader and task considerations. Kansas Department of Education's rubric can be found in Attachment E.2.

The third leg encompasses Reader and Task considerations. This leg is focused on what the reader brings to the text as well as the tasks related to the reading. When evaluating a text the reader is asked to questions such as: What is the students' current background knowledge is on the subject? How motivated are they to read the text? What is the purpose for reading? and What is the complexity of the questions and tasks related to the text that the students must address?

It's Not All About Lexiles - Taking All Three Legs into Consideration

Lexiles are purely a measure of text difficulty or readability. Lexiles cannot and do not determine the literary or informational content of text. Therefore, Lexiles should be looked at as a good "starting point." Utilizing the text complexity model helps to address the common criticisms of using Lexiles only. It is recommended to use more than one data point when making decisions about texts. As stated by Elfrieda Hiebert (2011), when using Lexiles only, informational text are often inflated due to

their use of “precise and often rare repeated vocabulary” where narrative text can be deflated due to use of dialogue causing shorter sentence length.

Qualitative and Reader and Task measures help educators make more targeted decisions on the literature used to teach in their classrooms. For example, The Kansas Department of Education completed a text complexity rating that reviewed all three legs in relation to *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). Looking at the Lexile grade band only or the quantitative leg, this novel has an 810L which would place it in the fourth grade according to the Common Core Lexile band expectations. Looking next at the qualitative features, this book takes place in the future and serves as a social commentary on reality television and social issues. There is a simple structure to the text, language is vivid and the narrator is conversational; however, the knowledge demands require deeper thinking as the ideas expressed are from a future world where there are unfamiliar customs and events, war, and moral dilemmas. Educators understand that this novel’s meaning and knowledge demands are not appropriate for elementary students and when utilizing all three legs of the text complexity model, it is recommended for seventh grade and above.

Using Lexiles and Other Readability Measurements Interchangeably

Since 1923 more than 200 readability formulas have been introduced. Most of these formulas function by analyzing semantic and syntactic complexity. (Heibert, 2011). Very often, the program a district chooses determines the type of measurement used for text readability. In an effort to align a variety of most frequently used measures, districts and companies have created alignment charts. Attachment E.3 is a

sample of one such alignment chart created by Learning A to Z (n.d.), one of the companies the district uses for access to leveled literature. Though Lexiles were not intended to be reported by grade level, the CCSS as well as other groups will often match Lexiles to anticipated grade levels. With so many different ways to report readability and reading level, it is imperative that districts not only share alignment charts with educators, but also discuss how the various measures work together and guide instruction to increase the overall achievement of students.

CR currently utilizes the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to gather benchmark and progress monitoring data for grades K-5 and Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading levels to work with students in differentiated, flexible small group instruction. With the CCSS and DCAS reporting Lexile expectations, aligning Fountas and Pinnell levels as well as DIBELS data to the newly introduced Lexiles is becoming more of a focus. Instructional time is at a premium. In order to protect that time, educators need to utilize data that is already provided through various sources to align with expectations across different programs and standards.

In 2009, Lynnda Higgins evaluated the relationship between criterion-referenced competency test in reading comprehension and Lexile scores and Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading levels in a Georgia public school district. The study included 546 third grade students instructed in guided reading during the 2007-2008 school year. Higgins (2009) sought to correlate guided reading levels, gender, and ethnicity to Lexile scores on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT).

Results indicated that students at a Fountas and Pinnell Level N were more likely to “meet the standard” on the CRCT and “meets” on the Lexile scale. When looking at the original Lexile band expectations, Level N correlates approximately to 651L-730L. (Higgins, 2009) If students are expected to perform between 740L-940 in fourth grade, a district would aim to have incoming fourth grade students at a minimum of a 740L. This would mean they should be leaving third grade at a minimum of a Level O or P in Fountas and Pinnell’s guided reading leveling system. Considering Higgins study was completed in April with two full months of school remaining, it is possible that students would be able to improve their reading level within that timeframe. This study gives credence to the A-Z correlation chart already in use within our district. Her results are consistent with the correlations generated by A-Z. The results from Higgins’ study help to support the use of the correlation chart as the district attempts to align the various measures.

When looking at reading level in grades K-2, CR does not currently have a Lexile measure available as students in those grades do not take the DCAS. As a result, it is necessary to correlate a Lexile score to a DIBELS oral reading fluency (ORF) score in order to best track growth utilizing consistent measures. A collaborative effort between Metametrics, Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc., and Wireless Generation resulted in an analysis completed in October of 2007 to link The Lexile Framework for Reading with the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) measure. Twenty-three thousand students from Seminole County Florida and West Virginia participated in the

testing. The test consisted of the following as noted in “Linking DIBELS ORF with the Lexile Framework for Reading:”

- Kindergarten-level: 12 items presented as pictures where the student was asked to identify the word that best matched the picture and 11 items where the student was asked to choose the best word to complete the sentence.
- Grade 1: 10 of the 12 picture items and 25 single-sentence reading comprehension items.
- Grade 2: 35 reading comprehension items (single sentences to paragraphs) and the Grade 3 test consisted of 40 reading comprehension items (single sentences to paragraphs).
- Test specifications were as follows: Kindergarten (-263L); Grade 1 (85L); Grade 2 (418L); and Grade 3 (474L). (Metametrics, 2009)

According to Metametrics (2009), after matching the Lexile linking test results with the DIBELS ORF results and then using those results to create linking functions, they were able to create charts to demonstrate ORF count in Lexiles for grades 1-3. A sample chart can be viewed in Attachment E.4. There are currently no plans for creating conversion charts for grades 4 and 5.

How Lexiles Are Obtained in the Caesar Rodney School District

Lexile measurements can be administered whole group or individually, paper and pencil or electronically. During the 2011-2012 school year, CR adopted the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) to administer to students in grades 6-9 as a beginning and end of year benchmark for student comprehension. The SRI provided a Lexile score for students after completing a paper and pencil test composed of short passages with linked comprehension questions. The test took approximately one class period, or 50 min., to administer. Teachers hand scored the tests and input Lexile

scores in the district's data warehouse, I-Tracker. Starting in the 2012-2013 school year, Delaware added a Lexile analyzer to their Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). Students in grades 2-10 were given a Lexile score correlated to their performance level on their DCAS student report. Two hundred and twenty-three schools from 44 districts and charter schools participated in a linking study that required students to take their regular DCAS Reading computer adaptive test with a random sample of grade appropriate Lexile questions (Metametrics, 2012). Lexile questions were used as anchor questions in order to calibrate the DCAS reading questions. Unsure of the accuracy of the Lexile scores reported on DCAS, the district continued to administer the paper and pencil SRI. During the 2013-2014 school year an analysis was done on an eighth grade class to compare reported Lexiles on DCAS to SRI scores. (See Attachment E.5)

After conducting a study of DCAS Lexiles compared to SRI Lexiles a .57 correlation was obtained. It was noted that the SRI and DCAS Lexiles collected for individual students could differ by 20L-425L. Therefore, the district continued to rely on the SRI Lexiles to guide instruction and intervention. With Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), the new state assessment, starting in the 2014-2015 school year, Lexiles will not be available from the state assessment. In an effort to acquire Lexile scores for all elementary students, the district has purchased a pilot of the Scholastic STAR assessment. This assessment is a computer adaptive; 20 min. test that measures reading foundational skills, informational text, literature, and language. It provides a course of action for teachers in planning to meet students' needs as they

begin the school year and also provides progress monitoring and summative options. This new assessment provides a Lexile along with a learning progressions report.

CR also utilizes a program called Achieve 3000 (2015) in grades 6-12. This online program provides differentiated instruction and practice in literacy to build student proficiency and support students in obtaining a minimum of a 1300 Lexile in order to be college and career ready. Achieve3000's *LevelSet*[™] Lexile assessment tool provides students and teachers with a Lexile level and then the program is able to provide instruction, assignments, and practice according to each child's level.

Using Lexiles to Guide Instruction and Measure Growth

Lexiles are used to track student progress and assign appropriate reading materials. Within their daily studies, students should be reading at or above their Lexile level. Each student's Lexile range is 50L above or 100L below their Lexile score. Currently, secondary schools in the district utilize Lexile scores obtained through the SRI and DCAS to place students in tiered instruction for reading intervention and science. Social studies and technical subjects have received professional development on reading in the content area and utilizing Lexiles to differentiate and choose appropriate reading materials. As mentioned previously, the district currently utilizes the program Achieve 3000. This program is accessible for intervention as well as for classroom teachers to download current articles from the Associated Press at all Lexile levels. Using these articles, teachers could have students of varying reading levels accessing the same content at the appropriate readability.

This feature allows content area teachers to focus on their content rather than being concerned with students' ability to access the text.

With Response to Intervention (RTI) regulations requiring regular progress monitoring of student growth as well as Delaware Performance Appraisal System Component V growth goals being mandated for all teachers and administrators, the need for data that accurately measures student growth is in more demand than ever. When the district adopted the SRI the first question was, "How much growth should we expect to see?" There are several ways to gauge growth. When looking at growth targets it is important to look at both norms and aspirations.

Metametrics partnered with the Scholastic Research and Validation team to measure growth from fall to spring using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). The six-year study was conducted in a large urban public school district located in southwestern region of US. This district was selected because their demographics represented national demographics. A group of 373,880 students in grades 3-10 had their pre- and post-SRI scores collected over the span of the study. Students' fall Lexile scores were rounded to the nearest 10L and then the mean Lexile measure was calculated for the students in each Lexile band and grade level. Average Lexile growth was calculated for each Lexile band by subtracting the mean Fall Lexile measure from the mean spring Lexile measure. A separate "best fit" equation was applied in the spring data set. The smoothed mean Fall Lexile measure and the smoothed mean spring Lexile measure were computed for each Lexile band. (Knutson, 2012). From this data, estimated growth from fall to spring was calculated across grades 3-10. This

research enabled the construction of growth tables. A portion of one of the growth tables can be viewed below in Table E3 below and a larger sample can be found in Attachment E.6.

Table E3 Sample Lexile Growth Chart for Grade 5

Grade	Fall Lexile Measure * Lexile values are rounded to the nearest whole number	Spring Lexile Measure * Lexile values are rounded to the nearest whole number	Fall to Spring Growth* * Lexile values are rounded to the nearest whole number
5	770	852	83
5	780	861	81
5	790	869	79
5	800	877	78
5	810	885	76
5	820	894	74
5	830	902	73

These charts allow educators and students to determine average fall to spring growth expectations by simply taking a Fall Lexile and rounding it to the nearest 10L. After finding that Lexile number on the chart, the corresponding Spring Lexile and then the Fall-Spring growth can be located in the same row. For students well below grade level, the charts should be used to set the minimum expectation. Upon review of the Lexile Growth charts it is evident that students with lower Fall Lexile measures are expected to show a greater growth than those with higher Fall Lexiles. It should also be noted that Lexile growth decreases as grade levels increase. This would account for the fact that in lower grades the emphasis is placed on learning to read while at upper

grades students are reading to learn. Included in Knutson's (2012) report on growth expectations are also two additional appendices sharing SRI Spring Norms at selected percentiles as well as performance standard proficiency bands for SRI, in Lexiles, by Grade. These tables are also helpful in goal setting for both whole groups as well as individuals as they provide proficiency bands indicating Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced by grade level as well as percentile rankings from 1-95 (with 50th percentile denoting average) for grades 3-10. In addition to Attachment E.6, all charts can be found within the Scholastic professional paper, "Growth Expectations Setting Achievable Goals." Scholastic's Best Practices Guide (2009) suggests when progress monitoring for growth, educators should allow at least 30 days between SRI administrations. Growth of 55 Lexile points or higher indicate the student's ability is actually changing. Below 55 would not be significant enough to denote change.

Summary

Lexiles play an important role in our transition to the Common Core expectations as well as in monitoring student growth for RTI and state accountability growth measures. Teachers and administrators will be more confident in making instructional decisions knowing the difference between the Guided Reading Text Gradient Scale and Lexiles. Their understanding of how the district obtains Lexiles and ability to explain how they are used interchangeably with other text measures will assist in analyzing data to guide instruction. Furthermore, being able to articulate how Lexiles fit into the CCSS' Text Complexity model will help in text selection and student placement in those texts.

Lexiles are often a starting point to guide educators in their quest to provide differentiated, targeted instruction. This new gained knowledge will help move from referring to Lexiles as numbers assigned to categorize students to utilizing Lexiles to make more informed decisions for student learning.

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Attachment E.1 – Qualitative Features of Text Complexity (Student Achievement Partners, 2014)

<p>Structure (could be story structure and/or form of piece)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple - Complex • Explicit - Implicit • Conventional - Unconventional • Events related in chronological order - Events related out of chronological order (chiefly literary texts) • Traits of a common genre or subgenre - Traits specific to a particular discipline (chiefly informational texts) • Simple graphics - sophisticated graphics • Graphics unnecessary or merely supplemental to understanding the text - Graphics essential to understanding the text and may provide information not elsewhere provided
<p>Language Demands: Conventuality and Clarity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literal - Figurative or ironic • Clear -Ambiguous or purposefully misleading • Contemporary, familiar -Archaic or otherwise unfamiliar • Conversational - General Academic and domain specific • Light vocabulary load: few unfamiliar or academic words- Many words unfamiliar and high academic vocabulary present • Sentence structure straightforward - Complex and varied sentence structures
<p>Knowledge Demands: Life Experience (literary texts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple theme - Complex or sophisticated themes • Single theme - Multiple themes • Common everyday experiences or clearly fantastical situations -Experiences distinctly different from one’s own • Single perspective - Multiple perspectives • Perspective(s) like one’s own - Perspective(s) unlike or in opposition to one’s own
<p>Knowledge Demands: Cultural/Literary Knowledge (chiefly literary texts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required - Cultural and literary knowledge useful • Low intertextuality (few if any references/allusions to other texts) - High intertextuality (many references/allusions to other texts)
<p>Knowledge Demands: Content/Discipline Knowledge (chiefly informational texts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required - Extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge required • Low intertextuality (few if any references to/citations of other texts) - High intertextuality (many references to/citations of other texts)
<p>Levels of Meaning (chiefly literary texts) or Purpose (chiefly informational texts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single level of meaning - Multiple levels of meaning • Explicitly stated purpose - Implicit purpose, may be hidden or obscure

Attachment E.2 – Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric – KDE



Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric
LITERARY TEXT

Text Title _____


Text Author _____

QUALITATIVE	Very Complex ←			→ Slightly Complex
MEANING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Several level/layers and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Several levels/layers of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: More than one level/layer of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: One level/layer of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text
TEXT STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narration: Complex and/or unconventional; many shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Not in chronological order; heavy use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narration: Some complexities and/or unconventionality; occasional shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Several major shifts in time, use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a few illustrations that support the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narration: Largely simple and/or conventional; few, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narration: Simple and conventional; no shifts in point of view or perspective ○ Order of Events: Strictly chronological ○ Use of Graphics: If used, extensive illustrations that directly support and assist in interpreting the written text
LANGUAGE FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences often containing multiple concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Some use of unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning ○ Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational language; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand ○ Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores many complex and sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized prior content knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores many themes of varying layers of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires moderate amount of prior content knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores few themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires some prior content knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires only everyday content knowledge

Attachment E.3 - Sample Conversion Chart: Learning A-Z

Learning A-Z Correlation Chart							
Learning A-Z	Ages	Grade	Fountas & Pinnell	Reading Recovery	DRA	PM Readers	Lexile
aa	4-6	K	A	1	A-1	Starters 1	BR-70
A	4-6	K	A	1	A-1	Starters 1	BR-70
B	4-6	K	B	2	2	Starters 2	BR-70
C	4-6	K	C	3-4	3-4	3-4 red	BR-70
D	4-7	1	D	5-6	6	5-6 red/yellow	80-450
E	6-7	1	E	7-8	8	7-8 yellow	80-450
F	6-7	1	F	9-10	10	9-10 blue	80-450
G	6-7	1	G	11-12	12	11-12 blue/green	80-450
H	6-7	1	H	13-14	14	13-14 green	80-450
I	6-7	1	I	15-16	16	15-16 orange	80-450
J	6-8	1	J	17	18	17 turquoise	451-500
K	7-8	2	J	17	18	18 turquoise	451-550
L	7-8	2	K	18	20	19-20 purple	501-550
M	7-8	2	L	19	24	21 gold	551-600
N	7-8	2	M	20	28	22 gold	551-650
O	7-8	2	M	20	28	22 gold	601-650
P	7-8	2	M	28	28	22 gold	601-650
Q	7-9	3	N	30	30	23 silver	651-690
R	8-9	3	N	30	30	23 silver	651-730
S	8-9	3	O	34	34	24 silver	691-770
T	8-9	3	P	38	38	25 emerald	731-770
U	8-11	4	Q	40	40	26 emerald	771-800
V	9-11	4	Q	40	40	26 emerald	771-830
W	9-11	4	R	40	40	27 ruby	801-860
X	9-11	5	S	40	40	28 sapphire	831-860
Y	9-11	5	T	40	40	29 sapphire	861-890
Z	9-11	5	U-W	N/A	50	30 sapphire	891-980

This correlation chart illustrates how Learning A-Z levels approximately correlate to other leveling systems commonly found in leveled reading materials. Learning A-Z uses objective (quantitative) and subjective (qualitative) Leveling Criteria to measure text complexity.



Attachment E.4- DIBLES ORF - Lexile Conversion Chart (Metametrics, 2009)



Linking DIBELS® Oral Reading Fluency with The Lexile Framework® for Reading



Grade 1 Conversion Table

ORF Reading Count	Reported Lexile	ORF Reading Count	Reported Lexile	ORF Reading Count	Reported Lexile
0	BR	54	55L	108	515L
1	BR	55	65L	109	525L
2	BR	56	75L	110	535L
3	BR	57	85L	111	545L
4	BR	58	90L	112	550L
5	BR	59	100L	113	550L
6	BR	60	110L	114	550L
7	BR	61	115L	115	550L
8	BR	62	125L	116	550L
9	BR	63	135L	117	550L
10	BR	64	140L	118	550L
11	BR	65	150L	119	550L
12	BR	66	160L	120	550L
13	BR	67	170L	121	550L
14	BR	68	175L	122	550L
15	BR	69	185L	123	550L
16	BR	70	195L	124	550L
17	BR	71	200L	125	550L
18	BR	72	210L	126	550L
19	BR	73	220L	127	550L
20	BR	74	225L	128	550L
21	BR	75	235L	129	550L
22	BR	76	245L	130	550L
23	BR	77	255L	131	550L
24	BR	78	260L	132	550L
25	BR	79	270L	133	550L
26	BR	80	280L	134	550L
27	BR	81	285L	135	550L
28	BR	82	295L	136	550L
29	BR	83	305L	137	550L
30	BR	84	315L	138	550L
31	BR	85	320L	139	550L
32	BR	86	330L	140	550L
33	BR	87	340L	141	550L
34	BR	88	345L	142	550L
35	BR	89	355L	143	550L
36	BR	90	365L	144	550L
37	BR	91	370L	145	550L
38	BR	92	380L	146	550L
39	BR	93	390L	147	550L
40	BR	94	400L	148	550L
41	BR	95	405L	149	550L
42	BR	96	415L	150	550L
43	BR	97	425L	151	550L
44	BR	98	430L	152	550L
45	BR	99	440L	153	550L
46	BR	100	450L	154	550L
47	BR	101	455L	155	550L
48	5L	102	465L	156	550L
49	15L	103	475L	157	550L
50	25L	104	485L	158	550L
51	30L	105	490L	159	550L
52	40L	106	500L	160	550L
53	50L	107	510L		

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Attachment E.5 – Lexile Comparisons Grade 8 Class – Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) vs. DCAS

Student #	SRI Lexile	DCAS Lexile	Difference
1	1645	1420	225
2	1385	960	425
3	1340	1410	70
4	1300	1350	50
5	1270	1290	20
6	1240	1420	220
7	1240	1110	130
8	1190	1420	230
9	1190	1290	100
10	1190	1085	105
11	1170	1080	90
12	1170	1100	70
13	1130	1325	195
14	1130	1210	80
15	1110	850	260
16	1095	1355	260
17	1075	1170	95
18	1075	1150	75
19	1075	1130	55
20	1060	1200	140
21	975	945	30
22	890	995	105
23	715	855	140

Attachment E.6 – Growth Charts – Scholastic Professional Paper (Knutson, 2012)

* Values are rounded to the nearest whole number Grade 5	Fall Lexile Measure	Spring Lexile Measure	Fall to Spring Growth*
5	770	852	83
5	780	861	81
5	790	869	79
5	800	877	78
5	810	885	76
5	820	894	74
5	830	902	73
5	840	910	71
5	850	919	69
5	860	927	68
5	870	935	66
5	880	944	64
5	890	952	63
5	900	961	61
5	910	969	59
5	920	977	58
5	930	986	56
5	940	994	55
5	950	1003	53
5	960	1011	51
5	970	1019	50
5	980	1028	48
5	990	1036	47
5	1000	1044	45
5	1010	1053	43
5	1020	1061	42
5	1030	1070	40
5	1040	1078	38
5	1050	1086	37
5	1060	1095	35
5	1070	1103	33
5	1080	1111	32

Appendix F

‘JUMPING THROUGH HOOPS’ DELAWARE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM II – COMPONENT V IMPROVING GOAL SETTING PRACTICES

Teachers’ Views of Assessment Results. Knowing that our district has a variety of programs and measurement tools, it was important to identify our teachers’ current understanding of available data. This was accomplished through a review of how they were analyzing information in order to create growth goals for student achievement. *Evaluating Goals Linked to Student Achievement: DPAS II Component V* examined the goals set by 12 teachers. Samples included two first grade teachers and two fifth grade teachers from each of three elementary schools. The analysis identified types of goals set (product/process) and rigor of goals (expected growth). Principals of the identified schools were also interviewed as to their approach to working with teachers through this process. The analysis sought to determine whether teachers were able to establish goals that were measurable and likely to improve student achievement as well as offer suggestions for more effective goal writing and data monitoring.

Goal Setting and the Delaware Performance Appraisal System II

Because teacher evaluation systems are still a work in progress, it is vital that school leaders and administrators continue to solicit feedback, learn from their mistakes, and make improvements.

- Arne Duncan (McGuinn, 2012, p. 1)

In March of 2010, Delaware was “the first state” to be awarded President Obama and Secretary Duncan’s Race to the Top (RTTT) competitive grant. One of the expectations of this new grant was the promise to create an educator evaluation system linked to student performance. Delaware had a distinct advantage related to this expectation as it had already had a statewide educator evaluation system for over 20 years. It was now time to enhance the current system. The state invested a portion of the 100 million RTTT funds in both development coaches to work with administrators and data coaches to work with building leaders and educators to support the accuracy of the evaluation process as well as refine stakeholders’ use of data in the process (McQuinn, 2012). The original evaluation system, based on Charlotte Danielson’s Framework (Danielson, 2007), remained as the core of the new system with the biggest change coming in the addition of a revised goal setting component, Component V.

This paper will discuss the workings of the goal setting portion of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System II (DPAS II), reflect on current perception and use of this component, and suggest actions to support further implementation of the state mandated educator goal setting process. This was accomplished through an analysis of completed educator DPAS II goal setting forms from the 2012-2013 school year and interviews with the building principals of the reviewed goal forms.

Setting the Stage

Educators are often faced with new initiatives. At times, these initiatives are introduced at a rapid pace and in conjunction with several other initiatives. RTTT

brought not only the shift to a new performance evaluation system, but also the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the computer adaptive Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS), and will soon bring to the state another new statewide assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). As Secretary Arne Duncan stated above, throughout all of these changes, it is imperative that the district and state review the practices that come with the new policies. It is imperative to understand the workings behind the evaluation tool before reading the district review.

The DPAS is used in districts across Delaware to evaluate the performance of educators, specialists, and administrators. The system itself has a variety of steps and forms to be completed throughout the school year. For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on the Educator evaluation form and more specifically on one of its five components.

The DPAS evaluation tool is comprised of five “components.” Administrators are asked to observe and document evidence of educator performance under each of the five components. The first four DPAS II components address Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. Each of these components is very similar to the areas observed in the original version of DPAS. As mentioned previously, Delaware’s RTTT application included a provision for the addition/revision of the fifth component, DPAS II Component V – Student Improvement.

Component V Overview

DPAS II Component V – Student Performance, evaluates an educator’s performance through the monitoring of a cohort of their students over one school year. As mentioned in the DPAS II manual (2012), “In a standards based environment, the ultimate goal is to move all students toward the standard. It is reasonable to expect that all students will further toward the standards during the school year” (p. 37).

Groups. There are multiple steps in the process of completing DPAS II Component V. First, educators are placed into one of three groups.

Group 1 is composed of educators who teach reading and/or math in grades 3-10. For example, this would include elementary classroom educators in grades 3-5 as they are generalists and teach all subject areas, middle school math and reading educators, and high school math and reading educators grades 9 and 10. These educators are included in Group 1 because their students will be taking the DCAS and will therefore have standardized test scores to play a part in their growth goals.

Group 2 is composed of educators who generally report grades in any subject or grade where DCAS reading and math are not administered and/or a DPAS II Measure B assessment is not available. DPAS II Measure B includes a bank of educator created assessments that are discussed in the next section of this paper.

Group 3 is simply any educator who does not fit in Group 1 or 2 (Delaware Department of Education [DE DoE], 2012). It is not surprising to find educators confused about their group membership. The first step of just identifying which group an educator fits in is often a feat in itself, as there are many outliers.

Measures. In order to evaluate the growth of an educator's students, the state has developed three measures. The measures are composed of: 1) state assessment (DCAS) scores, 2) internal and external assessments, and 3) growth goals developed by the educator linked to his/her content area. These measures are called DPAS II Measure A, Measure B, and Measure C respectively. An educator's performance is evaluated through the selection of some combination of the above three measures. DPAS II Measure A is based on students' DCAS scaled scores and can be used by educators teaching math or reading in grades 3-10. DPAS II Measure B assessments are composed of both internal and external measures. The internal measures are assessments created by the DE DoE in conjunction with educator teams from throughout the state. At the elementary level, there is currently one internal measure (assessment) available by grade level for each of the four content areas: reading, math, science and social studies. External measures are composed of standardized assessments from outside vendors such as DIBELS Next from the Dynamic Measurement Group and STAR from Scholastic (see Attachment F.1 for a complete list of external measures). There are currently 33 external measures approved for use across grades K-12. DPAS II Measure C goals are growth goals created by the educator specific to his/her content area or job assignment. DPAS II Measures A and B have specific assessments provided for educators to choose from. DPAS II Component C allows educators to create their own goals using either standardized or classroom based assessments of their choice. See Table F1 for an overview of the three measures as described in DE DoE's Guide for Educators.

Table F1 Description of DPAS II Measures - DE DoE’s DPAS II Guide for Educators

Measure	Description
Measure A: DCAS Scores	Based upon DCAS instructional scale scores for reading and/or mathematics in grades three (3) through ten (10).
Measure B: Content Assessments	Measure B is comprised of two types of content measures: 1. Internal assessments that are educator-developed and DDOE-approved specific to subjects and grade levels 2. External measures that are DDOE-approved and can be used at the discretion of each district.
Measure C: Growth Goals	Growth goals are educator-developed and DDOE-approved goals specific to content areas and job assignments.

Linking Groups to Measures

Once an educator has been placed in a group and has reviewed the available measures, the educator and administrator then identify which measures will be used in the DPAS II Component V portion of the evaluation. The educators’ “Groups” identify the measures that are available to them. For example, Grade 1 and grade 5 have different requirements related to measures to be collected to support student growth and are therefore in different Groups.

Educators in grade 5 are considered Group 1 educators. They are required to utilize their students’ DCAS scores as well as at least one DPAS II Measure B. In a 2011 research and policy brief by National Comprehensive Center for Teaching “the other 69%” are addressed (Goe & Holdheide, 2011). The other 69% represents those

educators who are not able to gauge student performance with standardized achievement tests. This other 69% is a large percentage of Delaware’s educators. This group is partially represented by the first grade educators in this review. Educators in grade 1 are considered Group 2 educators and are expected to utilize a minimum of four measures with at least one being a DPAS II Measure B and one a DPAS II Measure C.

Table F2 provides further information in relation to Group 1 and 2 educators’ required measures as well as the weight they bear when calculating the educators’ final rating. Group 3 is not represented on this chart. This paper focuses on Group 1 and 2 educators only. More specifically, it will focus solely on a sample of educators from grades 1 and 5 and their process for selecting measures, quality of goals written, and data selected to monitor those goals.

Table F2 DPAS II Component V Measures and Weighting by Group - DDOE’s Guide for Educators

Group	Measures Required	Weight
Group 1 Educators	MUST use a minimum of two (2) measures MUST use Measure A for all students assessed by DCAS in reading and/or math for grades three (3) through ten (10) MUST use at least one (1) Measure B	DPAS II Measure A and Measure B weighted 50% each
Group 2 Educators	MUST use a minimum of four (4) measures MUST use at least one (1) Measure B and one (1) Measure C	DPAS II Measure B and Measure C weighted 50% each

Component V Expectations

At the beginning of the school year, educators set goals in collaboration with their evaluator, which is usually their building administrator. Measurements are chosen according to the identified group of the educator. In the case of a Group 1 educator, the DCAS is a required measurement and then a minimum of one internal or external DPAS II Measure is chosen. For Group 2 educators, more flexibility and variability exist as they choose at least one internal or external DPAS II Measure B and then work to create measures specific to their students and teaching to meet the requirements of at least one DPAS II Measure C. The actual goals related to the measures also vary. Growth targets for DPAS II Measure A are provided and computed by the DE DoE. The state requires that 50-64% of an educator's students must reach their growth goal in order for the educator to be rated "Satisfactory." DPAS II Measure B and Measure C targets are set by the evaluator and educator. In the case of the schools being reviewed, "Satisfactory" performance was set at 70% to 84% students meeting the goal.

Data Sources

As mentioned previously, this paper focuses on two elementary grade levels, one and five. These two grades were chosen to reflect educators in Group 1 (Grade 5) and Group 2 (Grade 1). Educator Goal Forms were collected and growth goals and measures were recorded. Data was collected from three elementary schools across the district. All three schools have been recognized with the National Blue Ribbon. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and non-public elementary,

middle, and high schools where students achieve at very high levels and/or where the achievement gap is narrowing. In order to receive this recognition, the schools had to be nominated by the state and then demonstrate five consecutive years of data indicating growth in student achievement. Demographics are similar across the three schools to include race, gender, and poverty levels. Data represents one primary grade level, grade 1, and one intermediate, grade 5. Two educators in each school, in each grade, were randomly selected for a total of six first grade and six fifth grade samples.

Generating Goals

Throughout the DPAS II training, educators were taught to utilize the S.M.A.R.T. framework for writing goals. If a goal is written utilizing the S.M.A.R.T. framework it should be able to answer the following questions: Is the goal **Specific**? Is the goal **Measurable**? Is the goal **Attainable**? Is the goal **Relevant**? Is the goal **Time-bound**? Measure/Target forms provided by the DE DoE require educators to enter a goal statement to identify the areas they will focus on, measure, class receiving the measure, baseline date, baseline data, and a target date in separate fields from one another. See Attachment F.2 for an example of a Group 1 Component V Form. The next two sections will share observations related to the collected goal forms in grades one and five.

Grade 1 Data Collection

As indicated in Table 2 above, educators in grade one are Group 2 educators and are therefore required to have four growth goals. These goals must include both

internal and external measures. (See Attachment F.1 for a review of DPAS II Measure B External measures.)

All six, grade one, educators were required to choose a minimum of one DPAS II Measure B and one DPAS II Measure C. All of the forms reviewed were composed of three DPAS II Measure B's and one DPAS II Measure C. Of the DPAS II Measure B's chosen, each chose two internal assessments to include either ELA/math pre- and post-tests or text-based writing. All goal forms included one external assessment, the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next. Upon later interviews with the building principals, one noted that though the educators are not fond of the pre- and post-tests and text-based writing prompt created by the state, very few external assessments were chosen due to the fact that most of the approved assessments listed were not currently utilized within the district.

A total of 18 goals were reviewed out of 24 possible from the collected grade one goal sheets. This number is less than the 24 possible as one school did not record specific goals for the DPAS II Measure B Content Assessments that were chosen. This omission is not acceptable and will have to be corrected in future years. Due to the nature of the internal content measures created by the state, there is no autonomy for the educators to do anything more than set a percentage of students reaching proficiency. Therefore, their goals were very simple. On all goal forms reviewed, the internal measures' goals were to have 70% of their students meeting proficiency to be deemed "Satisfactory." When it came to the external measure, educators varied slightly in changing the percentage to 80% instead of 70% meeting Benchmark. This

change indicates educators' willingness to achieve a higher rate of success in order to be considered "Satisfactory."

DPAS II Measure C Growth Goals varied by school and were all linked to early literacy skills. For example, "80% of the target group will show improvement in recognizing and applying grade level phonic and word analysis skills and decoding words within the last six weeks of the school year." The DPAS II Measure C goals included data collection using the Words Their Way Inventory, Fry Sight Word List and the end of unit holistic test that accompanied the Harcourt textbook series used in grade 1. In each school, the two first grade educators reviewed, had identical Component V forms indicating team development of goals and measures.

Grade 5 Data Collection

Grade 5 data collection was more straightforward than the non-tested grades. Grade 5, Group 1, educators are only required to have two measures. The state assessment scale scores in either math or ELA are required and computed at the state level and also at least one DPAS II Measure B. Out of the six DPAS II Measure B goals reviewed, educators chose to focus on either math or ELA and utilized the external assessments DIBELS Next or the state created internal math assessment. In one school the two educators focused on the composite score for the DIBELS which incorporates subtests for fluency and comprehension. "85% of the class will meet Benchmark on the DIBELS Next Composite Score." Two teachers chose to use just the comprehension subtest, the DAZE. "Based on DIBELS Next Adjusted DAZE performance, 70% of the student population not meeting Benchmark will increase by

50% or more from September 2012 - May 2013 performance.” The DAZE not only measures fluency, but also comprehension by utilizing maze items in a 3 min. timing. Daze items require students to understand what they are reading in order to fill in missing words correctly, therefore helping to gauge comprehension. Educators continue to use DIBELS as part of their goal setting because it is currently one of the only standardized tests they have available to them. Using the DAZE only is an attempt to move more towards comprehension and less towards a fluency measure for intermediate grades. Group 1 educators have even less autonomy in goal writing than Group 2 as they are not able to create a DPAS II Measure C Growth Goal of their own. This leaves them little choice other than to use internal or external measures that may not directly link to specific areas of growth they would like to see in their individual classrooms.

In grades one and five, educators in each building had identical Component V Forms indicating grade level teams were working collaboratively toward common goals. Though the internal and external DPAS II Measure B goals allow for educators to change percentages and possible means of identifying success (i.e., close achievement gap, increase by 50% from fall) they leave little room for specific focus on strategies and skills required at specific grade levels. Out of 36 total measures across the 12 classrooms reviewed, there were only six goals that were developed specific to the needs and curriculum demands in each of the classrooms. These goals were the DPAS Measure C Growth Goals developed by the first grade educators.

In an effort to evaluate the quality of these goals, the evaluator reviewed them with a matrix that simply identified whether they met each of the criteria linked to writing S.M.A.R.T. goals. In reviewing the six goals, it was evident that the educators were attempting to create goals aligned with curriculum standards that play a role in increasing students' ability to read and comprehend text. Each goal mentions components such as "recognizing and applying grade level phonics" and "will show improvement in fluency." Two of the six goals written were relevant and time bound and in a sense attainable as the basic underpinnings of the goal were expectations for a first grade student. However, the goals were not specific and therefore difficult to measure. For example, one goal addressed reading non-fiction text. The goal was to show improvement in identifying key components, structures or features. The three areas of focus were not clear and therefore difficult to measure accurately from the beginning of year to the end. The other four goals utilized checklists/inventories calibrated for first grade reading expectations and were therefore more specific as well as measurable in comparison to peers in their class as well as across classrooms in the building. Overall, the goals were well thought out, linked to their instruction, and allowed for progress monitoring across the school year.

Interview with Principals

Before RTTT and DPAS II, schools in CR completed documents called School Improvement Plans (SIP). The SIP was developed with a variety of stakeholders to include educators, administrators, parents, specialists, and community partners. This plan stemmed from data from the previous year and focused primarily on student

achievement, school climate and parent involvement. Each school had distinctly different goals according to their identified needs and had informal goal meetings with school staff at the beginning of each school year. These goals were developed between the educator and administrator to support the building's School Success Plan. Therefore, educators developed distinctly different goals that included work towards the school's goals as well as professional growth and development goals. These goals were kept throughout the year and discussed during evaluation post conferences and reviewed in June as a wrap up to the year.

With the introduction of RTTT, DPAS II goal setting became much more regimented and prescribed. After reviewing the DPAS II goals forms from the 12 representative educators, the reviewer met with each of the building principals to discuss the process and impact of Component V. The principals were asked a series of five questions (see Attachment F.3). As the principals provided answers to the questions, their responses were recorded under each question. After all three principals were interviewed, their answers were reviewed and commonalities were recorded. Interestingly enough, there was little to no diversity in their answers.

In each of the three interviews, principals shared that all educators in the building review data in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at the beginning of the year in order to develop their DPAS II goals. When reviewing the collected goals, it was noted that teams of teachers create shared goals to focus on throughout the year. With that being said, each principal indicated that though they regularly discuss student achievement at each of their faculty meetings, in-service

days, post observation conferences, etc. They also indicated that individual educator goals are not necessarily formally reviewed until the end of the year when they are turned in for their summative rating. Though it is not an expectation of DPAS II guidelines to officially review personal growth goals with educators before their summative, it is surprising that it is not a common practice. However, principals reported that Component V has had little or no impact on student achievement in their building. They asserted that the process educators and administrators must go through to develop their DPAS II goals is prescriptive and viewed as a mandate rather than a tool and, as a result, it is just another hoop educators have to jump through in the evaluation process. With Component V, educators must choose within a group of internal and external measure and in the case of educators in tested grades, they must use the state assessment. As noted above, only 6 of the 36 goals were clearly written to directly match with classroom instruction and able to be progress monitored throughout the year.

Components I-III of DPAS II evaluate Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Instruction. The principals reinforced that the number one predictor for student success is educator effectiveness in the classroom. They questioned why DPAS II Component V weighs heavier than the first three components. They also felt the design and expectations of the goals set by the state are prohibitive. The current design makes it possible for an educator to not obtain a satisfactory rating in Components I-III and then be rated “Exceeds” in relation to their goals by simply having 65% or more of their students meet their growth targets. The state allows for a

minimum of 50% of students meeting their growth target to be rated “Satisfactory.” It also can penalize an educator who does well in Components I-III but does not have enough of her students show growth even though they received a 4 on the DCAS which is considered “Advanced.” In other words, principals communicated that DPAS II Component V takes away from the importance of the other four components and has low expectations for student growth on the part of the educator evaluation.

Yet another disadvantage from the principals’ perspective is that the educators track their own growth data. They felt it is simply impossible for building principals to go through each piece of data for each child and each educator. For grade 1 alone that would equate to looking at four separate data points for each of the 100 students. In a school housing grades 1-5 that would require a principal to review over 2,000 data points before meeting with educators.

Overall, the principals communicated that they support educator accountability for student growth but are frustrated with the process and lack of assessments that they felt truly measure student progress. They did not feel Component V helped to improve instruction and that the other components played a far larger role in that happening. They all support goal setting, but would prefer less prescription and more opportunity for the educator and administrator to create original goals.

Recommendations for Future Practice

As supported by past practice, the educators and principals in the district included goal setting as a way of monitoring both student growth and educator effectiveness before the mandated DPAS II Component V. After interviewing the three elementary

school principals, it was clear that the current process is viewed more as a hindrance than a support and not given the time or emphasis it should be. In order to address these concerns and allow the educators and administrators to value and use the mandated structure as part of their improvement process, the following action items are recommended:

1. Add to the Selection of Internal Measures in DPAS II Measure B

Currently the state has created Internal Measures (assessments) for each grade in each core content area (math, science, social studies, and reading).

Educators and administrators do not feel as if many of these assessments are linked directly to the content and skills they are teaching in their classrooms and therefore feel they are just another assessment to give the students at the beginning and end of the year. This past year the state put out information to districts where each district may submit Internal Measures for DPAS II Measure B that have been created or are currently in use for approval by the DE DoE. The district and individual school buildings should allocate time to identify several assessments that are currently part of the curriculum to submit for approval. This will add more relevance and options for the educators in choosing assessments.

2. Increase the Number of External Measures the District has Available for DPAS II Measure B

Though there are 33 current External Measures approved by the state, few assessments are currently used in the district. In an effort to align district and

state-approved external measures, the district should review the current list of External Measures and investigate the use of other possibilities listed. Out of the list of 33 the following would be recommended for further investigation: Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation and STAR Reading. Both of these assessments can be administered whole group and provide student growth models with instructional guidance.

3. Provide Additional Assessments as Well as Professional Development on the Use of the New Assessments for Intermediate Grades

The current use of DIBELS Next at the intermediate level is not serving the purpose of measuring students' growth in those grade levels yet it continues to be used as it is the only measure currently available. This measure was not designed to use alone as a measure of students' or educators' success. When used as intended, for identifying indicators of the five key early literacy skills, it provides valuable information needed for intervention (Kaminski & Cummings, 2007). It is recommended that a different comprehension assessment be substituted and that DIBELS continue to be used for diagnostic purposes for those students identified at risk through the comprehension assessment.

4. The District Should Maintain a Consistent Emphasis on Collecting and Analyzing Data

In order to maintain the importance of collecting and utilizing the data linked to DPAS II goals, the district must communicate the expectations related to

goal setting and collection of data. The district should reinforce the expectation that schools discuss building wide goals as well as DPAS II Component V goals on a quarterly basis.

5. Provide On-going Training on Utilizing Data

Though overall the SMART goals looked to be written effectively, the district in coordination with principals, building specialists, and school psychologists should provide training on how to utilize data obtained from diagnostic assessments linked to individual goals. This was done for the DIBELS in the past and needs to be revisited. This will help educators view these assessments as a tool to enhance instruction rather than just another test to administer. A variety of tests available in the district will be shared with the educators to let them know what tests are available for individual student assessment as well as whole group.

6. Think Positive, Not Negative

Though it seems as if DPAS II Component V has added to an already full plate, the district needs to take advantage of the opportunity to set goals and then hold educators responsible for them in reference to student growth. It is unlikely that elements of the current system will be changed to meet the district's expectations, so the district must work within the confines of the document to make it "worth the squeeze."

Overall, the recommendations focus on finding additional assessments that will provide targeted information for educators to write goals that are specific, measurable,

attainable, relevant, and time bound. These assessments should be linked directly to instructional recommendations and appropriate for use at the grade levels administered. More focused goals linked to building wide goals will lead to increased ownership of the goals as well as purposeful time being used to create and evaluate progress. It is important that completing the DPAS II Component V process not lead educators and administrators to feel as if they are just “jumping through hoops” when asked to monitor student growth. By addressing the recommendations above, the district will move closer to effectively using a mandated process to support student achievement and educators’ professional growth.

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Attachment F.1 - DPAS II Component V External Measures Page 1 – DE DoE

#	Measure Name	Overall Rating	Comments
1	Adaptive Behavior Assessment System®, 2 nd Ed. (ABAS®-11)	38.0/45.0	Adaptive behavior measure for all students.
2	Ages and Stages Questionnaires®, 3 rd Ed. (ASQ®-3)	39.5/48.0	Non-cognitive measure focused on five skill areas.
3	AIMS web®: Curriculum-Based Measures of Reading (R-CBM) and CBM Reading Maze	41.5/47.0	Cognitive measure (Grades 1-8) used to identify and monitor at-risk students in reading.
4	Battelle Developmental Inventory®, 2 nd Ed. (BDI®-2)	38.0/45.0	Developmental screening measure for young children (birth to age 7); applicable for School Specialists; Special Education.
5	BRIGANCE®: Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development-II	35.5/43.0	Cognitive measure (Grades 6 through adult) used to determine appropriate career or training programs.
6	DCAS		Measures reading and mathematics (grades 3-10); state comprehensive assessment system
7	DCAS Alt-1		Measures reading and mathematics (grades 3-10); state alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards – for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
8	Developmental Assessment for the Severely Handicapped®, 2 nd Ed. (DASH®-2)	15.0/43.0	DASH is a criterion-referenced system that provides a means of measuring, programming and tracking skills across five developmental areas: Language, Sensory-Motor, Social-Emotional, Activities of Daily Living, & Pre-academic.
9	Devereux Early Childhood	31.0/45.0	Assessment is intended to assess pre-school children's protective factors and behavior concerns.
10	Diagnostic Assessment of Reading® (DAR®)	30.0/47.0	Individually administered test of reading skills.
11	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills® (DIBELS®)	31.0/47	Cognitive measure (Grades K-6) evaluating underlying reading skills.
12	DIBELS (Next)	36.0/47.0	Measuring student growth and development of early literacy skills in grades pre-k through 6.
13	Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment® (ERDA)	32.5/43	Cognitive measure (Grades K-3) of early reading skills.
14	EOC – Algebra II		End of course math assessment.
15	EOS – Integrated Math III		End of course math assessment.
16	Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests® (GMRT®)	41.5/46	Cognitive measure (Grades K-12) of general reading achievement.
17	Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation® (GRADE®)	40.0/46	Cognitive measure (Grades PreK-12) of pre-reading and reading skills.

DPAS II Component V External Measures Page 2 – DE DoE

#	Measure Name	Overall Rating	Comments
18	Iowa Test of Basic Skills® (ITBS®)	43.0/46	Cognitive measure (Grades K-8) reading, language arts, math, social studies, science, and sources of information.
19	Measure of Academic Progress® (MAP®)	42.0/47	Cognitive, adaptive measure (Grades K-12) of reading, language usage, mathematics, and science.
20	Oral and Written Language Scales® (OWLS®)	29.0/43.0	Measures language knowledge and processing skills in children and young adults (ages 3-21).
21	Otis-Lennon School Ability Test®, 8 th Ed. (OLSAT® 8)	33.5/44.0	Measure of a student's ability to handle school learning tasks; also used in measuring talents.
22	Preschool Language Scale®, 4 th Ed. (PLS®-4)	36.0/43.0	Measures auditory comprehension and expressive communication for young children (ages 0-7) to identify children with potential language disorders or delays.
23	Preschool Language Scale®, 5 th Ed. (PLS®-5)		Measures auditory comprehension and expressive communication for young children (ages 0-7) to identify children with potential language disorders or delays.
24	Scantron® Lexile® Performance Series™ Diagnostic Solutions	39.5/47	Cognitive, adaptive measure (Grades 2-10) of reading comprehension and vocabulary.
25	Scholastic Reading Inventory® (SRI®) and Scholastic Math Inventory® (SMI®)	39.5/47	Cognitive, adaptive measure (Grades K-12) of reading and cognitive, adaptive measure (Grades 2-8) of mathematics.
26	STAR® Early Literacy	40.5/47	Cognitive, adaptive measure (Pre K-3) of early literacy skills of beginning readers.
27	STAR® Math	43.5/47.0	Provides information about student growth and achievement in grades 1-12.
28	STAR® Reading	40.5/47	Cognitive, adaptive measure (Grades 1-12) of reading comprehension.
29	Test of Adult Basic Education® (TABE®)	40.5/46.0	Cognitive measure (Grades 6 thru adult) used to determine appropriate career or training programs.
30	Test of Early Mathematics Ability®, 3 rd Ed. (TEMA®-3)	35.0/47	Cognitive measure of early (ages 0-3) mathematical ability.
31	Test of Preschool Early Literacy® (TOPEL®)	29.0/43	Measure used to identify children (ages 3-5) at risk of having developmental problems in literacy.
32	TerraNova®, 3 rd Ed.	43.5/47.0	Assesses student achievement in reading, lang.arts, math, science, social studies, vocabulary, spelling, & other areas.
33	Tool for Real-time Assessment of Information Literacy Skills® (TRAILS®)	28.5/45.0	Measure (Grades 3-12) used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the information seeking skills of students.

**DELAWARE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM II
COMPONENT FIVE FORM**

Educator: _____ Evaluator: _____

School: _____ Grade(s): _____ Subject Area(s): _____

<p>Part I: Roster Identification (recommended date: by October 31st) Class list(s) that will be used for each measure attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>(For measure A this will be a list of all of the students you teach in a DCAS subject.)</i></p>			
<p><i>I hereby verify that the attached class list represents exactly all of my students in accordance with the state's Educator of Record Policy.</i></p>		<p><i>I hereby verify that the attached class list represents exactly all of the students scheduled for the educator noted above in accordance with the state's Educator of Record Policy.</i></p>	
Educator Signature	Date	Evaluator Signature	Date
<p>Part II: Measure Selection (recommended date: by October 31st) MUST be completed and approved by administrator prior to using any Measure. MUST use Measure A <u>and</u> at least one (1) Measure B.</p> <p>Measure A: DCAS Measure B: _____ Class(s) Tested: _____ Measure Selection completed: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>			
<p><i>I hereby agree to use the above measure(s) as part of Component V of my DPAS II evaluation.</i></p>		<p><i>I hereby agree to the use of the above measure(s) as part of Component V for the aforementioned educator's DPAS II evaluation.</i></p>	
Educator Signature	Date	Evaluator Signature	Date
<p><u>PART III: (FALL Conference) – Set targets based on selected administrator approved measures.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1 educators will set targets for Measure B assessments on the Component Five Form. • Measure A targets will be calculated and provided by the Department of Education. 			

FOR GROUP 1 Educators
Data and Evidence Collection Procedures Chart
Target Selection/Results

Measure: <input type="checkbox"/> B <i>What is the goal?</i>			
Data Procedures			
Measure Used:			
Class Tested:		Baseline Date:	
Evidence			
Baseline Data:			
Target date:			
Satisfactory target: <i>Minimum that needs to be met to earn "Satisfactory" rating.*</i>			
Exceeds target: <i>Minimum that needs to be met to earn "Exceeds" rating.</i>			

Measure: <input type="checkbox"/> B <i>What is the goal?</i>			
Data Procedures			
Measure Used:			
Class Tested:		Baseline Date:	
Evidence			
Baseline Data:			
Target date:			
Satisfactory target: <i>Minimum that needs to be met to earn "Satisfactory" rating.*</i>			
Exceeds target: <i>Minimum that needs to be met to earn "Exceeds" rating.</i>			

*** NOTE:** *An unsatisfactory rating will result if anything less than the satisfactory target is achieved.*

The listed targets for Satisfactory and Exceeds have been agreed upon by the educator and evaluator.

Educator Signature	Date	Evaluator Signature	Date

- ❖ **Group 1:** At least 1 Measure B required
- ❖ **Group 2:** At least 1 Measure B and 1 Measure C required (4 total)
- ❖ **Group 3:** 4 Measure C required (4 total)

PART IV: Spring Conference Preparation

Roster Verification:			
The roster for Measure A has been verified electronically: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Class list that was used for Measure B is attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
<i>I hereby verify that the attached class list represents exactly all of my students in accordance with the state’s Educator of Record Policy.</i>		<i>I hereby verify that the attached class list represents exactly all of the students scheduled for the educator noted above in accordance with the state’s Educator of Record Policy.</i>	
Educator Signature	Date	Evaluator Signature	Date

Measure A calculations are based on DCAS scores and student growth targets

Exceeds	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory (with administrator discretion)	Unsatisfactory
65% or more of an educator’s DCAS student growth targets are met.	50%-64% of an educator’s DCAS student growth targets are met.	35%-49% of an educator’s DCAS student growth targets are met (conference between administrator and educator could provide option to upgrade to a “Satisfactory” rating.	Less than 35% of an educator’s DCAS student growth targets are met.
Measure A Rating: <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory			

Measure B calculations are based on the targets set during the fall conference.

Exceeds	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
The agreed upon “exceeds” target is met or surpassed.	The agreed upon “satisfactory” target is met or surpassed, but the “exceeds” target is not met.	The agreed upon “satisfactory” target is not met.
Measure B Rating: <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory		

Measure A = 50% of Component V

Measure B = 50% of Component V

Possible Rating Combinations		Overall Component V Rating
Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
Exceeds	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Exceeds	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory – evaluator can upgrade to “Satisfactory”
Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Overall Component V Rating:		<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory
Educator Signature	Date	Evaluator Signature Date

Attachment F.3 Principal Interview Questions

Principal Interview Questions

1. What data do educators use to identify needs and set initial goals?
2. How often do educators review their goals and update progress related to the goals?
3. What data do you rely on to set your building goals? Are you satisfied with this data?
4. How would you describe the impact Component V Goal setting has on student achievement in your building? Why do you feel this way?
5. If you were to suggest one way to enhance the goal setting process, what would that be?

Appendix G

INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS RESOURCE CHART

Teachers' Views of Data Results: In order to provide the best conditions for data driven decision making (DDDM), the district needed mechanisms in place to provide basic knowledge and frameworks for our data consumers. In order to better identify what resources were available within the district as well as how to determine which one to use, resources were inventoried and the *Instructional Needs Resource Chart* as well as its corresponding *ELA Resources* document were created. These tools provide support to drive DDDM conversations.

As of the 2008-2009 school year, Delaware public schools were required to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) for all elementary students. RTI is a data-driven, systemic approach to providing research based instructional practices matched to student needs. There are five key principles of RTI that have been identified by the Delaware Department of Education. These principles include:

1. Effective administrative leadership to include support, prioritization of resources, and active participation.
2. Evidence-based instructional practices occur across multiple tiers using a scientifically research-based core curriculum aligned to Delaware Content Standards and are available to all students, all staff, in all settings all year.
3. High-quality instruction matched to individual needs is accessible to all students across all tiers.
4. Formative assessment data is collected to document student progress and analyzed to inform instruction.
5. Data-based decision making within a team problem-solving model provides the foundation that guides instruction, interventions, and transitions between tiers. (DE DoE, 2015)

In an effort to support teachers and administrators in choosing the appropriate assessments and programs linked to student needs, the *RTI Instructional Need Resource Chart* was developed. The chart is organized first by the *Instructional Need*. As educators make decisions about reading interventions there are four areas often

identified as a focus: phonics, fluency, text comprehension, and vocabulary. The Caesar Rodney School District (CR) has facilitated extensive professional development on reading strategies and has also provided programs to support research based practices. The second column, *Resources/Materials*, helps to categorize the many programs by the areas of need they support. Most important to the intervention process is building teachers' core knowledge of strategies and best practice. This is done through professional reading and reflection. The third column of the chart identifies *Professional Books* available in each of the elementary schools across the district. Copies of these books are housed in schools' libraries, with school based reading specialists/special education teachers, and copies are also available at the district level by contacting the Supervisor of Instruction or district resource teachers. The final column lists *Additional Assessments* that are available at each of our school sites to help benchmark, progress monitor, and provide further diagnostic evaluation of student needs. This chart is ever changing as it is modified as new training and materials are piloted or purchased for use throughout the district. In an effort to provide further support and ease in use of the materials and assessments, an additional chart has been created listing the resources along with a short description and then location within the school and/or district where they may be found.

This chart was shared initially with building principals at the district's monthly principals' meeting. The charts were then provided in both hard copy and also added to the district's on-line curriculum warehouse, Curriculum Tracker. All administrators, teachers and specialists have access to the curriculum warehouse. The charts were also

shared with the district's Achievement Liaison Teachers (ALTs) and reading specialists. These two groups are composed of teacher leaders representing each of our elementary school sites. Both groups were tasked with reviewing the charts with grade level professional learning communities (PLCs) at each of their respective buildings. PLCs are composed of all grade level teachers. These charts are intended to support the five principles of the RTI process by allowing all stakeholders to have access to resources and assessments to best identify student needs and differentiate instruction through research based strategies and programs.

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ELA Resources

Resource	Location
Successful Strategies for Reading in the Content Areas (CARB) - Graphic organizers & mini-lessons for teaching comprehension strategies.	Classroom Teacher
Write Time for Kids Kits – multi- genre short passages to promote reading strategy instruction and text-based writing opportunities.	Classroom Teacher
Write Time for Kids Nonfiction Kits – expository short passages for teaching reading strategies.	ALT
Book Room Books – multiple copies of leveled books with corresponding lesson plans for strategy instruction, building background, comprehension and writing. http://resources.benchmarkeducation.com/ On line EBooks available to all teachers: www.benchmarkuniverse.com	Library Online free access to all teachers – Teacher’s Guides & more for planning lessons. Benchmark Universe: log in: first name.last name Password: password
ELL Book Room Books - multiple copies of leveled books with corresponding lesson plans for strategy instruction, vocabulary, building background, comprehension and writing linked to social studies, science, and math content areas.	Stokes – ELL teachers
Reading A-Z - website – a yearly subscription providing printable leveled books and lessons. www.readinga-z.com	Title; ALT; 1 SPED teacher per building 2013-2014 SY – All classroom teachers
Comprehension Toolkit (S. Harvey) – lessons designed to emphasize key reading strategies to enhance comprehension.	Title
Words Their Way – systematic words study approach that addresses advanced phonics word attack skills.	SPED & Title Library 1 set of supplemental WTW resource books per grade level team grades 3-5
Read Naturally – Fluency program utilizing leveled passages according to student’s instructional level.	ALT; Title; SPED
Fountas & Pinnell Phonics Kits (Gr. K-3) – Word Study	Classroom Teacher
SOAR to SUCCESS – Intermediate Comprehension Intervention Program	Classroom Teacher
Reading Success from the Start (RSS) – Primary Alphabetic Principle Intervention Program	Classroom Teacher
Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) – Fountas & Pinnell’s Early Systematic Intervention Program designed to prevent literacy difficulties.	Classroom Teacher Grades 1 and 2

Harcourt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthologies (1-5) • Books for All Learners (1-5) • Decodable Books (K-2) • Independent Readers (K) • Library (set of 5 per teacher K-5) • Big Books (K-1) 	Classroom Teacher
Harcourt Intervention Kit – additional intensive teaching and practice aligned with and correlated to instructional goals and objectives of grade level Harcourt Trophies.	Special Education & Title
Harcourt English Language Learners Kit – additional materials connected to basic instruction in the mainstream English classroom.	Special Education & ELL
Interactive Read Alouds – (K-5) - linking standards, fluency and comprehension through structured read alouds.	Librarian
Differentiated Reading Instruction (S. Walpole) – developmental model addressing word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.	Title I & ALT
System 44 – A foundational reading and phonics program designed for our most challenged, struggling readers in Grades 3–12+. (Computer adaptive program)	Title I /Special Education
Text Talk – Beck and McKeown – Scholastic (K-3) Early Intervention that engages teachers and students in robust vocabulary instruction tied closely to comprehension.	Classrooms grades 1-3 across the 5 elementary schools
My Sidewalks – Pearson An intensive reading intervention program that accelerates the reading development of struggling students. Can be used with any core classroom reading program. <i>My Sidewalks</i> accelerates reading through: emphasis on deep meaning of vocabulary and concepts.	Currently piloting in sped classrooms at Stokes and with Title I reading specialists for grade 2.
95% Group Blueprint for Intervention: Comprehension - This instructional tool provides direct, explicit, and systematic instruction on 7 comprehension processes for intervention groups for grades 3–6. This product is especially useful for students who are accurate and fluent but still not comprehending.	Title I Reading Specialist
95% Group Blue Print for Intervention: Phonics and Phonemic Awareness - Explicit, systematic, and sequential phonics/Phonemic Awareness instruction.	Title I Reading Specialist
Common Core Lesson Plan Book, Owocki – Framework for implementation of CCSS using current curriculum.	All classroom teachers
Drops in the Bucket – Differentiated daily grammar review.	All classroom teachers via Curriculum Tracker

RTI Instructional Need Resource Chart

Instructional Need	Resources/Materials	Professional Books	Additional Assessments
<p>Phonics: Helps children learn the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words Their Way Supplemental Books • Letters/Tile Trays • RSS (K) • Differentiated Instruction (Walpole) • System 44 • LLI (1-2) • Reading A-Z • Book Room / Benchmark Universe • Phonics Kits – Fountas and Pinnell • My Sidewalks Intervention Program • 95% Group Materials for Phonics and Phonemic Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words Their Way (Bear et al.) • Differentiated Reading Instruction (Walpole) • I’ve Dibel’ed Now What? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics Inventory (Walpole) • El Paso Phonics Survey • Emergent Literacy Survey (ELS) • Reading A-Z Benchmark • DIBELS – NWF/LNF • DIBELS DORF • PASI • PSI
<p>Fluency: The ability to read text accurately and quickly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Naturally • Great Leaps • Harcourt Books for All Learners • Reading A-Z • Book Room • My Sidewalks Intervention Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Bye Round Robin (Rasinski) • Differentiated Reading Instruction (Walpole) • Fluency Strategies & Assessments (Johns) • I’ve Dibel’ed Now What? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency Monitor • DIBELS DORF • IRI

<p>Text Comprehension: Comprehension is the reason for reading. It is purposeful and active. It can be developed by wide reading and teaching comprehension strategies through explicit instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soar to Success • Comprehension Toolkit • Comprehension Intervention Small Group Lessons from Toolkit • Reading A-Z • Book Room / Benchmark Universe • Interactive Read Alouds • Write Time for Kids Non Fiction Kits • Write Time for Kids • My Sidewalks Intervention Program • 95% Group – Blueprint for Comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies That Work (Harvey, Goudvais) • Successful Strategies for Reading in the Content Areas • Guided Comprehension & Guided Comprehension in Action (Fountas & Pinnell) • When Kids Can't Read (Beers) • Differentiated Reading Instruction (Walpole) • Nonfiction Matters (Harvey) • Make It Real (nonfiction – primary Hoyt) • Catching Kids Up – (Thompson) • Notice and Note (Beers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GATES (Primary) • K-2 Literacy Assessment • DAZE • DCAS • Comprehension Toolkit (Harvey) • Harcourt Intervention Kit Assessment • Harcourt Trophies Assessment Tools • Retell Protocol • IRI • Reading A-Z Benchmark
<p>Vocabulary: Refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. Oral vocabulary (words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening). Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soar to Success • Harcourt Intervention Kit • Interactive Read Alouds • Comprehension Toolkit • Reading A-Z • Book Room/Benchmark Universe • Text Talk • My Sidewalks Intervention Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words Their Way (Bear et al.) • Differentiated Reading Instruction (Walpole) • Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction (Beck, McKeown) • Catching Kids Up – Thompson • Teaching the Critical Vocabulary of the Common Core (Sprenger) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier Two Intervention Words • DAZE • Walpole Inventory
<p>The following sites are also widely used for strategy suggestions: Florida Center for Reading Research – www.fcrr.org and What Works Clearinghouse – www.whatworks.ed.gov/</p>			

Appendix H

MOVING FROM COMPLIANCE TO COMPETENCE REFLECTION ON INTERNSHIP

Training and Support: During my 2011 summer internship I worked with our district resource teachers to develop a professional development session and support materials to help guide teachers in using the Good and Kaminski's (2015) Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data. The goal of the training was to help teachers use their knowledge of the data measures within the DIBELS testing protocol to differentiate instruction within the classroom. This artifact contains products/tools that were used during the summer professional development and provided to teachers in grades K-5. It also documents the data driven decision making (DDDM) supports that were emerging during the summer before the 2011-2012 school year. Many of these initiatives have come to fruition and results are reflected in several of the other artifacts contained in my final ELP.

We live in an age of high stakes accountability. Our current system weighs a state test as the primary indicator of a school's success. The state has moved to a growth model for measuring achievement which on first glance looked enticing. The reality is what used to be two weeks of test anxiety for students, teachers, and schools has now turned into a yearlong event. The testing window opened for the fall testing two weeks before school was in session and will remain open until June. Though students and teachers are not sitting in front of a test that entire window, the test "environment" is now full time. As districts move towards implementing professional learning communities (PLCs) and continue to work with the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, assessment has become an everyday word and in some teachers' opinion, an everyday disturbance.

When looking at the instructional core, it is imperative that we address students' engagement in their own learning, provide academically challenging content, and enhance teachers' knowledge and skills. Through my summer internship and the years following, I addressed a simple theory of change; *if* we can help teachers and administrators utilize and view assessment as a tool to support instruction, *then* we will see an increase in teacher effectiveness and student achievement. (Attachment H.1)

I began this process by developing professional development for teachers that would show the relevance of the screening test, DIBELS, which we administer every fall, winter, and spring. It was my hope that by simply explaining the "why" behind the test and then the "how" it could be used to support their classroom instruction I

could begin to change the culture of “we’re just testing to get it done.” My suspicions were confirmed minutes after beginning our summer institute. We asked the group of sixty-five teachers, “What is the DIBELS?” The first answer from the crowd was, “Mandatory.” After discussing the relevance of the subtests of the DIBELS to comprehension and then demonstrating the use of the reader types chart linked to DIBELS scores, we had the audience hooked. Our exit tickets clearly demonstrated that participants now understood the relevance of the DIBELS and how they could use it to guide their instruction. As the next school year started, several of our schools utilized the charts as part of their PLC/RTI discussions. Sample tools for use with the DIBELS were modified from previous 95 Percent Group (2014) training we had attended as an instruction division the summer before. These tools can be found in Attachments H.2 and H.3. Each of these tools help guide teachers in using the DIBELS data to identify students for intervention groups according to their reader type: Fast/Right, Fast/Wrong, Slow/Right, and Slow/Wrong. Once the reader type is identified, suggestions are provided for intervention.

Teachers were just one of two primary stakeholders in the quest to changing the culture of utilizing assessments to guide instruction. As mentioned previously, the state test plays a large role in state accountability. Accountability sanctions include replacing principals when schools don’t meet targets. It is quite obvious that principals focus heavily on student achievement on the state assessment. The reading portion of the state assessment is designed to measure student comprehension, and therefore our schools feel that each and every moment should be spent on teaching and practicing

comprehension skills. As the Title I Supervisor of Instruction, I feel that it is a moral obligation that I help teachers and principals meet the standards set by the state without swinging so far towards the test that we ignore the real reason why we teach and assess: to help our children read.

In an effort to help facilitate that process, my internship also focused on creating new and enhancing old documents related to district expectations and tools to guide all stakeholders in assessment and intervention strategies/programs. The first resource that was enhanced was a matrix that indicates areas of focus such as phonics, word study, and comprehension linked to interventions and other resources, such as professional trade books, that teachers may utilize to build their professional repertoire as well as target their curriculum implementation. I have also led the district in utilizing a district wide data system, I-Tracker, to track, analyze, and utilize all of the data types we collect in order to best provide interventions and guide professional development in the areas of need in our district. Several workshops were prepared and facilitated to school staffs, individual teachers, specialists, administrators, and psychologists in an effort to enhance stakeholders' competence in utilizing the program and build a culture of utilizing data to make instructional decisions.

Structurally, it was time to update our current English Language Arts district expectations. Though this is still a work in progress, it has been updated to reflect all district approved programs, their areas of focus, and where they can be found in the building. It also has the beginnings of an RTI guide for our teachers. This is one structural component of our system that continually needs to be communicated to all

stakeholders and revised as we make further improvements. I also created a structure to our Title I monthly meetings to include regular data analysis, action research, and book/professional journal studies. The Title I reading specialists play an important part in creating the culture around utilizing data and linking it to interventions, so the more competent and comfortable we become the better off the school environments will be. Finally, a seemingly simple addition to our Title I binders was the explanation of the link between PLC's and RTI. In order to create an accepting culture, it is imperative that we continually draw links to all of the new initiatives and demonstrate relevance in why we are taking the time and effort to facilitate our meetings. Again, this is a sure way to eliminate the comment, "We're doing this because it is mandatory."

Due to the fact that most of what my internship focused on was the initial planning and facilitation of trainings and documents that would be used as the school year started, I thought I would not have as much to report out at this point as I actually do! I am very excited to see schools jumping right into the PLCs and asking for additional support utilizing I-Tracker to view their assessments. Not only are they asking technical questions, but they are asking to add on their own assessments, requesting support with the reader types charts, and even our middle schools are adding assessments onto the system and talking about differentiating assessments and instruction to match – A real bonus!

Our interventionists have been creative in scheduling to meet their students' needs. We are no longer creating generic schedules for intervention and placing all students who are struggling in one group. Though this is a big step forward, it does

take more time and one area to look at is how to condense the time needed and get groups moving more quickly. This change in scheduling demonstrates our district moving more towards a problem solving rather than a protocol system for identifying students' needs. I see these conversations also enhancing classroom instruction as teachers see themselves as interventionists too!

We are far from done. Actually, I do not think this job will ever be done. We will continue to inventory our current assessments and identify new ones in order to provide the best selection of options to use when looking at individual students. We will also finalize our district expectations to include the chart linked to skills and interventions. I am looking forward to working through the action research process with my specialists and watching as that illuminates other areas of need and success in our district. I will continue to support the use of data to guide instruction by participating in walkthroughs, PLCs, and building RTI meetings. I am definitely one who believes that I must be "in the thick of things" in order to truly evaluate the effectiveness of any initiative. Of course, none of this will be successful without continued professional development and opportunities for forums in which all stakeholders can share their ideas and expertise.

It is already evident that by addressing the needs of the stakeholders, providing new resources, and implementing specific systems, the culture of utilizing assessment will begin to move more towards comfort and competence rather than compliance. I look forward to my continued work with the buildings and research around assessment that will help our district on this journey

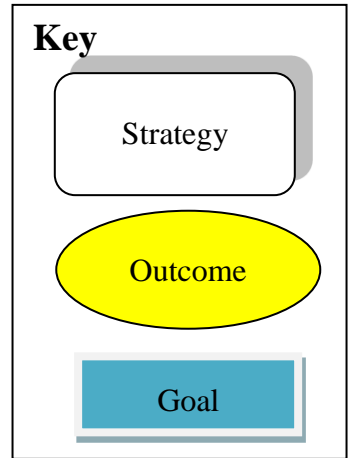
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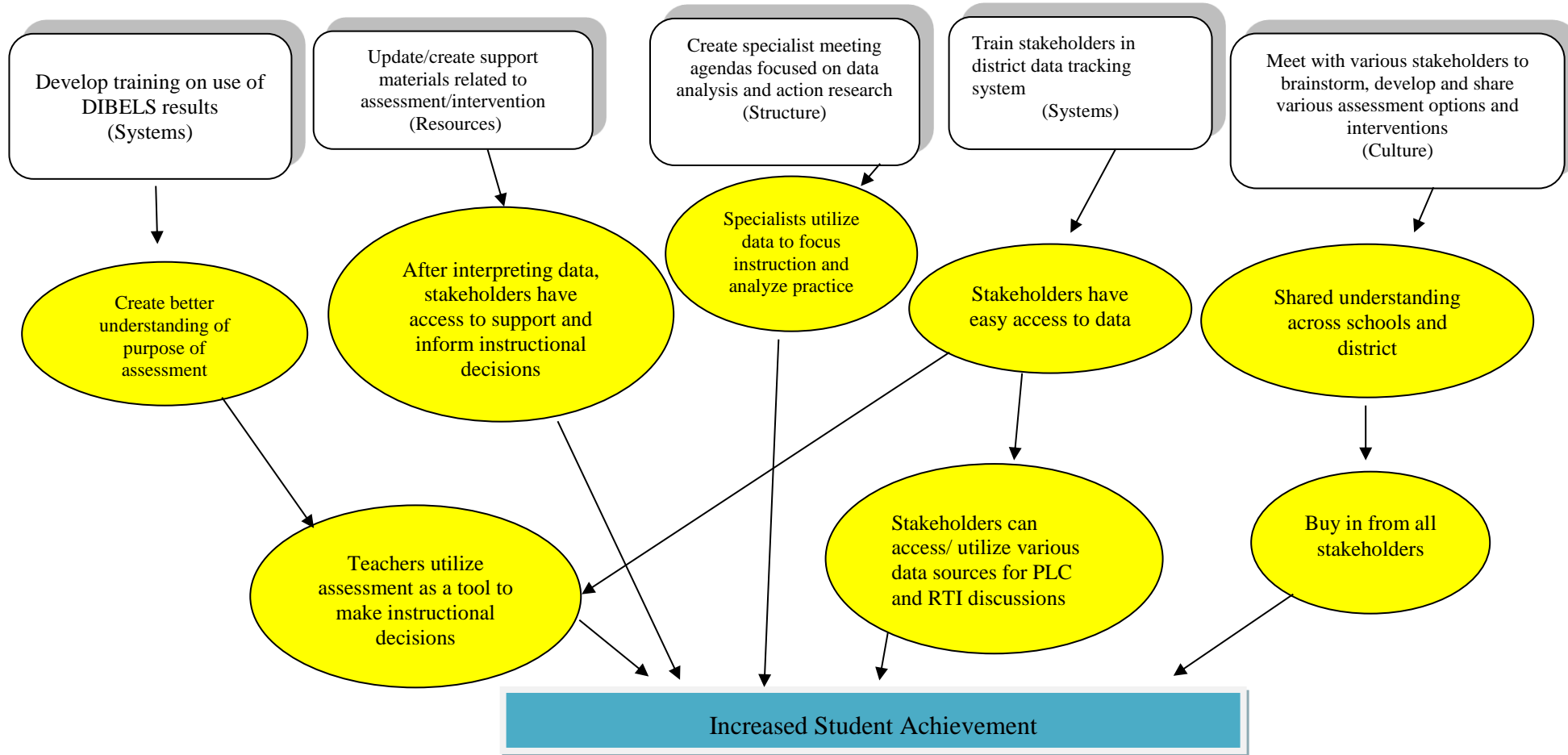
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Moving from Compliance to Competence

“If we can help teachers and administrators to utilize assessment as a tool, then we will see an increase in achievement.”



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Accuracy Vs. Fluency

★ 95% accuracy on 2 out of 3 passages ★

FAST + RIGHT Reached “Benchmark” for 2 out of 3 passages Reading on grade level Able to decode Able to comprehend	SLOW + RIGHT Sight words are good Reading on grade level Takes too long Do not like to read THEY NEED FLUENCY!
SLOW + WRONG NEED FLUENCY + ACCURACY Accuracy trumps fluency	FAST + WRONG Reads just enough words Cannot decode well NEED DECODING

Attachment H.3 – Sample Student Grouping Form (95 Percent Group)

Type of Reader	Fast and Right	Slow and Right	Fast and Wrong	Slow and Wrong
	WPM above <u>52</u> wpm and Accuracy 95% or above	WPM below <u>52</u> wpm and Accuracy 95% or above	WPM above <u>52</u> wpm and Accuracy below 95%	WPM below <u>52</u> wpm and Accuracy below 95%
Next Steps	DIBELS Composite score DCAS	DIBELS Composite score DCAS	Phonics Screener for Intervention	Phonics Screener for Intervention
Lesson Format/ Focus	Comprehension and Vocabulary	Fluency and Comprehension	Word Study and Comprehension	Word Study and Comprehension
	Small Group	Small Group OR Center	Small Group	Small Group
Progress Monitor	Curriculum Based Materials	DIBELS ORF On & Above Level Fluency Passages	DIBELS ORF and Phonics Inventory	DIBELS ORF and Phonics Inventory

Appendix I

ACHIEVEMENT LIAISON TEACHERS SUSTAINING A TEACHER LEADERSHIP MODEL THAT WORKS

Training and Support. This artifact chronicles the work and shares the impact and necessity of continuing the Achievement Liaison Teacher (ALT) position in the Caesar Rodney School District (CR). This position was created to support student achievement, teacher quality, and parent involvement. The evolution of the ALTs is shared by tracing their growth in responsibilities and focus on data to maintain and/or increase student achievement across all schools in the district. Information has been shared not only with district leadership, but also with state leadership as developing teacher leader positions was one of the state's original Race to the Top (RTTT) goals.

In 2009, CR received Title I and IDEA monies from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Grant (ARRA). At that time, three of our four schools at the secondary level earned ratings below Commendable. Conversely, our elementary schools all earned “Superior” state ratings for meeting Annual Yearly Progress. However, increasing expectations and demands placed on students and teachers at all levels from the state meant that if we did not make any changes in our existing instructional programs, we would likely see all of our schools’ ratings decrease.

CR has always prioritized the use of funds to support “people” rather than “programs.” We investigated numerous options to meet the needs of our elementary and secondary schools, and eventually settled on the creation of teacher leaders or what we call ALTs. This decision was made by all stake-holders. ALTs would provide additional support and focus on student achievement, teacher quality and parent involvement in an effort to increase the secondary schools’ performance as well as maintain the elementary schools’ success.

Reductions in funding allocations from both state and federal sources have placed these positions in jeopardy of being dissolved. This would be a step backwards for our district as this position has had a positive impact and should in fact, become a model for statewide implementation. Multiple factors have contributed to the success of our students, teachers and the district as a whole; this makes it difficult to tease out the contributions of the ALT position to the district’s success. Nevertheless, our district believes that the ALT position plays a crucial role and that our future success

would be compromised without this resource. This paper will describe the evolution of the ALTs job description; discuss ways in which they have supported our students, teachers and parents; and provide suggestions for continued funding of the program for our district and those districts that may choose to replicate the position.

Developing Teacher Leaders

In searching for options, we discovered The Aspen Institute’s 2013 report, “Finding A New Way: Leveraging Teacher Leadership to Meet Unprecedented Demands.” This report indicated several reasons why districts would create teacher leadership roles to include but not limited to the following:

- further develop top talent,
- help other teachers improve,
- improve implementing key priorities, like the Common Core State Standards (CCSS),
- build a pipeline to the principalship,
- distribute leadership in schools,
- increase highly effective teachers’ impact on student learning, and
- make principals’ span of supervision manageable.

These reasons closely matched the conditions we were facing in CR.

Further support for teacher leadership was found in a listing of potential teacher leadership roles and how teacher leaders could help improve schools (Harrison

& Killion, 2007). These roles included resource provider (sharing resources), instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter (demonstrating, co-teaching, observing in classrooms), learning facilitator (facilitating professional development), mentor, school leader (serving on committees), data coach, catalyst for change (visionary), and learner (model continuous learning). CR's ALT position was modeled after this list of possible teacher leadership roles.

The ALT Program began with three broad goals. Strategies specific to each school building were developed to address these three goals and a plan was outlined. These plans were developed by School Leadership Teams that included ALTs. The implementation plan included specific deliverables based on data. The three broad goals are listed below.

- **Goal 1 – Teacher Quality**

The ALT will provide sustained research-based professional development for teachers. Professional Development topics will include the use of data analysis to improve instruction and the use of specific instructional strategies to enhance the learning environment.

- **Goal 2 – Student Achievement**

The ALT will provide extended learning opportunities through “after school” tutoring and “during school” intervention for at-risk students in the areas of English/Language Arts and math. (After the ARRA monies dissolved intervention occurred during school hours only.)

- **Goal 3 – Parent Involvement**

The ALT will support parental involvement with students' academic success through parent support programs. The programs will teach parents how to monitor student progress, help parents understand the school's curricula and/or assessments, provide information about the essential components of reading and math instruction to enable parents to support the instructional practices used by the teacher, and train parents to use the Internet to access their children's grades and homework and communicate with teachers.

Each school creates yearly goals to meet its specific needs. The ALTs meet monthly with the Supervisor of Instruction to allow for collaboration among schools across the district, delivery of professional development related to the three primary goals of their position, and district data review and goal setting.

Support for the ALT Position through Teacher Leadership Standards

In 2008 a group of educators from across the nation met to discuss teacher leadership in our schools. Representatives came from large groups and universities such as the American Federation of Teachers and Harvard University as well as large and small school districts and state departments of education. Together they created model standards for teacher leadership. These standards further illustrate the importance of teacher leaders to the education system and provide a foundation for creating a vision and means of assessing the effectiveness of teacher leaders in our schools (TLEC, 2012). The Teacher Leader Standards were organized into seven

domains. We took each of the domains and linked specific responsibilities to our ALT position.

Domain 1: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning

The key to this domain is the ability for teacher leaders to understand adult learners and be able to work with them collaboratively and effectively to support improvement in instruction and student achievement.

ALTs Responsibilities Linked to Domain 1:

- facilitates Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at the various schools and grade levels,
- presents at building and district meetings/professional development,
- serves as mentors to new and experienced teachers,
- works with state data coaches to enhance current skills in facilitation, collaborative discussions and decision making, and
- works with colleagues as a peer rather than an evaluator/administrator

Domain 2: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning

This domain emphasizes the importance of a grounding of all practices around research and the understanding a teacher leader must have in utilizing data when making decisions.

ALTs Responsibilities Linked to Domain 2:

- accesses whole school data as well as individual teacher data in an effort to create individualized student and teacher plans according to results,
- participates in book groups and is provided research briefs/professional journal articles for discussion at each monthly district ALT meeting; these resources are then available to be brought back to schools to share with administration as well as teachers in PLCs,
- facilitates discussions during Response to Intervention (RTI) and PLC meetings around data analysis and its impact on teaching and learning, and
- utilizes district and state data systems when working with colleagues to enhance their skills in mining and analyzing data.

Domains 3 and 4: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Learning and Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

It is imperative for teacher leaders to stay on top of or ahead of best practices in the areas of teaching and learning in order to provide solid professional development and support for their colleagues. They must not only be able to facilitate the professional development and support, but they must also be able to work with their colleagues to ensure the practices are monitored and remain support the school's vision, mission and goals.

ALT Responsibilities Linked to Domains 3 and 4:

- serve on School Improvement Plan team to develop shared vision, mission and goals,
- helps develop school wide, yearlong professional development plans,

- facilitates whole group and individual professional development,
- attends a variety of local and national professional development/conferences to stay abreast of best practices, and
- meets regularly with ALTs across district to share successful strategies and utilize one another for personal development as well as professional development shared across schools.

Domain 5: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement

Teacher leaders must be knowledgeable and be able to share knowledge linked to the design, selection and use of formative and summative assessment methods in order to best evaluate and improve student learning as well as determine the effectiveness of interventions in place.

ALT Responsibilities Linked to Domain 5:

- trains teachers in standards based grading and reporting practices,
- participates in the development of school based and districtwide assessment writing, and
- develops assessment plans and monitor results according to school and district goals.

Domain 6: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

Teacher leaders understand the importance of engaging all stakeholders in the school community in an effort to increase student achievement and provide opportunities for this to happen on a regular basis.

ALT Responsibilities Linked to Domain 6:

- serves on committees at the school level with parents and community members,
- develops and monitor programs to enhance parent engagement,
- manages parent involvement funds to purchase items to support opportunities within their buildings,
- makes contacts with outside community stakeholders to form partnerships to enhance student achievement, and
- applies for grants and awards to better support and advertise the success of their schools in which they work.

Domain 7: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

The teacher leader not only understands educational policy at all levels, but also understands who the key leaders are in making these decisions and is able to communicate the impact they have on the profession to their peers. They use this knowledge and understanding not only to share information, but to also advocate for what is best for children and schools at a local, state and national level.

ALT Responsibilities Linked to Domain 7:

- discusses educational policy at monthly district ALT meetings,
- serves on local, state and national committees addressing policy matters,

- meets with local and state policy makers when needed, and
- serves as advocates at the building, district and state level for resources needed at their individual schools.

Overall, the ALTs' responsibilities are linked directly to the seven domains indicated by the Teacher Leader Standards and in reality span far past those standards as they also work directly with students in small groups to help enhance student achievement. A copy of the ALTs' job description can be viewed in Attachment I.1.

How Has the ALT Position Had an Impact on the District?

When it comes to looking at teachers, students, and schools within a district, it is difficult to tease out any single factor that contributes to the success of a district as a whole. There are many variables that come into play. The following section will document the growth and success stories accomplished by the district after the inception of the ALTs in our district. It is the district's contention that the ALT position has played a part in supporting this success. Accomplishments will be documented according to each of the three primary goals of the position: student achievement, teacher quality, and parent involvement/engagement.

Student Achievement. As mentioned earlier, going into the first years of the ARRA grant with the new ALT positions, CR had successful elementary schools with all maintaining a "Superior" status under the school accountability rating system. Over the past five years, federal, state, and local education groups have seen an enormous change in expectations. In August of 2010 the State Board adopted the CCSS. This

adoption meant a complete overhaul of our current standards, expectations, and curriculum. In the same year, Delaware moved from the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) to the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). State testing switched from a paper-and-pencil one time a year test to a computer adaptive growth model where students were tested during three different administrations each year (fall/winter/spring). Through the adoption of new standards as well as the implementation of a new state accountability testing tool, every elementary Title I school with an ALT continued to achieve a “Superior Status” under the School Accountability Rating system. The data indicates both whole school and disaggregated, that our schools have met the Annual Measurable Objectives in both reading and math approved by the federal government. The data in the Tables I1 and I2 below illustrate the 2012-2013 DCAS results for grade 5 across the state in English Language Arts and Math. The Caesar Rodney School District continues to rank in the top three out of 18 districts in both subject areas.

Table I1 DCAS Reading Grade 5 Percent Meeting the Standard 2012-2013

<u>School District</u>	<u>Number Tested</u>	<u>% Meet Standard</u>
Indian River	750	88.27
Milford	316	87.03
Caesar Rodney	589	86.08
Appoquinimink	787	86.02
Cape Henlopen	350	84.86
Brandywine	770	80.0
Lake Forest	309	79.29
Smyrna	423	79.2

Table I2 DCAS Math Grade 5 Percent Meeting the Standard 2012-2013

<u>School District</u>	<u>Number Tested</u>	<u>% Meeting Standard</u>
Indian River	750	84.8
Caesar Rodney	589	82.51
Cape Henlopen	355	81.69
Appoquinimink	783	78.67
Lake Forest	310	77.42
Milford	315	75.87
Delmar	185	75.14
Smyrna	423	72.81

After the first year with ALTs, our secondary schools immediately demonstrated growth through the School Accountability Rating System with one of our middle schools maintaining its Superior status, one middle school increasing its rating from Academic Progress to Commendable, and our high school increasing its rating from Academic Watch to Commendable. All three middle schools currently meet Adequate Yearly Progress with Dover Air Base Middle being named a Recognition School for exceptional performance. Tables I3 and I4 illustrate the 2012-2013 DCAS data for reading and math in grade 8 across our three middle schools. CR places within the top five districts out of 18 total school districts.

Table I3 DCAS Data for Reading Grade 8 Meeting the Standard 2012-2013

<u>District</u>	<u>Number Tested</u>	<u>% Meet the Standard</u>
Appoquinimink	766	86.95
Cape Henlopen	331	83.99
Caesar Rodney	617	81.69
Lake Forest	291	80.07
Indian River	661	76.4
Red Clay	1395	74.48
Delmar	180	72.78
Brandywine	829	72.01

TableI4 CAS Data for Math Grade 8 Meeting the Standard 2012-2013

<u>District</u>	<u>Number Tested</u>	<u>% Meet the Standard</u>
Appoquinimink	768	87.89
Lake Forest	291	87.63
Cape Henlopen	331	86.4
Caesar Rodney	614	84.2
Indian River	667	80.06
Delmar	181	79.56
Milford	311	76.53
Red Clay	1401	72.23

The ALTs play a role in maintaining student achievement as they help to identify the most "at-risk" students to target for additional intervention services through direct teaching. They are responsible for working with the building administration and have access to school wide data systems to disaggregate data and then develop plans accordingly. They organize and/or facilitate interventions with these students to ensure support in reading and math, both during and after the school day. With the RTI secondary grant awarded to the district, the ALTs are responsible

for starting from the ground up to develop a system that would work within a middle school schedule. They identified at risk students, found interventions to match student needs, and implemented progress monitoring tools to track student progress. Currently there is little research available in the area of secondary intervention so ALTs have worked closely with their elementary peers to replicate and tweak current RTI practices.

Our elementary schools have also been awarded two Super Stars in Education awards at Star Hill and Stokes Elementary for programs created and implemented by the buildings' ALTs. At Stokes Elementary the ALT created a morning tutoring program called Early Bird. The Early Bird program is designed to support Stokes' most at risk learners by delivering small group accelerated instruction during the first 25 min. of the school day. The Early Bird program has helped to raise student achievement at Stokes Elementary as measured by the DCAS, the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and classroom assessments. The growth made by their students can best be seen when comparing the 2010-2011 fall, winter and spring reading DCAS scores. Over the course of that school year, 47.3% of third graders met the standard in reading in the fall. By the spring, that number grew by 43 percentage points to over 90.0% of students in that grade level meeting or exceeding the standard. Similarly, fourth grade demonstrated growth by gaining 41 percentage points so that by the spring, 91.9% of students met the standard. Fifth grade grew from only having 44.3% of students meeting the standard in the fall to 91.5% of those same students meeting the standard in the spring. That is a growth of over 47 percentage

points in just one school year. Star Hill's ALT developed and provided school wide professional development to rollout fluency centers in every classroom. Star Hill's Fluency Stations is a program that is implemented during the English Language Arts block in grades 1 through 5. The program's emphasis is on reading fluency, which directly correlates to comprehension. The fluency stations provide opportunity for teacher to student; student to student; and parent to student interactions. Students receive direct instruction from a teacher or parent while student peers help with monitoring student progress in reading fluency. These stations are also differentiated, and students who perform above district expectations are challenged in such activities as Readers Theatre where they can practice inflection and intonation.

Teacher Quality. The ALTs work with classroom teachers through a multitude of venues including facilitating school wide and district level professional development as well as PLCs, modelling best practices in classrooms, and mentoring individual teachers. The ALTs focus on transforming effective teachers into exemplary teachers in order to achieve exemplary results from our students' academic performance.

The elementary Title I schools have received several state and national recognitions. (The state of Delaware has over 150 Title I Schools.) For three consecutive years, a National Blue Ribbon has been awarded to one of our district's schools: Nellie Hughes Stokes Elementary, Star Hill Elementary, and Allen Frear Elementary. In Delaware, two schools are recognized as National Title I Distinguished

Schools and in 2011 Stokes Elementary was one of the two. Star Hill Elementary was awarded the distinction of State Title I Distinguished School for 2011. All other Title I schools in the district, all which have an ALT, have received the distinction of Title I Honorees. Simpson Elementary and Stokes Elementary were also named “Recognition Schools” for either exceptional performance and/or closing the achievement gap in succeeding years. All Title I elementary schools in the district have received some type of Title I prestigious award.

Each of these awards is achieved by teachers and ALTs working strategically with students across all demographic subgroups. This is achieved in part by teachers learning how to analyze student data, differentiate instruction for their students according to the data, and then implement interventions with fidelity. Each of these tasks is a focus for professional development and modelling provided by the district ALTs.

The impact of the ALT Program on teacher quality can also be demonstrated qualitatively through informal conversations with stakeholders as well as a survey sent to principals (Attachment I.2). Principals share their appreciation and need for this position as they use the ALTs to run the gifted program, intervention groups, faculty trainings, facilitate PLCs, teacher support, and truly serve as a communication liaison teacher to student, teacher to teacher, teacher to administrator, and teacher to home. Whether it is a simple story from one of the buildings where the ALTs’ colleagues gave her a standing ovation at the end of year faculty meeting or an informal comment

from a teacher when discussing funding cuts, “Just don’t take our ALT,” the ALT position has become a part of the way “we do things” in our district and provides teachers with additional support from a colleague rather than their administrator. This provides a less evaluative and more collegial environment to enhance teacher quality.

Parent Involvement. Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn has recognized several of the district’s schools through his Excellence in Parent Involvement Award. The award is exclusive in nature and only recognizes two schools every year in the state of Delaware. In 2010, 2011, and 2013 CR was proud to have one of the two schools selected. As part of the goals of the ALT program, each teacher leader is responsible for developing programs to enhance parent involvement/engagement. The winning programs, Alphabet Army, Frequent Flyer Parent Cards, and a Delaware’s first Parent Resource Center were all programs developed, facilitated, and monitored by the building’s ALT. All of the ALTs focus on efforts to increase resources available both to our parents and community to increase parent involvement/ engagement by developing items to be sent home to parents or posted on the school’s website, facilitating parent information sessions during and after school, developing and maintaining parent resource centers, and serving as a liaison between parents, teachers, and the administration.

Maintaining the ALT Program

The Mission Statement of CR outlines a dedication to providing “quality educational opportunities” for all students. To stay focused on this mission, it is

necessary to be visionary in nature and constantly focus on continuous improvement. The creation of the ALT Program was a “new idea” to support schools in maintaining their tradition of excellence.

The vital support of the ALT position has been recognized by the school and district administration as well as the School Board. The program’s impact was also recognized in 2012 by the Delaware Chamber of Commerce through its very own Super Stars in Education award. Due to this support, the ALT position has been sustained through alternate funding sources.

Unfortunately, these alternate funding sources are depleting and the district is faced with the possibility of losing this valued position. This would be a step backwards for the district. It is the district’s intention that this program is too valuable to lose due to its continuous support of student achievement, teacher quality, and parent involvement. It also serves as a strong succession plan component as it helps to prepare teacher leaders to apply for future administrative positions. The district currently employs four administrators who were former ALTs.

During these difficult financial times both in the district and community, it is politically challenging to argue for this position as to the general public it is an “additional” teaching position that costs the district close to one million dollars in salaries. In order to maintain this position alternative funding must be explored. The following section outlines several funding options for CR as well as districts that may choose to replicate the program.

Funding Options

- **Title I Funds:** The district currently funds reading specialists and a variety of other positions through this funding source. All or some of the ALT funding could come from Title I for qualifying schools. For CR this would be for the elementary schools only. This would not be considered supplanting as the original position was funded with Title I monies.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Funds:** A portion of the ALT funding could come from IDEA. The ALTs work with at risk students as well as develop interventions and professional development in best teaching practices. This would not be considered supplanting as the original position was funded with IDEA monies.
- **Unit Allocation:** Though this option is least popular, as it requires districts to relook at how current units are allocated and then possibly reassign units to fund ALTs, this is a viable option. According to Delaware Code – Free Public Schools, Title 14, Chapter 17, each building is allocated teaching units per number of pupils according to grade spans such as K-3 at 16.2 and 4-12 at 20. Therefore, one unit is earned to a first grade for every 16.2 students. These numbers change when referencing special education pupil count as they are earned through three categories: Basic, Intensive, and Complex. In these counts the pupil count is much lower in order to earn one teaching unit. These units could be used to fund this position rather than another teaching position within the building.

- **Reassign Current Positions' Responsibilities:** Before the initiation of the ALT position, elementary and middle schools in the district did not have a teacher leader unit whereas at the secondary level there were several positions that served a variety of purposes. These positions, such as Academic Dean and Freshman Academy Advisor, take on many of the same responsibilities as an ALT. Depending on available funding; these positions may need to be revamped to better address student achievement, teacher quality, and parent involvement rather than allocating a unit at that level.
- **Lobby Legislators/Standards Board For Additional Teacher Leader Units:** With the increasing demands placed on schools to implement new initiatives such as the CCSS and RTI it is not unheard of to lobby local legislators as well as the Delaware Standards Board to put money in the state budget to provide these additional teacher leader positions at each of our schools across the state. Former Governor Ruth Ann Minner did just this by providing reading specialist positions in each of our elementary schools as well as math interventionists in the middle schools, both of which have now been retracted. One of Delaware's goals through its RTTT grant was to have high needs schools create at least one Teacher Leader position by the Fall of 2012 (DE DoE, 2014). This goal should be funded for all schools in all school districts as it is the intention of the state that these positions make a difference if they are requiring them for high needs schools.

Any time a district is awarded grant monies that have an ending date, it is imperative to build in a contingency plan for sustainability once the grant expires. Unfortunately, when trying to utilize funding to its greatest capacity and in a way to have the most impact on student achievement, a district is often left with innovative programs or positions that can no longer be funded. It is the district's responsibility to continue to re-evaluate programs and positions to best meet the district's needs as well as seek alternate funding sources to maintain successful programs. It is also the state's responsibility to be forward thinking in how units are allocated and ensure monies from the state level are allocated in a way to best support districts in their quest to meet the ever increasing expectations of new initiatives as well as state and federal mandates. The ALT position is one that warrants continued discussion at the district and state level as educators seek to address student achievement, teacher quality, and parent engagement in our schools.

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Job Description

Job Title: Achievement Liaison Teacher (ALT)

Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university

Delaware Teaching Certificate

Experience in training adults

Demonstrated proficiency in teaching

Data analysis skills

Strong organizational and interpersonal skills

Reports to: Building Principal

Job Goal: To provide individualized site support of student achievement, teacher quality, and parent engagement opportunities catered to the needs of the building assigned.

Performance Responsibilities:

1. To utilize data analysis to improve instruction, student achievement, and school climate.
2. To assist individual classroom teachers with the design, delivery and assessment of instruction.
3. To assist in the design and implementation of intervention programs.
4. To participate in and help facilitate professional learning communities.
5. To develop and lead professional development at the school and district level.
6. To serve as a resource person to assist in supporting district initiatives as it pertains to the individual school sites.
7. To develop and coordinate parent engagement activities at the building site.
8. To attend workshops, conferences, meetings, etc., as necessary to support building and district initiatives around student achievement, teacher quality, and parent engagement.
9. To collaborate with other building ALTs to ensure vertical articulation of best practices.
10. To perform such other assignments and accept such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the building principal.

Attachment I.2 – ALT Principal Survey

* Required

Which of the following relates to your ALT's responsibilities? *

Please mark all that apply

- Facilitates RTI meetings
- Facilitates PLC meetings
- Analyzes classroom/school data
- Works with individual teachers and PLC's to analyze their data
- Works with administration to set goals based on data
- none of the above
- Other:

How has your ALT helped to support efforts in your school's transition to the Common Core State Standards?

How would you describe the impact of having a teacher leader position in your building?

Appendix J

TRANSITION TO THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOCUS ON ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRENT REALITY AND FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Training and Support. Grade level teams, composed of teachers from all of our elementary schools and our district resource teachers, worked over a four year period to create our transition lessons for grades 1-5. These lessons were created to replace our current Harcourt anthology lessons with a focus on the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) expectations. Lessons were created not only to transition students, but also to provide a closer look at the new standards for our teachers as we waited for publishers to create more comprehensive programs for future adoption. The lessons, assessments and corresponding monthly professional learning communities (PLC) notes for implementation would serve as a professional development and support for the transition to the CCSS. The new expectations linked to these lessons and assessments would be the focal point of data driven decision making (DDDM) conversations in each of our school's PLC meetings.

Delaware Adopts CCSS

On August 19, 2010 the Delaware State Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt the CCSS. The CCSS were developed by members of the National Governors Association for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. It was their intention to produce standards that set high expectations across the country to ensure all students left high school “College and Career Ready.” By implementing these new standards it would not matter if a child lived in Delaware or California, the grade level standards and expectations for English Language Arts and mathematics would be the same. Currently, forty-four of the fifty states have adopted this set of standards to guide their instruction. (Common Core Initiative, 2014)

The newly adopted standards replaced the existing Delaware Prioritized Curriculum. Soon after the new standards were adopted there was talk of adopting a new state test aligned to the CCSS. Delaware had just transitioned from the paper and pencil Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) to the computer adaptive Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). Smarter Balanced’s (SBAC) test was on the horizon and districts needed to not only shift to the new standards, but prepare for yet another new state test slated to be administered during the 2014-2015 school year.

Ready or not, districts were thrust into a state of change, rapid change. With a tight timeline for expected transition, local education agencies needed to develop a strategy to address not only the curriculum change, but also the change in assessment.

The following paper documents Caesar Rodney's (CR) approach to transitioning with a focus on elementary English Language Arts.

The Instructional Core

With the move to the CCSS came several changes to the instructional core. Initially, when the standards were released, six shifts in teaching were shared with educators: balancing informational and literary texts, building knowledge across disciplines, staircase of complexity, text based answers, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary. Since its inception, the Student Achievement Partners' website, Achieve the Core (2014), condensed the shifts to three: Regular practice with complex text and its academic language; Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text both literary and informational; and Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction. If the district wanted students to be prepared for the administration of the state test in the spring of 2015, then it needed to expose students to the new expectations both through instruction and assessment linked to the new standards. In 2010, CR designed an aggressive four year plan to make the transition to the new CCSS and their shifts in instruction as well as to the new state assessment.

Planning for Change

The district's initial plan's goals and activities focused on understanding of the new standards, putting them into practice, creating assessments to align with the standards, and preparation for the new state test. It was the district's intention to address the new content and how this new content would impact teachers and their practices as well as students and their learning. With the creation and immediate

adoption it became evident that there were few, if any, “experts” to rely on for help in interpreting and implementing the standards. Therefore, the district knew that over the next couple of years, its understanding of the standards would evolve and continued professional development and curriculum revision would be needed to match those understandings. The tasks identified for immediate attention included the following:

- Understand the CCSS ELA standards and shifts in instruction,
- Determine curriculum needs for implementing CCSS, and
- Establish assessment literacy practices to support student learning linked to CCSS and SBAC

The following sections document the district’s efforts in addressing each of the tasks above in an effort to create a coherent and scaffold approach to the transition to CCSS and SBAC.

Determining the Curriculum Needs of the District

As a district, our top priority was looking at whether or not we could align the current curriculum and teaching practices to the new CCSS. To begin this process, district supervisors and resource teachers dove into any and all resources available linked to the standards. It was imperative that both groups became well versed in the new expectations in order to examine current curriculum and practices. The majority of research was available via the internet. Everything was literally in its “elementary” stages and each day there was something new to learn.

The Delaware Department of Education (DE DoE) developed cross walk documents that enabled districts to analyze current state standards compared to the

CCSS. It became evident after the first few months that trying to match up the old to the new or look for gaps in the old to new was a waste of time. These new standards would not allow for districts to “patch” where needed, it was time to start new. A Publisher’s Criteria was also released to analyze existing and new programs to align with the CCSS. After using both documents, the district determined that a complete overhaul of materials, rather than adding supplements, was warranted.

It was clear that the current anthologies used in elementary programs across the country would no longer meet the bill for the rigor, expectations, and “shifts” of the CCSS. Publishers immediately added stickers on the front cover of their materials indicating they were “Aligned to the CCSS” when in fact that had simply matched their current materials to standards in the CCSS without attention to text complexity, implementation changes, and questioning. One company simply added an additional unit at the end of its current anthology and called it the CCSS unit. As a district, CR knew that it would be some time before a publisher would be able to produce materials that were truly aligned. And even once these overhauls were done, the nation would still be interpreting the standards and making revisions to ways of thinking and materials related to the standards. An average adoption in a district with six elementary schools runs approximately one-million dollars. Though it would take a minimum of two years for new materials to come out, schools had less than two years to begin working on the new standards before the new test was placed in front of students. It was time to make a million dollar decision. The district decided to hold off

on purchasing new materials and instead create “transition” lessons for grades 1-5 aligned to the CCSS.

During the summer between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, teams of teachers at each grade level as well as district English Language Arts resource teachers and the Supervisor of Instruction, began reviewing the standards and mapping out a year’s worth of units to accomplish this lofty goal. Efforts were aided by various support materials to interpret and then begin to internalize the true essence of the standards. Supports included web based, print, and alignment documents created by the DE DoE. Attachment J.1 illustrates a literacy concept organizer created by the state. These organizers can be accessed by grade via the DE DoE’s website, www.doe.k12.de.us. The internet was the primary source of information as it allowed stakeholders to search out others’ efforts and find new information and documents as they changed daily throughout the nation. Two large organizations, Engage NY and Achieve the Core, became front runners in providing materials for research as well as lesson writing. Many of their training modules were utilized or adapted for districtwide training and their links provided for further teacher and administrator reference. Writing lessons would not only allow the district to work towards alignment, but would also allow for teachers across the district to look at and dive into the standards rather than simply open a new anthology and start teaching on page 1.

To support understanding of each set of lessons at each grade level, a cover page was created. Each cover page included the Unit Enduring Understanding, Objectives and Essential Questions. It also provides key vocabulary, teacher resources

needed to implement the lessons and the Literacy Concept Organizer related to the entire standard to help guide teachers in scaffolding the instruction throughout the year. Attachment J.2 is an example of a cover page for one of the series of lessons in grade 4. By the end of the summer the year-long map was roughed out and the first unit for each grade level was complete.

During the writing process, the district continued to look at current materials and curriculum for revision. Pilots of various supplemental programs to include Text Talk, a read aloud program for grades K-2 focused on Tier II vocabulary by Beck and McKeowen (2008), were initiated to align with professional development being provided. Outside of supplemental materials, the task of revising the core curriculum remained.

During the 2012-2013 school year, lesson writers continued to write and pilot their lessons. Lessons were enhanced with new learning around the CCSS. At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, teachers from across the district were brought together at one location and given professional development, by grade level, on the first unit of the newly created materials. Full implementation in grades 1-5 rolled out during the 2013-2014 school year with writing teams continuing to write and refine the shells of the remaining units to complete a year's worth of lessons. First grade ended with six units and grades 2-5 had five. Though the lessons rolled out in 2013-2014, as we enter the 2014-2015 school year lessons continue to be refined and enhanced to align with our new knowledge of the standards and include new supplemental materials that have been developed over the past four years.

To support parents with the new lessons, parent letters were created to be sent home at the beginning of each unit. These letters included an overview of the unit and its ties to other content areas such as science and social studies, essential skills addressed activities to do at home, and additional resources for parents to access on-line. A sample of the Unit 4, grade 4, parent letter can be found in Attachment J.3.

Outside of the changes to reading, expectations for writing had returned. With the move from the DSTP to the DCAS writing was no longer assessed at the state level. The unintended consequence of this change was a reduced emphasis on writing in classrooms across the state. To address this need, the district began looking for writing programs that would not only support CCSS expectations, but also provide built in professional development to help teachers enhance their pedagogy in relation to teaching writing. One of the elementary schools decided to write their own lessons and another was asked to pilot another commercial writing program. In the meantime, an emphasis was placed on argumentative writing in grades 3-5.

During the 2013-2014 school year the district chose to purchase Lucy Calkins' (2005) "Units of Study" to use as its core writing program. This program was chosen primarily due to the author's reputation as an expert in the area of writing, as well as her tendency to be verbose in her teacher manuals, therefore allowing for more in-depth information related to how to teach writing for both new and veteran teachers. With the introduction of both the reading and math lessons, it was the district's intention to wait until the end of the year to introduce the new materials. When asked, the buildings opted to roll them out in December. Due to the pure volume of new

teaching materials, schools were left to their own accord to begin or hold off on teaching all of the Calkins' units. Districtwide training was conducted on an in-service day to introduce the materials and follow up training was conducted in the summer with the expectation that schools would begin during the 2014-2015 school year.

The current Supervisor of Instruction responsible for elementary English Language Arts has again set out to meet with textbook publishers for potential adoption of a full series. Four years after the initial exploration, there are few to no publishers with materials that the district feels will meet the needs and expectations of the CCSS and SBAC.

Understanding the Common Core Standards and Shifts in Instruction

Within weeks of the adoption of the CCSS, phone calls began arriving at the district office with concerns about the perceived and publically reported political agenda behind the standards. Groups began forming across the state convinced there was a federal conspiracy and that the new standards were indoctrinating our students by requiring specific literature, especially from the Environmental Protection Agency, to be used in our classrooms. During this transition it was vital that the district communicate regularly and clearly to parents and the community at large to build trust and understanding while rolling out the new standards and assessments. Both the state and district were responsible for explaining how these standards would increase the rigor and initially how this rigor would potentially result in a decrease in student performance both on school based report cards and the state test in 2015. From the beginning of the adoption period to current implementation, schools have shared

information related to the transition through parent conferences, newsletters, PTA meetings, parent information nights, and individual meetings between parents and building administration as necessary. At the district level, information has been shared through the CR Report, the district website, meetings with the state PTA and other parent groups, phone interviews with local newspapers, and individual parent conferences as requested.

As both the schools and district worked to inform parents, teachers' understanding was paramount to the success of the transition. Concepts as simple as learning how to read the new standards to others as complex as changes in instructional pedagogy had to be simultaneously addressed. Professional development had to be focused on pedagogy, content, and addressing philosophical debates in instructional delivery as the standards upped the rigor in both contents and shifted content, in some cases, from two to three grade levels below where it used to be taught. Lexiles were increased and a renewed emphasis on writing returned. With the content shift in grade levels as well as the introduction of new concepts not formally taught in certain grade levels, teachers began to realize that not only were they going to be learning new content, but they would also have to look at how to fill the gaps where content had been moved. The challenge was that there was little time to transition while the nation, state, and districts were literally "changing the wheels while the car was moving."

In order to support teachers, the state and district created professional development plans to shift from the Delaware Prioritized Curriculum to CCSS. As

educators across the state and nation began to better understand the CCSS the district had to decide where to begin with teacher professional development. One of the biggest instructional shifts that would also require a “mind-shift” in student expectations, revolved around regular practice with complex text and its academic language. Utilizing quality literature was key to implementing the new standards. But what was the right literature and why was what we were already using no longer acceptable? The district decided to answer these questions by focusing on increased Lexiles and an emphasis on Tier II vocabulary. This focus would allow teachers to have hands on practice with identifying literature at the new Lexile expectations. This also facilitated the process of looking at the qualitative and reader and task expectations related to choosing text that would support instruction in reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from literary and information text. This seemed to be the one area where immediate change and better understanding of the standards’ expectations could be achieved with materials within our classrooms and libraries. Training on Read Alouds and identifying appropriate text as prescribed in the CCSS text complexity bands was conducted. As gaps were identified in text complexity, additional copies of non-fiction text were purchased for school libraries as well as an online version of these texts to allow for teacher modelling in whole group. Librarians were trained in the text complexity model and they began looking at ways to support classroom teachers in text selection.

As the district continued with professional development focused on text complexity and vocabulary for classroom teachers, Achievement Liaison teachers

were exposed to “train the trainer” models focused on the instructional shifts: balancing informational and literary texts, building knowledge across disciplines, staircase of complexity, text based answers, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary as well as best practices in using them in the classroom so that they could return to their buildings to share information with the teachers. Additionally, groups of teachers and specialists were sent to a variety of state trainings to build understanding and capacity to lead professional development around the standards.

Initially, the state released online teacher modules that were intended to be self-directed or modified to use during an in-service day to introduce teachers to the standards. The district used these modules during in-service days as the teachers’ first exposure to CCSS and gave them an idea of what was to come. As a follow-up to the state’s online training the year before, the district created its own training, “Digging Deeper.” Five days of face to face training were prepared and delivered by district resource teachers to allow for grade levels to attend together from across the district to look deeper at their grade specific standards. The 2012 summer was full of district sponsored training that teachers were able to opt into ranging from program specific training such as Text Talk and Benchmark Universe to strategy driven training such as vocabulary and text structure. Professional development was led by district personnel as well as outside experts such as Dr. Sharon Walpole and Dr. William Lewis. Dr. Lewis continued to provide professional development for the district in how to utilize a writing organizer (CSET) to frame argumentative writing pieces. This organizer was integrated into the lessons being produced by the district writers.

During the 2012-2013 school year, a continued emphasis was placed on training around the instructional shifts. To support this focus, modules were created to be shared during PLCs and faculty meetings and a variety of teacher groups continued to attend professional development at the state level with nationally known presenters such as Kylene Beers. Teacher leaders, specialists and administrators continued to add to the understanding of the standards and new expectations allowing them to better share these practices with classroom teachers.

As indicated previously, at the end of the year, an in-service day was dedicated to rolling out the new units. Grade levels met from across the district and received the lessons and corresponding materials for Unit 1 to begin the next school year. All documents were placed on the district Curriculum Tracker site for teacher access. Curriculum Tracker became the warehouse for both the newly created curriculum as well as support materials to be used during PLC's. Summer training included further support in utilizing CCSS supplemental materials, unit/lesson implementation, foundational skills, signposts, and close reading. Sessions were focused on concepts needed to implement lessons and were highly attended by the district's teachers.

With the RTTT grant came many different initiatives. PLCs, above all, clearly helped to structure the support needed to move the transition forward. One of the requirements of maintaining the RTTT funding was to ensure all tested grade levels received a 90 min. block of time every week for data driven decision making and planning. During the 2013-2014 school year, the district was able to utilize portions of this time to roll out mini-professional development modules and support documents to

guide teachers in discussions around the new units, resources, and assessments. As new information was released, teachers and administrators within school districts were asked to wrestle with the information and then move forward. As mentioned previously, Curriculum Tracker housed the support materials used during PLCs. These support materials were updated monthly. Attachment 4 is an example of one month's fourth grade PLC support materials and provides a sample of the four standing categories of information provided. The first of the four categories, *Long Range Planning*, provided monthly updates on keeping on pace with the units, encouraged teachers to utilize planning calendars given to them previously to map out lessons and assessments so they could be discussed as a group, and allowed for updates to lessons or tips on what they were teaching to be addressed. The *Assessment Review* provided information related to assessment questions, grading, and feedback. Each month a *Professional Development Module* was included to address elements of the CCSS unit lessons or SBAC assessments to provide continued professional development throughout the year. Additional support materials were listed on the cover sheet and were therefore available after meetings to all stakeholders. The final section, *Curriculum Tracker Feedback*, was there to remind teachers to provide regular feedback on units and assessments. This digital feedback method allowed teachers to give feedback on assessments and units and then have this information stored within the Curriculum Tracker system for future use in revising units and assessments over the 2014 summer break.

In addition to other supports, a district PLC was created where building principals and the buildings' Achievement Liaison Teachers attended monthly to receive professional development and guidance in using the monthly English Language Arts and math PLC documents discussed above as well as best practices related to the CCSS and SBAC.

By the end of the 2013-2014 school year teachers and administrators alike were physically and mentally tired. They had worked through a year of extreme change with new lessons and expectations in both English Language Arts and math. With an extended year due to snow and an early start to the new year, summer training was sparse, intentionally. Everyone needed time to digest the changes and recharge.

Moving into the 2014-2015 school year district administrators, resource teachers, lead teachers, and classroom teachers continue to build their understanding of the CCSS and have moved toward monitoring and assessing implementation through classroom walkthroughs. SBAC also released the new Digital Library that houses model lessons, assessments and training modules. The district completed training in using this resource as well as the many other resources now available online to include the initial "go to" sites such as Achieve the Core. Teachers have attended local and national conferences to learn more about how the CCSS will continue to be implemented and how the district can enhance its teaching practices. Online programs for students as well as availability of technology have been increased to meet the expectations of the core in relation to using multi-media sources, writing, researching and general technology skills to navigate the new SBAC assessment

administered for the first time in the spring of 2015. Professional development continues to be focused on instructional strategies and now more heavily on technology integration and assessment practices.

Assessment Literacy

Prior to the adoption of the CCSS, the district utilized Harcourt Trophies' anthology as the primary source of instructional materials and assessment for elementary English Language Arts (Beck et al., 2005). All of Harcourt's assessments were linked to the anthologies' stories; therefore, with new units under construction, new assessments also had to be developed. Another set of teams comprised of grade level teachers and specialists began writing assessments aligned to the focus standards and essential questions of each of the units. Teams reviewed documents released by SBAC in order to ensure question types and stems were aligned to the future testing expectations for students. They also utilized documents from Delaware as well as various states where the standards had been deconstructed and sample questions and question stems had been developed.

Two primary changes were made to the way teachers and students were accustomed to taking assessments. First, assessments were given with a passage that students had never read before. Students were used to completing an assessment after a series of lessons linked to one title that had often times been read aloud and discussed by the teacher, in pairs with a peer, and independently by the students before taking the assessment. The second change was linked directly to one of the shifts in the standards, text based questioning. Each assessment was developed with multiple

choice and constructed response questions. The constructed response questions required students to provide text evidence in order to score full points. Attachment 5 provides a sample page from an assessment that demonstrates the expectation of text based answers. This required teacher support in small group instruction to model and practice answering in this manner.

After the first few months of administering the district created assessments, revisions and rewrites were completed to respond to teacher feedback. The revisions more closely aligned assessment questions to the standards taught in each lesson and exemplar answers were provided to accompany rubrics to aid in scoring. Teachers were encouraged to work in PLCs to determine the effectiveness of the rubrics as well as the level of understanding from the student answers. Table J1 is a sample of a two point constructed response rubric modified from a SBAC test rubric. Table J2 is the matching exemplar.

Table J1 Scoring Rubric, Grade 4, Unit 4

2	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives sufficient evidence of the ability to integrate information from two texts to write about the subject knowledgeably. • includes specific evidence that make clear reference to the text • adequately supports the effectiveness of their choice with clearly relevant details from the text
1	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives limited evidence of the ability to integrate information from two texts to write about the subject knowledgeably. • supports the effectiveness with limited details from the text
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability explain what the text says

Table J2 Exemplar for 2 Point Rubric

Exemplar	Both texts talk about how amazing it was to find thousands of dinosaur eggs. Chiappe even says that it was the, “type of site we had been hoping to discover our entire lives.” Because they were found where a flood happened, the mud helped preserve the tiny details. Finding these eggs was important because there were not only bones, but there was also tissue surrounding the bones. This had never been found before. The scientists think this discovery will help them find out about dinosaur mothers and their young.
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As districts were privy to more information related to the format and expectations of SBAC, the assessments were modified to reflect those changes, as closely as possible, considering the unit assessments were paper and pencil and the SBAC assessment would be an adaptive online test. Changes such as being able to choose more than one correct multiple choice answer were held off until after the administration of the DCAS so not to confuse students as to test expectations.

For the first time in a long time, it seemed as if the standards and ways of teaching in the classroom would closely mirror the expectations on the state assessment and therefore more emphasis was placed on classroom implementation rather than the traditional “test prep.”

Current Reality and Future Implementation

As the district moves into year 5 of the transition to the CCSS, a deeper understanding of the standards continues to build. Once teachers and students are actually able to look at and take the SBAC assessments, there will be an even better understanding of how the standards will be manifested in a summative assessment.

Online sample questions can only give so much of a sense of understanding of expectations. There are several areas that continue to be refined and whether it is a false sense of security or not, educators are starting to feel more confident in their ability to meet the new demands. Even with all of this preparation, multiple sources continue to say that school districts and states can only hope that close to 40% of their students will meet the proficiency expectations for SBAC. With this being said, moving forward there are several areas of focus for the district.

Focus #1: Curriculum and Assessment

The district will continue to refine and implement the current transition lessons and utilize these lessons within classrooms until after the first administration of the SBAC assessment. Once this assessment has been released, publishers will have a better understanding of what is expected and series will be truly updated instead of modified. It is the district's intention to adopt a new series once one is identified to meet CCSS expectations. It is expected that this will happen by the 2016-2017 school year. Until then, professional development and appropriate support materials are vital to success. As of the 2014-2015 school year, educators are finding more supplemental resources being created by outside vendors that are directly addressing the shifts, especially in the area of content area reading and text complexity. This is a positive move forward and will continue to help supplement current units. Teachers will be provided with support materials from the Digital Library, Achieve the Core and other online resources and will be expected to stay up to date by reviewing the resources made available to them as this initiative is not one where everything can just be

handed to someone. It is imperative that everyone continue to be well read and have collaborative discussions. We also have several teachers serving on the Dream Team led by Learn Zillion. These teachers are helping to build the Digital Library as well as have firsthand experience working with and talking to others from across the country.

Current assessments will continue to be refined and district wide performance tasks are being created as practice modules for students and teachers. They have been created to be modelled rather than just administered to allow for a deeper understanding for both the teachers and the students. Districts were promised a “Digital Library” from SBAC to utilize to prepare for the test. This library was to house curriculum modules as well as formative assessments and professional development. The library was not fully released until the end of the 2014 summer and as of November 2014 the library is still not completely functional. Interim and Block assessments are not slated to be released until mid to late January and will therefore serve as a very limited resource for test preparation for this coming summative assessment. The district will continue to share information and train on the use of the Digital Library as it is developed.

Focus #2: Writing

Now that Calkins (2005) has rolled out across the schools, a concerted effort needs to be made to review student writing as well as teacher implementation of the lessons. Bi-monthly meetings, led by a teacher who worked with Calkins’ materials previously, are scheduled for teachers to voluntarily participate in a year-long follow up. These meetings allow for conversation around the elements of the lessons and

assessments as well as the creation of SMART Notebook files to facilitate the lessons contained in Calkins' materials. Students will also continue to write in response to their reading during their reading block and lessons have been enhanced to include additional writing tasks. The focus still remains on embedding writing tasks linked with the reading expectations (i.e. CSET) and those too will continue to be enhanced.

Focus #3: Assessment Data

As we continue to transition to the CCSS and SBAC, it is imperative to look at what data points are being used to track student performance. Across the state, districts are sharing ways in which they are collecting and using data to truly identify areas to focus on with instruction and planning ahead. It is assumed that the Interim Assessment that is being released in late January will be able to be used next school year in the fall as a baseline assessment and then the available block assessments which are broken down by standards and claims, will help to provide data throughout the year linked to specific areas of study.

It has become more apparent than ever that to truly work in a data driven culture, the need for solid, aligned, and focused data must be a priority. Over the next six months, the district must look at the data currently used as well as future data options to better guide PLCs in making instructional decisions. High stakes decisions cannot be made with one data point and every decision made with our children in mind is high stakes.

Focus #4 – Accommodations

As the new test approaches there have been additions and revisions to the accommodations available to students. The SBAC assessment is being touted as one of the most accessible tests as it has accommodations available not only for special education, 504, and English Language Learners, but also more universal accommodations for general education students who are in the RTI tiers and would benefit from additional support. The district will work with teachers to create a process for identifying appropriate accommodations and then utilizing these accommodations with students in the classroom.

Focus #5 – Parent Information

In preparation, the district applied for and received a parent communication grant sponsored by the state to hold fall, winter, and spring sessions at each of our school sites. Though much of this information has been shared over the past four years, it is imperative to continue to reiterate the shifts in the CCSS as well as share updated information related to testing. The following items will be shared with parents across the district:

Session #1 – Fall

- Share shifts of CCSS
- Share change from DCAS to SBAC
- Describe how these practices are being supported in classroom
- Provide testing schedule
- Provide opportunity to take Smarter practice test

Session #2 – Winter

- Demonstrate SBAC Digital Library
- Provide an overview of the interim and block assessments
- Explain how our schools will use interim results to better understand students' strengths and needs
- Provide examples of how parents can work with their child at home

Session #3 – Spring

- Emphasize performance tasks
- Provide additional resources for practice at home
- Share sample test items from SBAC
- Review timeline, district schedule, and ideas for traditional test prep at home

The district will also continue to work on its Instruction Division website that contains information related to the CCSS and SBAC in all content areas. This website is being updated by all district specialists and ALTs to include resources and websites to enhance parent understanding of the CCSS and SBAC expectations.

Conclusion

The district has made extreme efforts over the past four years to transition all stakeholders to the CCSS and SBAC. Through trial and error and a lot of hours and dedication on the part of our teachers, students, and administrators, the district has made strides and will continue to work towards a cohesive system to support student achievement. In the end, the percentage of students reaching the expected proficiency

level on SBAC may not be as high as their current performance, but our district knows that the path has been forged to not only reach but exceed the expectations in the near future. It is difficult to predict or to even give credence to the predications made at the state level with so many questions still waiting to be answered. Despite this, our district will continue forward and work collaboratively to ensure success, as success is the only option.

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GRADE 4-Craft and Structure **Informational Reading Standard 6**

<p>College and Career Ready (CCR) Anchor Reading Standard (6): Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">CCSS – Grade Level Reading Standard 6 (Informational)</p>		
<p>Grade 3: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.</p>	<p>Grade 4: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.</p>	<p>Grade 5: Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Know (Factual)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Understand (Conceptual)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Do (Procedural, Application and Extended thinking)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational text (both literary nonfiction and expository/technical texts) • Compare • Contrast • Firsthand account (primary) of an event or topic • Secondhand (secondary) account of an event or topic • Author’s viewpoint/focus/attitude • Author’s roles/purposes (to inform, to persuade, to explain how, to entertain) for writing a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An author’s focus/viewpoint affects the choices he/she makes (e.g., style, word choice, content) in shaping a text. • Good readers look at first and secondhand account of the same event or topic to obtain different information. • Good readers recognize that the same event can be interpreted differently when told from different perspectives/viewpoints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the author’s purpose for writing a text • Identify a firsthand account • Identify a secondhand account • Explain how a firsthand and secondhand account are different • Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of an event or topic • Describe differences in focus and information provided by firsthand and secondhand accounts of an event or topic • Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided
<p><u>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</u> CCSS-Grade Specific Standard 10 (Grade 4) By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p>		

Appendix J.2 – Cover Page of Unit Lessons for Grade 4

Grade 4 Unit 4: Can You See It My Way?

Lesson 3 RI6

Skill/ Strategy: What is the difference between a firsthand and secondhand account?

Approximate Days: 10

Unit Enduring Understanding: What is perspective and how does it enhance a reader's understanding?		
<p>Key Standard: RI6: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.</p> <p>Additional Standards: RI3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in text.</p> <p>RI9: Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.</p>	<p>Objective(s): Students will be able to identify firsthand and secondhand accounts.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe the differences in focus between firsthand and secondhand accounts.</p> <p>Students will accurately synthesize information from two texts on the same topic.</p>	<p>Essential Question(s): What is the value of reading both firsthand and second hand accounts of the same event?</p> <p>How does the author's participation in the event shape the focus and information presented in the account?</p>
Key Vocabulary: source, firsthand account, secondhand account, primary, secondary, focus		
<p>Resources: Please preview all texts, videos and images prior to use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART NB File • Sources Activating Sheet • What it Really Means – Graphic Organizer • Fact Sheet: Primary Sources • Source Scenarios – Source Cards – Copy and cut out before lesson • Oregon Trail - Passage • Helen Keller - Passage • Inauguration Day – Passage • Integrating Information Across Texts Graphic Organizer – Owocki, Figure 9.4 • Article: Life at Sea – Byrd Expedition • Article: PBS – Richard E.Byrd • Article: Brrr.... Those Are Some Really Cold Cows • http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/regions-places/polar-regions/antarctica_byrdexpedition/ - Kids National Geographic video on Admiral Byrd 		

<p>Know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational text (both literary nonfiction and expository/technical texts) • Compare • Contrast • Firsthand account (primary) of an event or topic • Secondhand (secondary) account of an event or topic • Author's viewpoint/focus/attitude • Author's roles/purposes (to inform, to persuade, to explain how, to entertain) for writing a text 	<p>Understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An author's focus/viewpoint affects the choices he/she makes (e.g., style, word choice, content) in shaping a text. • Good readers look at first and secondhand account of the same event or topic to obtain different information. • Good readers recognize that the same event can be interpreted differently when told from different perspectives/viewpoints. 	<p>Do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a firsthand account • Identify a secondhand account • Explain how a firsthand and secondhand account are different • Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of an event or topic • Describe differences in focus and information provided by firsthand and secondhand accounts of an event or topic •
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Unit 4: Can You See It My Way?

4th Grade ELA

Caesar Rodney School District 2013-2014

Dear 4th Grade Families,

In this unit, we will continue to engage the students in purposeful, meaningful lessons as we implement the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Students will be given opportunities to increase their reading skills and strategies in both whole group and small group reading experiences. Our focus is to engage the children in text and for them to become active readers. Thank you for your continued assistance and support.

Unit Overview:

Students will read literary texts in order to understand an author's purpose for writing a text and the point of view in which it is written (first person, third person). Students will also read a variety of informational texts in order to determine if a text is a firsthand or secondhand account of the same event. They will read closely in order to locate evidence to support their understanding. Students may also read texts that address specific Social Studies and Science topics: Chronologically Thinking (examining timelines and cause/effect factors in the early part of Delaware's colonization), and Land & Water (how water shapes the land and how, in turn, the land directs the flow of water). Students will use a variety of strategies in order to make meaning through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Essential Skills:

- Identify author's purpose for writing a text.
- Determine first person and third person narration.
- Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated.
- Refer to details and examples from the text to explain what the text says.
- Recognize how details are organized in an informational text.
- Use specific information to explain what and why key events happened.
- Identify firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same event; describe the differences in focus and information provided.
- Use context clues to help determine the meaning of unknown words.
- Decode words with multiple syllables.
- Read appropriate texts with purpose, understanding and expression.
- Use learned spelling patterns when writing words.
- Write, expand and rearrange simple and compound sentences.
- Organize and develop a piece of writing.



Unit 4: Can You See It My Way?

4th Grade ELA

Caesar Rodney School District 2013-2014

Activities to do at home:

- Read every day and discuss what they read. Read a variety of texts: stories, magazine articles, recipes, directions
- Keep a reading chart to track progress and types of texts read
- Pay close attention to details and illustrations
- Word Sort activities for spelling patterns
- Word hunts looking for multi-syllable words in newspapers and magazines
- Use the internet to find information about Land and Water & Thinking Chronologically:
Land and Water sites:
<http://www.mbgnet.net/fresh/rivers/index.htm>
http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/flash/flash_watercycle.html
<http://www.kidsgeo.com/geology-for-kids/0074-erosion-rivers-lakes-streams.php>
Thinking Chronologically:
<http://www.kalmarnyckel.org/>
<http://www.visitdelaware.com/delaware-history-trail/delaware-history/>
- Go to your local library and check out books about:
 - Robert Byrd and other explorers
 - The American Revolution
<http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/perspectives.html> (perspectives)

Additional Resources:

- Caesar Rodney Elementary ELA site:
<http://www.teachers.cr.k12.de.us/~galgano/4links.htm>
- Point of View Interactive:
<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/math-games/point-out-view/> (point of view game)
- Parent and After School Resources:
<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/>
- Word games: Match word games to word patterns being learned in class
<http://www.eduplace.com/kids/sv/>
Check out:
 - Word Sorting and Word Building
 - eWord game is a fun activity for vocabulary practice.

Attachment J.4 - Sample Grade 4 PLC Agenda

April ELA PLC Agenda Items - Elementary

Long Range Planning

With all of our snow days, it is hard to believe we are in the fourth marking period already! Please continue to review units before implementation and feel free to ask Mimi, Denise or Christine to join in on your PLC to review lessons and concepts. For example, in Grade 4, Unit 4 Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts are introduced. This is a new concept and takes some review before teaching. The term “focus” is used and it is important to stress that focus is not the same as purpose. Focus is the central point or emphasis for a text.

Assessment Review – Request for Samples

Please work as a team and collect samples of students’ last assessment you administered. Please send samples to Christine Alois at the district office. If you would prefer not to make the copies, you may send originals and we will copy and return them to you. Thank you.

Common Core PD Module: Preparing for Smarter Balanced – SMARTER

After the Common Core State Standards were introduced, two consortia, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced, were tasked with developing assessment systems to embody the new standards. States had their options of choosing which consortia they wanted to work with. Delaware decided on Smarter Balanced. Starting next school year, the DCAS will be replaced by the SMARTER assessment. Several of our elementary and middle schools participated in a pilot of the math and ELA tests last month. We know that preparing for this new assessment involves not only working to incorporate the new CCSS, but also learning more about the structure of the new test. Earlier this year, several resources were shared during an in-service day to allow for review of the online sample test as well as sites that provide possible question stems and sample questions to begin preparing for the new format and expectations. The Smarter Balanced site, <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>, continues to update the progress being made on the assessment and will house support materials that have been promised to be released by this coming fall. We will continue to work to provide as much information as we can as we are updated by the state, continue to research online, and as we read through professional publications. This month’s PLC materials include two articles from Educational Leadership magazine’s March edition. Both are quick reads. Use this time to continue to add to your knowledge and understanding of the new assessment and feel free to list and then send questions you may have to christine.alois@cr.k12.de.us. We may not have all the answers, but will be able to research and make a few phone calls to try and address them as they come. ☺ Professional development will be offered this summer to address the Common Core to include Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language. Assessment aligned to the Common Core, including performance assessments, will also be offered. More details coming soon..... Article #1 - *The Common Core Assessments: What You Need to Know* – This article provides answers to basic logistic questions related to Smarter Balanced and PARCC... remember, we are using Smarter Balanced. Article #2 – Excerpt from: *New Assessments, New Rigor* – This excerpt discusses the test’s claims and attention to levels of Depth of Knowledge. Additional DOK resources have also been included with this month’s agenda.

Feedback via Curriculum Tracker

- Each month we will be asking teams to provide a brief feedback comment through Curriculum Tracker. At the bottom of the unit’s Curriculum Tracker page you will find a feedback button. Any items you have created can be shared by clicking the “Browse” button. It will allow to you search for your file and then “Submit.” We look forward to seeing what you have all created as these transition lessons were intended to serve as a first step in planning with the Common Core with the expectation that all of our district experts join in to enhance them!

Attachment J.5 - Sample Test Questions from Grade 4, Unit 4 Assessment

4. In **A View from the Summit**, the climber says, “For the first time on the whole expedition, I had a feeling of confidence that we were going to get to the top.”

What evidence is provided to support the climber’s confidence?

- a. Although it would be relatively useless, I got Tenzing to attach my rope to something secure
- b. The ice had broken away from the rock and a narrow crack ran upward.
- c. Nervously, I wondered if the ledge might collapse under my pressure.
- d. I pulled myself out of the crack onto the top of the rock face.

4. *On Top of the World* supports the reader’s understanding of *A View from the Summit* by -

- a. providing details of the famous climb
- b. reporting on expeditions to the South Pole
- c. telling where Mount Everest is located
- d. explaining why ice had broken away from the face of the mountain

5. Which source best describes how *A View from the Summit* was written:

- a. a textbook
- b. a newspaper article
- c. a diary
- d. a report for his teacher

6. What evidence in *View from the Summit* lets the reader know it is a firsthand account?
