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The Graduate School

College of Education

BUILDING COLLABORATION CAPACITY for RTI: PRINCIPAL VOICES

A Dissertation in

Educational Leadership

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how principals build capacity for collaboration within the Response to Intervention process. Undertaking mixed methods research, a survey gathered advice from principals who had well-developed RTI processes functioning in their schools, so that other administrators and teachers could use that information to develop and improve their own Multi-Tiered Systems of Support-RTI (MTSS-RTI) efforts. The study explored the leadership decisions, actions, and opinions of principals who guide RtII processes. It was a multi-site case study of 22 schools (21 principals) who had obtained approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to use their Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) program as one factor in a recommendation for a learning support designation. It addressed the following five research questions:

1. How do principals build infrastructure for RtII collaboration?
2. How do principals facilitate the collaborative work of the data analysis team?
3. How do principals build collaboration skills?
4. How do they view the connection between the team collaboration process and the sustainability of their RtII plan?
5. How have principals overcome obstacles in building capacity for collaboration? What advice would principals give to other school leaders beginning the process of building an RtII framework?

Because the systemic change of MTSS-RTI may upset a school’s historic way of doing business, some principals might hesitate to fully commit to its implementation. The views of the principals in this survey may give other administrators needed impetus and insight for RTI implementation.
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I would like to express gratitude to the outstanding teachers in my family. My father, Dr. Hugh Kane, was a pioneering special education teacher in the Horseheads School District, NY, and later a professor at Mansfield University. He commanded respect and used music and art in his classroom. My twin sister, Mrs. Collette Roberts, taught for 31 years as a high school reading specialist in that same district. She is my confidante and life coach. My brother, Thomas Congdon, retired after 50 years of teaching math and science. He has inspired me because of his fortitude. He has crippling arthritis that fused his spine, but this never dissuaded him from his commitment to being the best teacher possible. Especially, I would like to express gratitude to another outstanding teacher—my mother, Edith Kane. She taught me to have unconditional love, hope, and faith, and to always seek how we can help each other in this life.

I want to thank my advisors, Ed Fuller from the Educational Leadership department and Charles Hughes and Douglas Dexter from the department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education, for leading me through this dissertation process.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Why do teachers enter their profession? Teachers are drawn into the service of teaching from many motivational angles, and one of these starting points is often a desire to make a positive difference. Experiencing the classroom ourselves as students, we have seen how low grades and halting skills in reading or math can label students and undermine their confidence and self-esteem, and we find ourselves on an inexorable path of commitment to help low-achieving kids in the best way possible. We develop empathy; we develop teaching skills; and we launch into our teaching careers. Some teachers are able to remain enthusiastic, recognizing the number of students they are able to help each year. Yet, a large number of teachers will face discouragement as the task of helping so many students achieve in one classroom or one school becomes almost impossible. We finally come to the conclusion that single-handedly, it is too difficult to meet all of our students’ varied and serious needs.

In past decades, teacher education had centered on teachers becoming excellent instructors and dispensers of the curriculum, but still, many of our students fell behind in gaining fundamental skills. At last, teaching has righted its focus and turned to the matter of asking not, “Have I taught it?” but “Have my students learned this skill yet?” and “What will we do, if they haven’t learned it?” Some teachers have accepted the notion that their classes will always include students who don’t make progress, and so won’t strategize to bring these students to proficiency. On the contrary, the non-achievers can make good progress, and we have the responsibility to scaffold their learning so that they can! We have finally come to the logical conclusion that we must work collaboratively, pooling our expertise, if our goal is to help students reach proficiency in the most important skills, and if they are able enter the workforce with a job that will support
their families. The process of Response to Intervention (RTI) is the collaborative framework that has developed from research to help students before they fail and is being supported both by the federal Department of Education and by most state governments across the nation (Hauerwas, Brown, & Scott, 2013).

Development of RTI

RTI was developed as an alternative to the IQ-achievement discrepancy formula used in assessment for eligibility of learning-disability support. An alternative was seen as necessary, because the discrepancy for some students was often not identified until years after a student’s lack of progress had presented itself and chances for remediation had become mitigated. Additionally, it was recognized that many students were failing but did not meet the discrepancy formula’s prescription for extra services. By some educators, this was regarded as a moral and social justice issue (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

Permission for the use of RTI was established with federal support when it was referenced (though not named) in the 2004 IDEA implementation regulations and its policy interpretations that described one factor in the determining of SLD eligibility (Zirkel, 2010). The language referred to “a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention,” and to core RTI characteristics: (a) high quality, research-based instruction in general education; (b) continuous performance monitoring; (c) screening for academic and behavior problems; and (d) multiple tiers of progressively more intense instruction based on the student’s response (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

The practices of RTI were also being pioneered in several states from the 1990s on as educators sought to provide early intervention to meet the needs of all students (Buffam, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). It has now become a system used in most states to differentiate instruction for all students (Jimerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden, 2016), so that they can be supported to make one year’s worth or more of achievement gains during each school year. This view is reflected in
the definition of RTI given by a leading RTI researcher as the “systematic use of assessment data to allocate resources most efficiently in order to improve learning for all students” (Burns & VanDerHeyden, 2006).

The intent of RTI is to create a standards-based prevention system that supports struggling students as they are given differentiated instruction that leads them to achieve incremental gains. Using a screening assessment system, teachers are able to identify students who have below benchmark scores. These students are then organized into increasingly intense instructional groups that work on missing skills and concepts. Regular progress monitoring and further diagnostic assessment assist teachers in refining instruction as they meet to collaborate in data analysis teams (Burns & Gibbons, 2012).

In Pennsylvania, RTI is viewed as a multi-step school improvement approach to provide early academic and behavioral supports to struggling students before they fail. It is a prevention, early identification, and intervening strategy provided in general education classrooms, and it relies on a process that tracks how well students respond to changes in instruction (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Network [PaTTAN], 2010a). A primary difference of a RTI framework compared to previous pre-referral intervention systems comes in the form of educators using multiple tiers of instruction. In many states, as in Pennsylvania, this includes three tiers: Tier 1 or core curriculum instruction delivered to all students; Tier 2 supplemental instruction; and Tier 3 intensive instruction, finely tuned to build skills and based on further diagnostic assessment (see Figure 1 below). RTI was developed initially for use in the early grades and primarily for the support of reading, and now it has expanded to being used for other content areas and other grade levels, K-12 (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012). Core characteristics of RTI include (a) standards-aligned instruction, (b) universal screening, (c) shared ownership, (d) data-based decision making, (e) tiered intervention with flexible grouping, and (f) parental engagement (PaTTAN, 2009).
In recent years, Pennsylvania has re-branded the name of RTI and included it as a category under Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in order to reflect the use of multiple tiers, not only for literacy support, but also for other academic subjects such as math and writing and for behavioral concerns (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). In Pennsylvania, it is now referred to as MTSS-RtII (Response to Instruction and Intervention) and is aligned to two other state reform initiatives—implementation of the PA Core Standards and educator effectiveness (Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015).

Figure 1. Pennsylvania’s Three-Tier Model of Response to Instruction and Intervention (MTSS-RtII)

Source: Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII): A Fact Sheet for Parents, PaTTAN Publications
Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather advice from principals who had well-developed RtII processes functioning in their schools, so that other administrators and teachers could use that information to develop and improve their own MTSS-RTI efforts. Principals are the leaders responsible for organizing school improvement. They establish a vision, disseminate the mission’s goals, and then attempt to develop capacity for a framework such as RTI. However, knowing what to do is different than knowing how to do it. Having blueprints in front of you is far different than managing construction at a building complex. This idea is illustrated in a quote from Whatever It Takes (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004):

While leaders need a few key big ideas to provide the conceptual framework and coherence essential to successful school improvement, it is equally imperative that they recognize the need for specific, short-term implementation steps to advance those ideas. They can paint an attractive picture of the desired future state of the school, but they must balance this futuristic vision of what the school is working toward with steps that can be taken today (p. 187).

These short-term implementation steps involve making school-wide plans to build the capacity and the capability to effectively implement RTI’s various components (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007; Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Capacity building has been defined by Fullan (2006) as the strategic action that “increases the collective efficacy of a group to improve student learning through new knowledge, enhanced resources, and greater motivation on the part of people working individually and together” (p. 60). It is important to emphasize that the ability to engage this staff commitment is strengthened when teachers actually experience how their use of new strategies result in visible improvements (Fullan, 2006). It may be valuable to see how these surveyed principals engaged their staff to learn in their every-day school context.
We know that principals are instrumental in creating the conditions necessary for student success. Their actions have a direct impact on teacher improvement, which leads to an indirect, but positive influence on student achievement gains (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). To add to the literature, Marzano and colleagues (Carbaugh, Marzano, & Toth, 2013) compiled an extensive review of school administrator leadership. They identified specific school leader actions and behaviors that historically have had a relationship with student achievement. These actions were grouped into 24 categories and were further organized into five domains. Four of these domains of principals’ actions are crucial for implementation of the RTI process: (a) Maintain a data-driven focus on student achievement with clear established goals; (b) Plan for continuous improvement of instruction and job-embedded professional development; (c) Set regular team interactions for cooperation and collaboration; and (d) Maintain a positive school climate characterized by trust and recognition of school success.

Another chief responsibility that is linked to increased student academic achievement is for the principal to act as a change agent (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). This offers an opportunity and a challenge. Because the systemic change of MTSS-RTI may upset a school’s historic way of doing business, some principals might hesitate to fully commit to its implementation. The views of the principals in this survey may alleviate this concern as they relate their experiences and thus give other administrators needed impetus and insight.

Regarding the survey’s emphasis on building collaboration skills, it is important for principals to focus on this effort, because it is integral to every step of the process. One definition describes collaboration in this way: the “joining of forces, pooling of resources, and sharing of expertise in order to meet shared goals for instruction and assessment” (Ehren, Laster, & Watts-Taffe, para. 7). Collaboration is the core filament that is woven throughout the entire MTSS-RTI process. It provides the cohesion that will make the process successful and sustainable (Miller &
Freeman, 2016). Principals have the privilege and responsibility of structuring and supporting this key component of RTI.

When planning for reaching educational goals, promoting collaborative learning cultures has been identified as one of the key core leadership capacities (Carbaugh et al., 2013; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership [OLF], 2013). This involves providing scheduled opportunities to work together on instructional improvement through problem solving. It also involves establishing norms that promote constructive dialogue about evidence-based practices. Principals ensure that the discourse of collaboration centers on efforts to improve student achievement. Principals further build capacity for collaboration and trust by fostering conflict management skills, facilitation skills, and interdependence (Cosner, 2009).

Specifically, this study investigated how principals build capacity for collaboration within the RtII process. It addressed the following five research questions:

1. How do principals build infrastructure for RtII collaboration?
2. How do principals facilitate the collaborative work of the data analysis team?
3. How do principals build collaboration skills?
4. How do they view the connection between the team collaboration process and the sustainability of their RtII plan?
5. How have principals overcome obstacles in building capacity for collaboration?

What advice would principals give to other school leaders beginning the process of building an RtII framework?

**Professional Significance**

Regarding how to organize RTI efforts in the context of daily teaching, some persistent complexities surrounding RTI implementation have continued to present themselves to educators, including the effective organization of intervention tiers and the efficient provision of services (Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2012). It is hoped that this study will
provide perspective to these issues from principals who have worked hard to establish effective RTI implementation in their complex school contexts. The results of this study record principals’ suggestions for implementing RTI and their perceptions of how they have overcome obstacles in their journey.

Researchers such as Michael Fullan (2011) advise schools to connect with other schools and districts to form a collaborative partnership, to do the learning together of what works in RTI implementation and how to lead the process closer to sustainability. Perhaps this study will be an avenue for other principals and teachers to learn more about how experienced principals have successfully built infrastructure, developed skills for data analysis teaming, nurtured the collaborative climate, and laid plans for sustainability.
Chapter 2

Method

Participants and Procedures

A mixed methods study was used to investigate how principals build capacity for effective collaboration within an RtII framework. It was undertaken through descriptive research that explored the leadership decisions, actions, and opinions of principals who guide RtII processes within their schools. It was a multi-site case study of 22 schools (21 principals) who had obtained approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to use their Response to Instruction and Intervention program as one factor in a recommendation for a learning support designation.

A list of PDE-approved schools was obtained from the Bureau of Special Education, PaTTAN website. The 27 principals of these schools were contacted by email with a message stating the purpose and topics of the survey, an electronic link to the online Google docs survey document, and informed consent information. Participants were informed that their responses would be kept confidential. If a principal didn’t initially respond to the survey, the person was emailed or called with a second or third request. This resulted in a sample size of 21 participants, a 78% response rate.

To ascertain demographic characteristics of these schools, participants were asked to respond to six questions. The results are tabled below:

Table 1. School Size by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 249 students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>250-499 students</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-750 students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750+ students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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Table 2. *School Community Demographic Description by Percentage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primarily urban</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily suburban</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily rural</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
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Table 3. *Students Qualified for Federal Lunch Program by Percentage*

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<th>Low Income Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1-25%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-49%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-75%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
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Table 4. *School Grade Levels by Percentage*

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<th>Grade Level Span</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreK-5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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Table 5. *ELL Students by Percentage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Span</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14%</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% or greater</td>
<td>0</td>
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Table 6. IEP Students by Percentage

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage Span</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% or greater</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding school population size, approximately one half (52%) of the schools had between 250-499 students. Twenty-nine percent of the schools had larger student bodies of between 500 and 750 students. Fifty-seven percent of the surveyed schools were primarily rural, and only one school was urban. Statewide, 28.2% of Pennsylvania school districts were rural in 2013-2014 (Johnson, Showalter, Klein, & Lester, 2014).

The grade level spans of these elementary schools varied. Seventy-six percent had a K-5 or K-6 configuration. Fourteen percent of schools had spans of only two grade levels. Only two schools (10%) contained Pre-K classes.

Concerning levels of low income, measured by students who qualified for the federal free/reduced lunch program, one half of the schools (52%) had between 26 and 49% of low income students, and 14% of schools had between 50 and 75%. The majority of these schools was not affluent. Regarding numbers of ELL students, 67% of schools had low numbers of less than 1% to 3% of students. The Pennsylvania state percentage for ELL students in 2014-2015 was 3% of the population (PDE, 2015). Seventy-six percent of schools contained between 7-14% of IEP students. The state percentage of IEP students was 15% in 2013-2014 (PDE, 2014).

Instrument

An instrument designed to ascertain how school principals build capacity for RtII collaboration was created for the current investigation. During development, the question arose
regarding which key component should receive concentration for the purpose of this survey, since all pieces of the RtII framework are necessary for implementation. Therefore, a mini-survey was emailed to the PDE approved school principals, asking them to rate the importance of the RtII components which they considered the most crucial to the success of the RtII process. These components included the following: the team collaboration process, coaching support, fidelity of implementation, and sustainability. There was a 70% response rate from the 27 principals. Their responses highlighted the importance of collaboration, first, and sustainability, second. Ninety percent of the responses rated “Team Collaboration” as a high priority, and 63% rated “Sustainability” as a high priority. Subsequently, the decision was made to have the survey investigate the areas of collaboration and collaboration linked to sustainability.

The survey questions were then designed to align with the PDE application, “Using Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) for SLD Determination: Elementary School/Building Application for Approval.” The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires PA schools to submit this application to the Bureau of Special Education and gain approval before using an RtII framework for specific learning disabilities (SLD) identification in reading at the elementary level (PaTTAN, 2012c). A school team must submit extensive evidence of fidelity to RtII implementation, including lesson plans for all instructional tiers, team record forms, and examples of professional development. The alignment of the survey questions with the Application ensured that the principals had experience with the collaboration elements in the RtII framework and therefore the ability to respond. On the average, these schools have had 2.7 school years of RtII implementation since their acceptance. This application is organized around nine domains. The bold-faced domains below were used in the survey’s development:

1. Standards-Aligned Core Curriculum and High-Quality Research-Based Instruction

2. Universal Screening

3. Shared Ownership
4. **Data Based Decision-Making**

5. **Multi-Tiered Intervention and Service Delivery System**

6. Parent Engagement

7. RTII/SLD Eligibility Determination

8. **Central/Building-Level Leadership**

9. Professional Development

These bold-faced domains held elements of collaboration practices within their requirements, and so were used in the development of the survey questions. Detailed alignment information regarding specific survey questions are included in Appendix B. The survey contained 25 total questions: six demographic questions, twelve “choose all that apply” questions, two listing questions, and five open-ended questions. The principals’ answers were recorded and saved in the Google document over a period of several months.

In order to design a survey that would be conducive to participation, the survey was reviewed by key leaders of Pennsylvania schools who had participated in full implementation of RtII and by researchers of RTI practices. These included two nationally recognized RTI researchers and university professors, a curriculum coordinator, and a principal. Additional advice was given by two PaTTAN consultants in the area of RtII. The comments and advice from these experienced implementers and researchers guided revisions of the survey before it was emailed to the 27 PDE approved school principals.

The PDE term for RTI is Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII). This term will be used in the survey document and in the results and discussion sections, since the study surveyed only Pennsylvania principals of schools approved by PDE. The term “data analysis teams” (DATs) refers to teams of educators that are responsible for data analysis and decision making for student assignment and interventions. They use data to design, implement, and adjust instruction. They function at the level of a grade, school, or district, or can work across grade
levels in content area teams. Members can include administrators, school psychologists, general education teachers, special education teachers, and various specialists (PaTTAN, 2012b).

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis is designed to bring order, structure, and interpretation to the information collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I attempted to understand and interpret the data in a coherent manner. For the open-ended survey questions, my goal was to discover or identify the general categories (codes) in which to group the information. Patton (2002) calls this inductive analysis in which the investigator creates a typology grounded in the information collected.

Once the interview data was organized, I looked across the responses for commonalities and links in the data. I used strategies often used in content analysis (Neuendorf, 2017) by reading and rereading the information to identify emerging categories.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest research be judged on its trustworthiness. They argue that the researcher should provide evidence regarding the credibility of the findings. The researcher should provide evidence that the findings reflect the participants’ views rather than reflect the researcher’s prejudices and biases.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four constructs that reflect the quality of qualitative research information. The four concepts include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Researchers frequently use multiple strategies to support that the qualitative aspect of the research meets some or all of these four concepts.

In the current study I facilitated credibility of the research via two strategies. First, I have extensive experience in the subject matter of the study, giving me authority and expertise as the researcher. Second, I engaged in extensive repeated reading and examination of the data and refinement of the categories. Confirmability was addressed as I remained cognizant of my own biases as a researcher. Because of my own deep level of involvement with the subject of the research, I worked to bracket my possible biases and to be as impartial and objective as possible.
For the “choose all that apply” and listing survey questions, I tallied the responses and compared frequencies and percentages of the items, the choices of principals. Percentages were based on varying numbers of responses, since principals were not required to answer every question. For the open-ended survey questions, I coded the responses using values, beliefs, and themes. Categories were labeled by using current topics being discussed in RTI literature. Labels were used from sources such as PaTTAN’s (2012) “RtII/SLD Application,” the Burns and Gibbons (2012) guide—*Implementing Response-to-Intervention in Elementary and Secondary Schools: Procedures to Assure Scientific-Based Practices*, and *Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement* (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). I tallied frequencies of the responses by category for each question. Quotations that offered particular insight and lessons drawn from experience were chosen for publication and were accompanied by my remarks based on research surrounding RTI practices.
Chapter 3

Results and Discussion

The principals’ survey responses give us helpful insight on how to plan and implement an RtII framework, particularly focusing on the collaboration aspect. There are several far-reaching considerations. First, principals need to schedule times for the collaboration to take place. Then, they need to lay a foundation for the systematic collaborative practice of the data team meetings. Additionally, principals need to build the interpersonal skills of collaboration. It is a long process to bring RtII components into operation. The importance of sustainability needs to be uppermost in a principal’s mind, even from the beginning of the planning process.

In this Results and Discussion section, research data are reported and discussed as they pertain to each of the first four questions of the research project:

1. How Do Principals Build Infrastructure for RtII Collaboration?
2. How Do Principals Facilitate the Collaborative Work of the Data Analysis Team?
3. How Do Principals Build Collaboration Skills?
4. How Do Principals View the Connection between the Team Collaboration Process and the Sustainability of Their RtII Plan?

The fifth research question contained two parts: (a) How have principals overcome obstacles in building capacity for collaboration? (b) What advice would principals give to other school leaders beginning the process of building an RtII framework? Survey questions 24 and 25 were designed to answer this fifth research question. Because it was found that these data corresponded to the topic of each of the previous four questions and contained some of the most important advice given by these principals, these data are listed under discussions of “Obstacles” and “Solutions and Advice” and are integrated into the discussion of each of the first four research questions.
Below, the responses to the four research questions are presented, followed by a discussion of the findings. For reference, the data tables and complete responses for open-ended survey questions 10, 24, and 25 are listed in Appendix B.

**Research Question 1: How Do Principals Build Infrastructure for RtII Collaboration?**

The principal makes the RtII process possible. This person provides the structure and the schedule—times for collaboration meetings and times for intervention. This person arranges for the necessary resources including materials and manpower. Five of the survey questions give us insight on how this infrastructure was created: Questions 7, 10, 11, 24, 25.

**Table 7. Actions to Provide Infrastructure by Frequency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Action</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design Schedule for Data Team Meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procure Tier Materials</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Adequate Staffing for Tier Times</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Schedule for Tier Times</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Assessment Dates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principals made 13 references (32%) regarding building infrastructure in response to Survey Question 10. These included references to scheduling data team meetings and assessments, procuring materials, and providing adequate staffing for tiered instructional times. One principal met with teams during the August in-service to establish the year’s meeting schedule and to “ensure grade level meetings won’t conflict and that “Learning Support, Title I, Instructional Coach, classroom teachers and I can attend.”
Twelve (57%) principals said their teams met monthly. Eight (39%) said their teams met weekly or bi-weekly.

Table 9. *Data Team Meeting Scheduling Options by Percentage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Meeting Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Listings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the teachers’ common planning time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: substitute coverage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use faculty meetings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use professional development days</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: after school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use early student dismissal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: early A.M. before students arrive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: release time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most prevalent ways to provide for time for meetings were the following: using teachers’ common planning time (23%), using substitute coverage (23%), and collaborating during time previously used for faculty meetings (19%). Additionally, four principals used professional development days, and four used after-school meetings. Two schools met in the morning before students arrived, and two schools instituted an early dismissal time for students.
Table 11. *Topic of Infrastructure Advice by Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Advice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build a Schedule for Team Meetings &amp; Intervention</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The topic of schedule was listed 6 times (26% of the references) and was one of the two most mentioned topics under the obstacles listed for Question 24. It included scheduling time for meetings, including team planning and PLC time, and intervention blocks. It was the most mentioned advice topic for Question 25 with 6 references (23%).

These are summarized solutions and advice regarding schedule:

- Understand that this time is crucial for the tasks of collaboration, data analysis, progress monitoring, instructional decision-making, and planning.
- Schedule team meetings in an annual calendar as part of the master schedule and “sacred.”
- Schedule intervention blocks for all students, meeting all students’ needs.

Below are some of the principals’ comments which give us their opinions and feelings surrounding this issue:

Time is always a challenge. We do not have a 40 minute common planning time, but do the best we can with 20-25 min. every morning. Providing subs for RtII meetings has helped and allowing time on Act 80 days for team meetings is helpful.

We had to give up 2 faculty meetings a month and make them data analysis meetings in order to find the time for teams to get together. That is sometimes a challenge when there are topics that I would like to share with my faculty—I am limited to one 50 minute meeting a month. The trade-off has been worth it, though.
“We struggled with creating intervention blocks at the very beginning of the process. That was resolved by working together to create times outside the core time allowing each grade level to be serviced separately.”

**Discussion.** The principal sets the regularity of the data team meetings that involve progress monitoring, differentiated class/tier instruction, and matching interventions to student needs. The timeline for holding regular grade level data analysis meetings throughout the year needs to be set into the master schedule from the beginning, and these principals took this overarching responsibility seriously. A major challenge for a principal is to find feasible time in the schedule for both these team meetings and for intervention instruction. This topic was uppermost in the survey responses covering both obstacles and advice.

Literature has described three organizational phases of initial RtII implementation (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2010; NASDSE, 2008b). Phase one is involved with consensus building and the educating of school staff on the core components and principles of RtII, such as “All children can learn” and “Differentiating instruction is an important part of general education.” Phase two is when foundational supportive infrastructure is acquired. This includes the elements of schedule changes, changes in teacher roles, materials for instruction and intervention, deciding on assessments for screening and progress monitoring, and plans for professional development. This phase was highly developed by these principals, as seen in their responses. Phase three is the actual implementation of the “blueprint” planning process. Its success depends on the quality of work carried out in the first two phases.

Making compromises with scheduling is a theme that emerges in these principals’ solutions. One needs to give up previously assigned time in order to improve the organization of the schedule for systemic change. It is evident that preparation for RtII should not be seen as making piecemeal changes, but rather as re-arranging the daily routine for teachers and students
with the purpose of RtII in view. Collaboration times allow teachers collectively to plan the best instruction and intervention suited to struggling learners.

Among the key resources for building the infrastructure phase in RtII is the mind-set of flexibility when changes to student, teacher, and paraprofessional schedules are warranted (Liu, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2011). This trait is certainly seen in how principals solved the obstacle of scheduling for meetings and intervention blocks. Flexibility is also necessary when changes to personnel roles are inevitable for effectively implementing RtII. For example, special education teachers may team with general educators. Reading specialists or coaches may take on a coordination or management role. School psychologists may become involved with progress monitoring (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012).

Although there is no empirical research regarding how times for RtII meetings and interventions should be sliced into the daily schedule, there are principles that researchers have suggested to help beginning implementers. Options for Tier 2 scheduling include organizing Tier 2 groups within the classroom, dedicating a different time for RtII for each grade level (Burns & Gibbons, 2012), or dedicating a time for RtII school-wide for all grade levels. This last option, scheduling an intervention period into the school day, is widely used (Bender, 2009).

Presented with scheduling options, faculty can work together to plan RtII intervention schedules that work best for them and that best meet the needs of the students with whom they are familiar. As one principal commented, “That was resolved by working together to create times.” Making compromises with scheduling and learning to be flexible are good lessons to be learned when facing the challenge of building infrastructure for RtII collaboration. Principals can take the opportunity to encourage shared leadership, even in this infrastructure planning stage, and include teachers in finding creative ways to build solid working schedules.
**Research Question 2: How Do Principals Facilitate the Collaborative Work of the Data Analysis Team?**

The work of the data analysis team (DAT) is intensive and ongoing. It involves data storage, presentation, and analysis. At the heart of the work is the problem-solving process where decisions are made regarding student placement into tiers and interventions. Principals must plan to provide training in data analysis and interventions. They must also organize fidelity checks. Ten of the survey questions give us insight on how principals support this collaborative work: Survey Questions 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 24, 25.

**Table 12. Staff Acting as Meeting Facilitators by Percentage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Take Turns</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Coach</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Core Team (Principal, Coach, &amp; Counselor)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Variety of individuals, depending on need</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A facilitator conducts meetings and monitors the flow and time of the process. This fostering of efficiency can limit a loss of effective problem solving and is extremely helpful for a DAT (Bahr, et al., 2006). As viewed here, the principal serves as the facilitator for the DAT meetings in one third of the schools. For another third, members take turns in this role. Because data analysis meetings cover so much territory, it is helpful to have an appointed facilitator to keep everyone focused on the decision-making process.

One principal commented, “[I] facilitate meetings as opposed to ‘running them.’ Let people do their job in their area of expertise.” This is similar to the advice given by Elmore...
(1999), when he described distributed leadership as using and recognizing the varied expertise of many to improve teaching and learning for all.

Table 13. Principal Attendance at DAT Meetings by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per quarter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: As needed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Actions to Facilitate Data Analysis by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather &amp; Share Data</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Data Analysis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Protocol Use</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principals have a high attendance rate at these team meetings. Seventy-six percent of them attend the grade-level team meetings monthly or weekly. Principals see themselves as important members of their school’s team. When asked about their role in the data team process, approximately 50% of them mentioned facilitating data analysis, including the gathering and sharing of data and monitoring the process. One principal commented, “I am able to share data information not typically viewed by individual teachers. This helps us make more specific plans for our students not hitting targeted benchmarks.”

Another principal commented under Survey Question 24 (Appendix B), “Teachers must turn in a meeting summary/protocol after each data meeting and it serves as a roadmap for tiers until the next meeting.” This accountability requirement, arranged by the principal, also serves to share responsibility for the necessary follow-through with instructional and monitoring decisions.
Table 15. Decision-making Protocols by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protocol Used for Intervention Decisions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIRF Plan (Screening and Information Recording Form)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Team Process Script (DATP) from PDE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Own protocols</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Own, similar to DATP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Created own, similar to SIRF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: DIBELS and DRA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Performance Tracker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Protocol adapted from School Reform Initiative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding protocols, 68% of schools used the SIRF Plan, the DATP script from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, or protocols adapted from these two plans. One used the steps delineated in Performance Tracker, and one used the steps used in the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS, Good & Kaminski, 2005) and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA, Beaver, 2002). Another used an adapted protocol from the School Reform Initiative. Two stated they used their own protocols.

**Discussion.** The data team meeting is the place where decisions are made. It’s the central command of this intensive push toward success for each student. It is here where collaboration becomes crucial. The progress of each student is discussed and plans for instruction are formulated. With such a large task load for each data analysis team, it becomes imperative to have a recognized format and routine. Unless the team follows an established written order of steps, the discussion process could outlast the time available. PDE has published the Data Analysis Team Process (DATP) Script (PaTTAN, 2008) to help districts organize this process. This was patterned largely after Joseph Kovaleski’s Screening and Information Recording Form (SIRF) Plan (Kovaleski & Marco, 2005). Performance Tracker (Sungard K-12 Education, https://www.kasd-pa.perplusk12.com) is a web-based assessment organizer that accesses state, national, and local assessment data. The School Reform Initiative
(http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org) is a non-profit organization that develops and maintains resources to support collaborative adult learning. They offer several downloadable protocols on their website. These include “Examining Data,” “Observing One Another,” and “Focusing on Students.”

Table 16. Method Used to Share Data by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method to Share Data</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Listings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google docs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Tracker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Data Blender</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: STAR Reports</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: AIMSweb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: DIBELS printouts &amp; Excel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: System generated reports</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To make data accessible for the data team collaborative meetings, two methods were widely used. Google docs was used by 52% of the schools, and Performance Tracker (https://kasd-pa.perfplusk12.com) was used by 43% of the schools. Performance Tracker is web-based and organizes assessment data into live charts and graphs. Data Blender was used by 24% of the schools. This data program, developed by the Warwick School District, is an online warehouse of data that can blend local assessments, district benchmarks, and summative tests, and can track progress of tiered small student groups (http://www.warwickware.org). Twelve schools (57%) used a combination of two methods. As a word of caution, a school district would do well to investigate the security of their data when using any of these data warehouses. For example, Google advises using their two-step authentication process.
Table 17. Method to Determine Rate of Improvement by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slope discrepancy- Slope of improvement compared to a normative cut-point</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual discrepancy using slope of improvement and end performance level</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Combination dual discrepancy and slope discrepancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Dual discrepancy with AIMSweb, running record benchmarks, and Measures of Academic Progress, and Title I eligibility requirements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final benchmark using a criterion-referenced benchmark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: AIMSweb graphs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Split- Slope of improvement meets the rank-ordered median</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final normalization- Standard scores on a mastery test meet a given percentile rank</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifty percent of the twenty schools who responded used the slope discrepancy method—the slope of improvement compared to a normative cut-point. Thirty percent used the method of dual discrepancy—using slope of improvement and the end performance level.

**Discussion.** It is not only important that the progress data are thoroughly analyzed, but that this analysis be used for making placement decisions for students—changes in tiers or for instructional programs. Cut scores need to be used for looking at a student’s adequate rate of improvement. The method used for determining an adequate rate of improvement becomes even more crucial when it is used as part of the learning support identification process.

Fuchs, Compton, Fuchs, Bryant, and Davis (2008) did a research study examining the outcomes of using different types of methods for determining adequate rates of improvement and how non-responsiveness should be defined. Three measures met appropriate standards for
sensitivity and specificity: (a) Final Normalization using Test of Word Reading Efficiency and Sight Word Efficiency, (b) Slope Discrepancy using Word Identification Fluency, and (c) Dual Discrepancy using Reading Fluency for level and Word Identification Fluency for slope. Both AIMSweb (Shinn & Garman, 2006) and DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 2005) assessments are prevalently used by schools for progress monitoring. Since progress monitoring reports of these Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) measures can yield both normative benchmark scores for grade level and a slope of improvement score, data analysis teams could look at both methods and their ramifications for decision making. It is confirmed from the results of this survey question that all but one of the approved schools used research-suggested methods of determining a student’s adequate rate of improvement.

The method used for determining an adequate rate of improvement becomes even more crucial when it is used as part of the learning support identification process. Central to the discussion over identification is the fact that each of these suggested methods identifies different sets of children designated as reading disabled and with highly variable prevalence rates (Fuchs, et al., 2008). This is a concern, and there needs to be a wider consensus across districts and states regarding which methods are most beneficial (Hughes & Dexter, RTI Network).

Regarding the number of data points necessary for reliable and valid progress monitoring scores and decision-making, Christ, Zopluoglu, Monaghan, and Van Norman (2013) found that the duration of progress monitoring is the single best predictor of the precision of slope of improvement. They reported that 12 to 14 weeks of data are necessary to show valid measures of growth. This knowledge should influence a data team’s decisions when setting the length of Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention times. However, analyzing shorter periods of progress monitoring should be conducive to data analysis teams when they collaborate for the purpose of fine-tuning instruction.
An extremely important perspective to hold is that any decisions about change in instruction, change in level of intervention, or especially decisions regarding LD identification, be made within the context of multiple forms of assessment, including state assessments, teacher-made assessments, and teacher judgment (Shapiro, 2013; Shapiro et al., 2012). Although slope analysis of a student’s rate of improvement is helpful, research evidence does not support the idea that accurate interpretations of a student’s growth can be made solely from utilizing this analysis method (Ardoin, Christ, Morena, Cormier, & Klingbeil, 2013).

Table 18. Method Used to Assess Intervention Quality by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Collaboration for Intervention Quality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Listings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss amount of time scheduled for an intervention (frequency and intensity)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss completed fidelity of implementation checklists</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss refinement plans with supports to improve implementation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss how many weeks the intervention should be given (duration)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Analyze data for error patterns and decide on modifications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Hold RtII checkpoint meetings with intervention specialists</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of schools that reported using more than one discussion topic to assess the quality of tier services was 75%. These four topics were widely used: “Discuss amount of time scheduled for an intervention” (frequency and intensity), 27% of responses; “Discuss completed fidelity of implementation checklists,” 24% of responses; “Discuss refinement plans with supports to improve implementation,” 24% of responses; and “Discuss how many weeks the
intervention should be given” (duration), 22% of responses. This indicates that these principals placed importance on all of these topics when deciding on Tiers 2 and 3 intervention adjustments.

**Discussion.** Fidelity must be a priority. Shapiro (2013) recommends that teams not only give attention to the results of progress monitoring, but also to the results of the school’s universal benchmark CBM data and to the records of implementation fidelity when measuring a student’s individual progress as a consequence of intervention. A principal can establish a strong foundation for fidelity when he is careful to plan a process for choosing appropriate evidence-based interventions and a process for providing teacher training in those interventions. It is important that a principal provide this infrastructure and necessary resources. When developing this infrastructure, it may serve principals well to use a fidelity checklist such as the one presented by Mellard and McKnight in Mellard and Johnson (2008, p. 127), “Standards for Judging High-Quality Fidelity of Implementation.” This tool assists principals in ranking the development of priorities such as planning for frequent monitoring of teachers who are new to an instructional method, planning for documentation of strategies addressed in recent professional development, and planning for feedback conferences with staff members.

The organizational factors of frequency, intensity, and duration for interventions are influenced by a school’s context (Harlacher, Sanford, & Walker, RTI Network). Contextual factors might include number of available staff and whether or not intervention is held during the same period each day for all grades or is staggered at different times for each grade level. One factor to consider when increasing intensity is the amount of transition time that takes up a portion of a school day. Intervention time can be lost through excessive transition times between classes or subjects (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Additionally, Mellard, McKnight, and Jordan (2010) suggest that increased intensity can be gained by forming groups with smaller numbers of students, using teachers with specialized skills, and focusing on specific learning goals.
It is an on-going process to form refinement plans and teacher supports in order to improve instructional implementation. Intervention programs may be new to teachers. Furthermore, these programs may contain detailed routines and formative assessments that require much practice and a training period. A principal can foster motivation for tackling these challenges by giving teachers a voice in selecting the programs and the opportunity to discuss how the programs will target their students’ needs (California Department of Education, 2007). Training for new interventions needs to incorporate a process and multiple supports, not a one-time launching event. Included in PaTTAN’s protocol for data analysis (PaTTAN, 2008), is the step of planning for team assistance to teachers who are learning instructional strategies. A principal should plan for ongoing coaching that incorporates feedback (DiGennaro, Martens, & McIntyre, 2005). It is also important to know that feedback to a teacher regarding implementation is most effective when it is immediate, specific, positive, and corrective (Scheeler, Ruhl, & McAfee, 2004).

The attitude of a principal during this training period is very important. Enthusiasm shown by the administrator engenders positive attitudes about a new program (California Department of Education, 2007). Equally important, a teacher should be confident that the principal’s attitude during the monitoring process is that of helping the teacher to be successful, not of formally evaluating the teacher’s aptitude (Mellard & Johnson, 2008).

Analyzing data for error patterns, although mentioned by only one principal, is part of the recommended PDE protocol for differentiating instruction for students at all tiers, but especially during Tier 3 intervention (Santoro, 2015). Teachers need to diagnose which reading subskills in phonics or comprehension, for example, need to be strengthened so that these can be remediated in a systematic manner during intervention.
### Table 19. *Data Trainings by Frequency*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainings</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIBELS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETRS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMSweb</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math CBM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Blender</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Tracker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWEA for MAP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Data Analysis Protocol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Review Google Doc</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National School Reform Faculty Protocols</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 20. *Data Trainers by Frequency*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Units</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading or Literacy Specialist/Coach</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Coach/Academic Learning Facilitator/Intervention</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist/Building Support Specialist</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PaTTAN or PDE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data &amp; Instruction Teacher/Instructional Technology Specialist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Coaching/Teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Coach</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District K-12 Test Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Group (progress monitoring workshops)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roland Good (DIBELS training)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor Personnel Followed Up by Peer Coaching</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 21. *Category of Data Trainers by Percentage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-house trainers</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside trainers</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Unit, PaTTAN, or PDE trainers</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading or literacy specialists/coaches</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional coaches, facilitators, or intervention or support specialists</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer coaching</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principals listed titles of helpful trainings. These included Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), AIMSweb, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), and STAR. LETRS (www.sopriswest.com) provides foundational knowledge for understanding how students learn to read, write, and spell, and discussion of how different areas of the brain are integrated in the process. The STAR Reading Assessment (www.renaissance.com) uses an adaptive computer programming to adjust to a student’s responses. It assesses foundational skills, reading informational text, reading literature, and language skills.

In many cases, the principals utilized the help of their own school or district staff to deliver trainings. Sixty-eight per cent of the responses referenced in-house trainers. Staff people assigned this task included reading/literacy specialists, instructional support coaches, data and technology specialists, the district test coordinator, psychologist, teachers doing peer coaching, and the principal. It appeared that all specialists were on call to provide the training that is needed. In results listed for Survey Question 22, one principal remarked, “Principals have trained a leadership team . . . prior to providing each training to entire grade levels. [I] send staff to training when possible with the expectation that they share the information with others.”

**Discussion.** This practice of using a school or district’s own staff as trainers, after receiving high-level training themselves, is supported by research. Bahr et al. (2006) did a study
comparing the type of training used for giving teachers professional development on problem-solving collaboration for general education intervention teams. When assessing the quality of team meetings, the use of in-house trainers for giving teachers this professional development was found to be as effective as having teachers trained directly by project staff. Nellis (2012) advocated developing local experts in important areas of intervention design and integrity, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of an intervention team without needing to require extensive training for everyone.

It is apparent from the survey results that principals chose a variety of sources to provide professional development for data analysis. PDE has made a strong commitment to offer trainings and technical assistance for MTSS-RtII through PaTTAN (2011b), in areas such as “MTSS Boot Camp,” “Tier 3 Problem Solving,” and “MTSS Writing and Math.” These trainings are especially helpful during the initial phase of a school’s endeavor to implement RtII. Intermediate Unit consultants also are available to assist school-based teams with context-embedded professional development and application of MTSS resources (www.pattan.org).

A data-driven focus on student achievement is one of the primary characteristics of principals who enhance learning in a school (Carbaugh et al., 2013). Therefore, building capacity for the skills of progress monitoring and data analysis becomes an important responsibility of school leaders. Making decisions regarding a professional development plan and timeline should come early in the process of RTI implementation. PDE offers a RtII Readiness and Implementation (Elementary): Self Assessment Tool (PaTTAN, 2007) that incorporates the setting of implementation priorities for RtII professional development.
Regarding obstacles encountered by principals in this process of team data analysis, 33% of principals mentioned having a challenge with data recording and its use for instructional decisions. Their representative comments are recorded below accompanied by their suggested solutions:

“Among the grade levels, the data collection and entering into the share drive is something that needs to be a shared responsibility. This coming school year, we will make changes and designate shared responsibility from the classroom teachers.”

“We have to always focus on the data and evaluate the results in an objective manner. The obstacle to overcome is the insistence on a continued focus on the causes while discarding the we've already tried that mentality.”

Team members that mistakenly identified behavior needs for academic needs and struggle with the fact that the small group instruction of tier 2 or tier 3 is not what is in fact needed for the student as it is an intervention. To overcome this we look at the data and base the needs on the data in front of us. Also, at times, we can be too data dependent on just one data point so we have worked hard to take a well-rounded view of the data before making a decision.

The importance of protocols was highlighted in Survey Question 25 where principals were asked to give advice to other schools that are developing their own RtII team collaboration.
routines and policies. When principals gave advice to “Establish the Data Meeting Protocol,” they referred to these uses:

“Select or develop a discussion protocol for evaluating progress monitoring data. Avoid discussions that ‘admire the problem’ and replace them with a persistent focus on determining best courses of action to address solutions.”

“Make sure your tier criteria are clear and do not waiver from using the data to make decisions.”

I would advise them to look at the protocols that are already working in other places, but to consider what can work or fit for your team. Most importantly, once you determine what will work for your team, be consistent and specific about what you do and when you do it.

**Discussion.** Using data wisely to ascertain causes for lack of benchmark proficiency and then matching these needs to intervention strategies was the concern of three of the principals. One principal mentioned the importance of focusing on finding root causes. This is crucial so that interventions can effectively target missing skills. This also involves using multiple sources of data. For example, DIBELS is useful as a screening assessment but will not give specific enough information for pinpointing weak skill areas. Diagnostic assessments are recommended in order to understand the nature and severity of reading difficulties and to provide intervention as early as possible (Harlacher et al., RTI Action Network; McHale-Small & Flaherty, 2015). For certain students needing Tier III instruction, an intervention plan must also address the learning-to-read components of phonological awareness, oral comprehension, and verbal and visual memory, for example. Establishing a meeting protocol was emphasized by one principal who seemed frustrated by having a division data team that kept running out of time to reach the end goal of deciding on appropriate interventions: “Establishing a division data meeting protocol in collaboration with the division teachers ensures instructional strategies and resources are identified to meet student's needs.”
The principals’ comments highlight the fact that time is a premium commodity. It is
difficult enough for a principal to fit data team meetings into the school’s master schedule.
Following that feat, there is the ongoing time challenge to be able to include all the necessary
problem solving and action planning for assignment of students to tiers or assignment of
interventions to instructors and students. Protocols help participants to focus on clarity of
purpose and efficiency. Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders, and Goldenberg (2009) investigated the
inquiry process that leads to improving student achievement. Their results suggested that it is
critical to seek causal connections to learning problems and to use a defined and printed protocol
that articulates specific steps, such as identifying appropriate goals, use of progress monitoring
assessments, lesson delivery, and further reflection on the process. One state-adopted protocol,
the “Problem-solving/RtI Worksheet” (2015) found at http://florida-rti.org, is used in the Florida
Collaborative Inquiry” (Wellman and Lipton, 2006), emphasizes the three steps of “Here’s What,
So What, Now What” and uses the categories of attention to task, attention to process, and
attention to relationship for data-driven dialogue.

The collaboration with school psychologists, speech therapists, and reading specialists all
adds strategic information to form a composite picture of a student’s skills (Harn, Chard,
Biancarosa, & Kame'enui, 2011). It is this level of data analysis that can be expertly used to
develop a targeted and focused intervention plan. Progress monitoring alerts us when a student’s
instruction is not adequately working; however, it takes teacher professional judgment to design
more effective instruction. It is exactly here, in this problem-solving scenario, that teachers need
to rely upon collaborative input for designing tailored interventions. For the entire data analysis
process, these principals were accountable to provide support for the data system, for fidelity
measures, for protocol use, and for ongoing professional development.
Research Question 3: How Do Principals Build Collaboration Skills?

The entire RtII process, including data analysis, matching of instruction to students’ needs, and improving teaching skills, requires a high degree of collaboration. The principal, as a guiding force, keeps the central focus on the purpose or the “Why” of RtII (Buffum et al., 2009). This next section discusses the survey results pertaining to building collaboration skills.

Promoting the school’s vision and building the culture and climate for school improvement call for deliberate action and portrayal of model behaviors by school leaders. These eight survey questions give us their insight: Survey Questions 10, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25.

Table 24. Actions to Facilitate Collaboration by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assist with Decision Making</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Collaboration to Address Identified Areas of Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Culture of Shared Responsibility/Ownership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate as a Team Member</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Discussion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in these results, the principal can help the team to navigate the complex process of Tier 2 and Tier 3 decision-making by keeping everyone’s focus on using the data to make decisions. Seven principals commented on their role in assisting with decision-making. One principal reported, “[I] assist with decision making, [and the] team process to determine the meaning and ramifications of the data.” Another explained, “[I] maintain a balance between discussion of data and making decisions based on the data.” These principals place a priority on matching interventions to student needs, as seen in this comment: “I assist, ask questions to promote discussion with a solutions orientation.”

Discussion. At times, individual teachers may initially rely upon past experience to match intervention to students rather than rely upon conclusions reached from the data analysis. For example, a tendency may be to rely on preconceptions of student ability or on ease of
scheduling, such as assigning a student to a current intervention group that has room for another student (Metcalf, RTI Network). Sometimes team members are more attune to a teacher’s perceptions which may or may not be based on the data (Knotek, 2003).

It is helpful for a principal to facilitate the process of data-analysis problem solving by continually being cognizant of the process as a whole. This makes it possible for principals to bring side-tracked conversations back into the end goal of making decisions and matching interventions to students’ needs. Two principals remarked, “I advocate for student needs,” and “I participate in or lead discussions to determine the intervention type or duration for individual students.” Several researchers have summarized this process by labeling four basic steps in the sequence of problem solving (Batsche et al., 2005; Castillo et al., 2012):

1. Identify the problem.
2. Analyze the problem
3. Design appropriate instruction and intervention plans.
4. Evaluate the intervention’s effectiveness.

Additionally, it appears that because these principals maintain an overarching perspective of the purpose of the RtII process and its objective to boost student achievement, they work to inculcate the same regard for decision-making into the mind-set of the teachers sharing in this collaborative endeavor. This is seen in the comment under the “Promoting Shared Responsibility” category: “We want our teacher teams to feel efficacy to dig into the data to have ownership over future decision making.”

One example of administrative support is the sharing of responsibility that develops leadership among team participants. This action is reflected in the comment, “We try to maintain a collectivist culture—‘all of the students are all of our responsibility.’ Sometimes I need to remind people of this.” This is an important characteristic of principals who use transformational
leadership to provide a platform for shared decision making and teacher empowerment (Rafoth & Foriska, 2006).

The attitude characterizing these comments is one of sharing authority and being able to trust the staff participants to carry out the duties of collaborative data analysis without using a heavy hand of control. As these principals stated, “I am another voice at the table,” and “As an active member of the team, I listen and provide additional thought and brainstorming with other members of the team on data analysis, tier design, instructional planning ideas, intervention ideas.” An effective facilitator encourages active involvement of everyone while maintaining a standard of judgment-free interactions. He or she is a good listener, adept at giving reflective feedback, and experienced at interpersonal problem solving (March & Gaunt, 2013).

Table 25. *Types of Norms to Facilitate Interaction by Percentage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team-developed norms</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Combination of team and administrator norms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator-supplied norms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: accepted practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that 95% of the schools (20 out of 21) used collaboration guidelines or norms to facilitate respectful interactions. Sixty-five percent used team-developed norms. Only two used administrator-supplied norms, and four used a combination of team and administrator norms.

**Discussion.** DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many (2010), in their book *Learning by Doing*, offer suggestions for developing norms for collaboration. A key suggestion is that it is beneficial for each team to create its own norms, and most of these principals did just that. Ownership of the process fosters greater commitment. Other suggestions include the following:

1. Norms should be stated as commitments to act in certain ways, rather than as beliefs.
2. For the first six months of team formation, the norms should be reviewed at the beginning and end of each meeting.

3. Teams should evaluate their effectiveness at least twice a year.

4. Violations of team norms must be addressed. (p. 136)

Several authors and organizations have offered guidelines for developing norms for teams. The National Staff Development Council published their *Tools for Change Workshops* (Champion, 1993), and DuFour et al. (2010) later published an adaptation of that guide. *Team to Teach: A Facilitator’s Guide to Professional Learning Teams* (Jolly, 2008) was also published by the National Staff Development Council. This guide advises to consider the procedures for teacher dialogue, decision making, attitudes, and behaviors. All of these norms help to articulate collective commitments to the process and to each other. When Little (1982) studied workplace characteristics of successful and adaptive schools, she found that these schools had norms of collegiality for their shared work. Interestingly, she also reported that principals have a key position to be able to establish and nurture collegial norms and to foster collaborative functions such as observation and discussion of practice, joint work on materials, and improvement of teaching skills.
Because staff as a whole must provide for three tiers of differentiated instruction, it is crucial for them to develop instructional skills to add to their repertoire of strategies. Seventy-nine percent of schools (15 out of 19) used a combination of collaborative activities to implement intervention instruction. The three most widely-used activities in which principals directed teams to engage were these: (a) developing a “menu” of possible strategies and standard protocol programs, (b) developing plans for differentiation within Tier 1, and (c) collaborating in professional learning communities other than data analysis teams to hone instruction. Three schools used peer modeling and coaching to increase instruction skill. One principal assigned reading specialists to meet with grade level teachers weekly “to provide professional development as needed to improve literacy instruction.”

**Discussion.** Coordinated instructional support that meets student needs involves the principal, general and special education teachers, and instructional support specialists. It is a priority for all of them to discuss scheduling and the acquisition of appropriate instructional and assessment materials (Harn et al., 2011). Principals and teams are able to find listings of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Listings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They will develop a “menu” of possible strategies and standard protocol programs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They will develop plans for differentiation within Tier 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They will collaborate in professional learning communities other than data analysis teams</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They will use peer modeling and coaching to increase instruction skill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Work with reading specialists to develop appropriate interventions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Identify strategies and resources</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
evidence-based instructional materials on The National Center on Intensive Intervention website. This center, functioning under the Office of Special Education Programs, established a standard process to evaluate the scientific rigor of commercially available tools for screening, progress monitoring, and academic intervention programs. These tools can be found at http://www.intensiveintervention.org/resources/tools-charts

The practice of differentiation is at the crux of this RtII process. The use of tiers is differentiation in itself, but differentiation is especially crucial in the delivery of core instruction at Tier 1. Allington (2009) says that it is critical for teachers to match a beginning reader to the appropriate level of text, because “high-success reading” produces more growth than struggling with harder texts. Therefore, teachers commonly use leveled texts so that reading practice can be differentiated for all students. Fountas and Pinnell (2010) have created a system for leveling texts (http://www.fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com), and the Common Core Curriculum uses Lexile levels to help identify appropriate texts (https://lexile.com). Teachers can collaborate to develop libraries of leveled books to share. They can further work together to decide how to assign students into small reading groups according to reading level and skill areas which have been assessed by running records and miscue analysis (Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2009).

Instruction can be differentiated class-wide by type of content presentation (advance organizers, online books accompanied by narration) or by type of product (quiz show, brochure, debate, or cartoon). It is also important to differentiate according to a student’s readiness, interests, and learning profile (Tomlinson et al. 2003).

Of course, it is necessary to use the experience and expertise of all of a school’s team players to carry out differentiated instruction plans. This is where professional learning communities (PLCs) can be forums to assist teachers who need others’ expertise. In this area of using PLCs, one role of the principal is to reinforce consistent messages about district reform and a PLC’s objective of improving instruction (Coburn & Russell, 2008). When teachers work in
collaboration instead of in isolation, their knowledge base and instructional strategies build on each other (Chenowith, 2009). Added to this, co-planning can include how-to demonstrations and follow-up time with feedback and co-teaching (Walker-Dalhouse, Riska, 2009), making instruction even more effective.

Table 27. Method to Assess Collaboration Quality by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team meeting report forms</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Grade level meeting discussions/check-ins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Informal observations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration rubric</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team progress self-assessment from <em>Team to Teach: A Facilitator’s Guide to Professional Learning Teams</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most surveyed schools used a team meeting report form to monitor the quality of a team’s collaboration. Only one used a collaboration rubric. One of the PDE-approved RtII school districts has submitted its team form to PaTTAN to be used as an exemplar by other school districts and can be accessed at the PaTTAN website (PaTTAN, 2012a). This is a weekly “Data Meeting Agenda” that is completed and submitted to the principal. It includes these reporting categories: “For This Week”—Attendees, Celebrate Success, Analyze Data, Below Level Interventions, Above Level Enrichment; and “For Next Week”—Topics and Instructional Strategies/Materials & Resources, and Suggestions for Changes to the Curriculum Map.

**Discussion.** There are a few assessments that address collaboration quality which have been published in the research. The Formative Assessment of Collaborative Teams (FACT) is a rated checklist that was created in an action research project to address fidelity and quality during collaborative team meetings and the professional learning community (PLC) process (Taylor, Hallam, Charlton, & Wall, 2014). Its objective is to facilitate individual members’ accountability and ownership. Collaboration components included in this checklist are the following:
participation, expertise, professionalism, roles, and productivity. Participants rate these components from 0-3. Burns, Peters, and Noell (2008) have also developed a performance feedback tool to be used for the problem-solving team process. This is a 20-item checklist that serves to strengthen the problem-solving team’s fidelity. After its implementation, teams were found to have more consistently used a form to request a meeting, document the process, and hold follow-up meetings.

Table 28. Listing of Collaboration/Consensus-Building Trainings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainings for Collaboration</th>
<th>Trainer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLC Overview and subsequent trainings</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC Training</td>
<td>Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared readings from <em>Whatever It Takes</em> by Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Karhanek &amp; articles provided by PaTTAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Don’t Bring It to Work; Crucial Conversations</em></td>
<td>CEO &amp; Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books: CAFÉ, Core Six</td>
<td>In-house &amp; PD trainings by staff members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National School Psychologists Assoc. Meeting Protocols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic Achievement Partners Initiative focus on Rigor, Relevance and Relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29. Collaboration Training Type by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainings</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared Readings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC Training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protocol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30. Collaboration Trainers by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals/Assistant Principal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house Staff Members</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only 33% of the principals commented on trainings for collaboration. In five schools, principals listed using shared readings from PLC literature and PaTTAN. Two listed PLC training, specifically. As seen in the survey results for trainings chosen to develop data analysis skills (Survey Question 19), in-house trainers were used to deliver most of the trainings. In three schools, the principal or assistant principal were the presenters.

**Discussion.** Several books were mentioned by the principals to develop collaboration skill for raising student achievement. *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When kids Don’t Learn* (DuFour et al., 2004) discusses how teachers respond when kids aren’t progressing and gives suggestions for designing systematic interventions. It can serve as a broad overview for engaging teachers in collaboration around the processes of building shared knowledge and inquiry into best practices. *Core Six: Essential Strategies for Achieving Excellence with the Common Core* (Silver, Dewing, Perini, & Jacobs, 2012) is a book that suggests classroom strategies to put the Common Core State Standards into practice across all grade levels and subject areas. The research-based strategies include the following: (a) Read for meaning, (b) Compare and contrast, (c) Inductive learning, (d) Circle of Knowledge (collaboration), (e) Write to learn, and (f) Vocabulary’s CODE. The book includes sample lessons, implementation checklists, and planning considerations.

*Crucial Conversations* (Patterson, 2002) is a book used to develop collegial relations with the skills of listening and speaking persuasively. It also aims to develop collaborative skills in order to find synergistic solutions to problems. The book, *Don’t Bring It to Work: Breaking the Family Patterns That Limit Success* (Lafair, 2009), discusses how to avoid and resolve workplace conflict and origins of dysfunctional behavior patterns. Although not mentioned by these responding schools, PaTTAN offers training opportunities to develop skills for collaboration and staff “buy-in.”
Table 31. Effective Actions to Build Collaborative Culture by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Action or Policy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Celebrations of Success</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Recognition</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working together to develop curriculum (materials and instructional resources) aligned to PA Core Standards</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Begin faculty meetings with affirmations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Staff input to build buy-in</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: A sense of common purpose for increasing student achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Grade level collaboration times are part of the master schedule</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of principals took the time to accentuate the positive. Eighty-five percent of principals had scheduled school celebrations of success. Seventy-five percent used moments of staff recognition. Seventy-five percent also reported that working together to develop curriculum materials and instructional resources was instrumental in building the cooperative climate. Other suggestions included giving a sense of common purpose for increasing student achievement, encouraging staff input in order to build buy-in, and beginning faculty meetings with affirmations. Recognizing and celebrating staff are two of the leadership responsibilities positively associated with student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005).

**Discussion.** Fostering a culture and climate of collaboration involves many interpersonal skills. Although the element of culture is intangible and not as manageable as the data analysis component, it is nonetheless vital to the success and sustainability of RTI implementation. We can learn much from the experience of these principals on this important element of RtII. Building a culture of trust and respect is foundational to collaboration in the RTI process (Fleming & Monda-Amaya, 2001). It needs to be laid during the groundwork of the RtII process and maintained throughout the ongoing mission of school improvement. When a principal asks for staff input to build buy-in, a rapport and trust naturally develop. There are other ways to authentically show appreciation and value to teachers and administrators. School celebrations of
success can applaud the joint achievement of a school’s collaboration efforts as well as outstanding contributions of individuals, and can promote a caring culture (Hipp & Huffman, 2010). These public events give visual reminders of values and purpose (Peterson & Deal, 2002). The trait of self-efficacy and the belief that “we can do this” are also reinforced when principals recount a school’s success stories (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Scheduling times and venues to recognize staff, in small ways or in community-wide forums, can yield more allegiance and support to the school’s mission of improved achievement for all students. One principal mentioned the practice of beginning faculty meetings with affirmations. This is a clear example of a principal who understands that recognition of staff strengthens the team (Barth, 2006; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Furthermore, it would be wise to not only recognize academic achievement but to also include areas of improvement, service, and character (DuFour et al., 2004).

Working together to develop curriculum is an authentic teaming activity and requires much focused involvement of all members. With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), teachers are working to align lesson plans to focus on mastering more rigorous standards. Pennsylvania has modified the CCSS and written their own version, the Pennsylvania Core Standards, which retain the features of rigor and depth of learning. This curriculum alignment work involves choosing the highest priority or eligible content and building curriculum maps with units that fit into the space of a school year (Chenowith, 2009). As teacher teams examine the CCSS, they discuss how to make the outcomes measurable. Rubrics must be written and formative assessments must be collaboratively designed. Then, the important work of differentiating instruction must be undertaken (O’Meara, 2011). The CCSS do include mention of supports that may help to differentiate instruction for students with disabilities. Some of these
are presentations of information in multiple formats, variety in assignments, and variations in materials and procedures (Jimerson, Stein, Haddock, & Shahroozi, 2016).

Table 32. Obstacles to Building Collaboration Skills by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Obstacle</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Purpose &amp; Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training New Teachers in RtII</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 33. Advice Topics for Building Collaboration Skills by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Advice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize RtII’s Purpose &amp; Culture</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal comments that shed light on the topic of “How Principals Build Collaboration Skills” are discussed below. They refer to obstacles, solutions, and advice. Three important themes emerged: (a) understanding the purpose of RtII, (b) building the culture conducive to RtII, and (c) building staff capacity for collaboration.

**Discussion.** When principals gave advice from their experiences, three areas were highlighted. First, they advised to emphasize and reiterate RtII’s purpose of giving the best instruction to meet all students’ needs. This is demonstrated by the following remarks:

The number one obstacle was getting everyone to understand our purpose for RtII implementation. Once they understood that RtII was to improve our teaching practices and to provide the best instruction for ALL students, our job became much easier.

Know that it is going to be a long process and that it requires that the principal dive into all aspects of the RtII process, and in many cases, the principal will need to remind teachers WHY RtII processes are valuable and necessary.

Keeping all eyes on the goal can never be far from principals’ minds, as shared by one principal:
I would also suggest that they always keep a focus on the goal or purpose (growing each child) and to adjust when something just does not work for your setting or faculty. Most importantly, once you determine what will work for your team, be consistent and specific about what you do and when you do it.

When Katzenbach and Smith (1993) summarized characteristics of high performing companies, they included the attributes of leadership teams who kept each other focused and committed to the goal and who inspired confidence in everyone as a result. When Marzano et al. (2005) summarized a meta-analysis of effective school leadership, they identified that focusing a school’s efforts on clear purpose and goals was a key leadership responsibility. When Pennsylvania teachers were asked to report on the most important disposition needed in their RtII implementation process, they responded, “to work with others toward a common goal” (Bean & Lillenstein, 2012). This RtII focus on raising achievement for all students must be re-emphasized, because RtII is a long-term multi-year improvement process, and commitment is crucial for sustainability.

Second, these principals believed that creating a supportive culture of accountability is important, a culture where the principal sets the tone and then holds team members mutually accountable for working toward RtII’s purpose. This belief is seen in the following statements:

Changing the culture to understand that this is how we will do business and that it is not going away. Building trust, accountability, and staff skills are cornerstones. Policies and procedures are helpful, but building the people skills and culture is paramount to sustain change.

We've been fortunate that we've built this collaboration from the beginning. By listening to teacher ideas, concerns, and suggestions, and then tweaking the framework accordingly, everyone knows we are all in it together.
It’s about keeping an open mind and accepting that all kids learn differently and are at varying levels/stages in their academic acquisition. It’s also about not thinking ‘my kids vs. your kids.’ They are all of our kids and we need to work together in helping them achieve growth.

The importance of giving people recognition in order to support the culture is illustrated by this comment: “Listen to all of your staff’s concerns; try to facilitate professional discussions and brainstorming meetings when they get frustrated. ALWAYS celebrate the success stories.” Another voice advised, “It is important to celebrate when students do move back into only needing Tier 1 support, and serves to remind teachers that RtII does work when all are committed to the success of the most struggling students.”

The accountability statements used above to emphasize the responsibility that team members hold could be characterized as rallying cries: “This is how we do business,” “They are all of our kids and we need to work together in helping them achieve growth,” and “RtII does work when we are all committed to the success of the most struggling students.” Reciprocal accountability is the process principals establish when they provide the support and resources teachers need for student improvement, so that teachers in turn can fulfill their responsibility to help students (Fullan, 2013). This type of support is illustrated in the following statement:

There must be support from the Board and District Administration first and foremost. Then, work extensively with your faculty and staff to build understanding and investment. LISTEN to them, as they are your “instructional experts. Then, build a schedule and provide the TIME to give them, so they can meet, analyze data, progress monitor, plan, come back together. Also, COMMUNICATE with parents. They need to be on board with it too. It’s not impossible…we’ve done it and it works!”

Gallimore et al. (2009) concluded that in order for a school to be successful in raising academic achievement, it is necessary for a principal to support teams and, at the same time, to
hold them accountable to continue working on the problem-solving process until improvement becomes a reality. Building capacity in this way means everyone “puts their hands to the plow,” engaging in the same purpose, doing the hard and long work together.

Third, training was viewed by these principals as a priority to build staff capacity for collaboration: “Provide proactive training prior to starting RtII implementation to build buy-in of staff,” and “Also give the staff credit for what skills and expertise they already exhibit and then build on from there.” Another piece of advice was to “Give teachers time to collaborate and teach them how to do it.” Part of reciprocal accountability requires that principals provide for continuous job-embedded professional development, which begins with using the expert knowledge that staff already hold. In Bean and Lillenstein’s (2012) survey regarding making RtII work, interviewees reported that they gained significant professional growth when they underwent job-embedded learning as a result of their contributions and experiences.

To summarize how these principals viewed building collaboration skills, they emphasized the shared responsibility of all staff to make plans for meeting student needs and kept everyone focused on this goal. They reinforced accountability with use of norms and collection of team report records. They built a culture of collaboration by implementing professional learning communities and by rewarding teams and individuals for reaching team goals.

**Research Question 4: How Do Principals View the Connection between the Team Collaboration Process and the Sustainability of Their RtII Plan?**

Building collective capacity in order for the RtII process to operate is an all-encompassing priority. It is the building of collective collaboration capacity that will make RtII a reality. Team collaboration embodies the RtII process. It takes all of the team together to plan for assessment, differentiated instruction, tiered interventions, and repeated assessment. The principal leads by giving the teams what they need in order to be successful, a playing out of reciprocal accountability. However, nurturing a supportive culture for collaboration is also
essential. How is it possible for all of this large framework of RtII to be sustained? This section asks the principals’ perspectives on how the process of team collaboration is tied to sustainability of the school’s RtII plan. It uses the open-ended results from four survey questions: Survey Questions 22, 23, 24, 25.

Table 34. Actions to Support Shared Leadership by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Action</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the lead role during RtII meetings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Reading Specialists/Coaches</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Instructional Support Specialists</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Psychologists</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving teachers responsibility for the data analysis and instructional planning process</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving teachers a voice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying the school’s mission</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principals’ responses could be grouped under five categories, and their comments are recorded below. Each category also contains discussion comments.

**Discussion.** The philosophy of sharing the lead role when facilitating RtII meetings was expressed by this advice: “Facilitate meetings as opposed to ‘running them.’” Let people do their job in their area of expertise.” These responses explain specific configurations:

The school psychologist prepares and presents the data for RtII meetings. The RtII team for each meeting consists of the individual classroom teacher, school psychologist, Title I or Instructional Support teachers and learning support teacher. Monthly division data meetings consist of classroom teachers, Title I or IST teachers, Learning Support teacher, Instructional Coach and principal. Each team member provides input. Decisions are made collaboratively.
Our Instructional Support Specialist leads the discussion and analysis of student data.

We sit as a grade level team, that includes me as the principal as we discuss progress or the lack of progress then determine an appropriate course of action for each student.

Gallimore et al. (2009) suggest that the facilitator role can be shared and rotated as team members’ capacity for this skill grows, and observe that teams are actually more effective when they are led by a peer-teacher facilitator, for several reasons. As teachers, they themselves are a full participant in the inquiry and solutions process. They are trying out the same instructional strategies that their teammates are suggesting. When principals are freed from this responsibility, they are able to concentrate on giving support and accountability to all of the school’s teams and their facilitators. They are then able to serve as leader of leaders, rather than as the foremost expert problem solver of the school (DuFour, 2004; Wilhelm, 2013). Sharing lead roles at team meetings gives everyone the opportunity to be personally invested. When this shared responsibility element functions, the RtII collaboration process has a better chance of being sustained.

Giving teachers responsibility for the data analysis and instructional planning process included these practices:

I have encouraged teachers to constantly look at reading and math data and to talk with grade level team members, reading specialists, special ed teachers and me about differentiation in core in addition to established interventions for our tier 2 and 3 students. We have called RtII review meetings early, at the suggestion of teachers and reading specialists, when students have caught up to grade level before a 12 week period has ended.

All staff members have a hand and are responsible for the data and for progress monitoring, great Data Blender data housing system, putting more ownership on data analysis on the teams, collaborating to plan for student instruction based on data.
Other responsibilities included the following: “Reading specialists meet with grade level teachers weekly to provide PD as needed to improve literacy instruction,” and “There are designated math and reading team members that are responsible for sharing the information from meetings back to their grade level teams.”

The sheer volume of data necessitates shared responsibility. This organization of small grade-level teams ensures that every teacher participates in data collection and interpretation. When this occurs, teachers will begin to engage in reflection on their teaching practices and take more ownership of their RtII process (Gischlar, Hilt-Panahon, Clemens, & Shapiro, 2011).

Giving teachers a voice included these insights: “Everyone has a voice. Conversation, discussions, and sharing allow everyone the opportunity to be heard and seen as a team member,” and “I seek feedback from teachers in how we can make the process more effective, meaningful and powerful.” This next quote is a comment about the process of shared leadership:

The entire process has been one of teamwork and collaboration from the very beginning. As the idea of RtII unfolded, teachers were encouraged and welcomed to share ideas, and these ideas were incorporated into planning. Annual surveys provided insight into the successes and struggles we encountered and we worked together to address any issues to improve instructional delivery. We truly listened to teachers and by addressing their concerns, increased investment and accountability ensued.

When a principal creates an avenue for individual teachers to have a voice and actively seeks teachers’ input, as seen here, sustainability is developed. It does so because it increases personal engagement with the process. When a professional relationship is characterized by shared leadership and mutual respect for each person’s expertise, staff are more likely to develop ownership for collaboratively-arrived solutions and are more likely to carry through on recommended actions necessary for solution implementation (Nevin, Thousand, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Villa, 1990).
The topic of cultivating leadership proffered these insightful remarks:

Principals have trained a leadership team as above prior to providing each training to entire grade levels. Cultivating this leadership has been instrumental in getting things off the ground smoothly. Building a core leadership team is important. We also complete needs assessments to determine what teachers need. Send staff to training when possible with the expectation that they share the information with others.

I attempt to utilize the ‘multiplier’ concept. When problem solving, I work side by side with my staff. In doing so, I ask many questions and reduce barriers as I watch them move forward to acquire answers. I'm still working at getting better at this.

Creating a leadership team is seen as one of the first steps in implementing the RtII process. Building teams can manage overall facilitation and evaluation of how the RtII process is being carried out (Burns & Gibbons, 2012). Some of the team’s responsibilities include conducting a needs assessment for resources and staff, identifying training needs, and building commitment and consensus among staff. Burns and Gibbons (2012) offer suggestions for effective teams: have an agreed upon mission statement and a regularly scheduled meeting time and place, and have assigned but flexible roles such as problem-solving facilitator, recorder, and agenda manager. They also advise to include both general education and special education members and an administrator. Additionally, NASDSE (2008a, 2008b) has published guidelines and self-assessment rubrics for leadership teams, both at the school building level and at the district level, in their documents, “Response to Intervention: Blueprints for Implementation.” These manuals suggests role functions that include a data mentor, content specialist, facilitator, staff liaison, and the principal as instructional leader and resource allocator.

When a principal commented on utilizing the “multiplier” concept, that person expressed an astute principle that can move the collaboration process forward. This principal was serving as a mentor and saw his time investment of working side by side with staff as a specific and personal
goal. As well as scheduling time for grade-level teams to meet, it is just as important for a principal to regularly schedule time for meetings with members of the leadership team, in order to develop strong leadership skill sets (Wilhelm, 2013).

Shared leadership is indispensable to sustaining effective RtII collaboration. First of all, the sheer workload of assessments and planning for Tier 1 differentiation and effective interventions cannot be logistically completed without reliance on all staff. To be an ongoing improvement effort, teachers must not only be delegated duties, but must be “wooed” and motivated by the possibility of positively affecting the progressive trend line of many students. One principal effectively described a key to motivating teachers when he gave this advice under Survey Question 25: “If we expect our teachers to be leaders within their own right, we must give them the opportunity to feel the thrill of leading on behalf of kids.” These principals have set into place many practices to sustain their RtII process. Besides delegating responsibility, they have made certain that they nurtured relationships with their staff so that staff felt their roles were necessary, valued, and respected.

Table 35. Connections Between Collaboration and Sustainability by Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Framework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Expertise</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Breeds Success</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Support</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion.** In broad terms, the responses could be grouped into two categories: (a) The collaborative work of the team ensures sustainability, and (b) Team collaboration, rooted in mission and culture, strengthens sustainability. However, in order to attempt to use this information as advice for other school communities who are implementing their own RtII process, it is more advantageous to look at the principals’ responses in a more specific manner,
and so the following six categories are used: consensus, culture of continuous improvement, structured framework, shared expertise, success breeds success, and principal support.

1. Consensus

When these principals comment on the importance of consensus and infrastructure, they are realizing the priority of building a strong foundation for RtII in order to realize the benefit of sustainability later on in their process, as seen in these quotes:

“The wider the net for collaboration the more ownership is felt by the team. This is critical in helping others feel personal connections to the mission and vision of any program/plan.”

“It [collaboration] is a must. All stakeholders must believe in the system and collaborate together to make it work.”

Gaining consensus is a process that calls people to embrace the mission of RtII, academic progress for all, and its implications to engage collaboratively in the work with values of trust, respect, and problem-solving. Tending to the matter of building consensus for a school’s RtII process is an important initial step in implementation. It’s listed as the first stage in the NASDSE (2008b) manual, “Response to Intervention: Blueprints for Implementation.” These NASDSE guidelines advise to not go ahead with initial implementation until establishing widespread consensus for RtII, because without it, the chances for sustainability are decreased. Steps for building consensus can include focusing attention on student outcome data, establishing smaller pilot programs, and maintaining continuous dialogue about benefits, challenges, and expected changes.

2. Culture of continuous improvement

Principals give collaboration high status when working toward continuous improvement for student achievement, as seen in these comments:
Our collaboration process will definitely have sustainability because everyone has been a part of the implementation and continuous discussions of how to make it even better. The process is now embedded into the culture and daily routines of each day.

“Open discussions at the building and district levels, re-examining the effectiveness of intervention programs and assignment of personnel resources to best meet student needs. Core team meetings also vital.”

“The more we collaborate and continue to evolve to meet the needs of the students we are working with and have students experience success, the more sustainability we will have.”

In the Learning Focused System philosophy, researcher and educator Max Thompson (2012) urges schools to establish ever-higher performance goals for their students. For example, instead of being satisfied that 80% of a school’s student population reached benchmark proficiency on a literacy or state summative assessment, he suggests that a school raise the bar to achieving 90% proficiency. Richard DuFour might describe this effort as creating “stretch” goals (DuFour et al., 2004). Utilizing stretch goals applies to teacher teams as well as to students. It is demanding more of students, teachers, and ourselves; consequently, principals need to provide the necessary support to reach those goals.

3. Structured framework

The surveyed principals thought that having an established regular schedule of team meetings was a factor in sustainability, as expressed here:

“The RtII data meeting structure ensures collaboration. We also have monthly division data meetings; divisions are k, ½, ¾ & 5. The division data meeting protocol ensures collaboration.”

“Because we have been meeting weekly and move to every other week in order to have data points to analyze, it has become a part of our ‘US’.”
“The RtII process is sustainable because the principal is not the lead, only a member. The other members of the team work with the students and can provide the progress monitoring data on a weekly basis.”

Holding to a data meeting protocol kept everyone on track, and team members had assignments to be accomplished, such as data analysis. Their practices coincide with the NASDSE (2008b) “Response to Intervention: Blueprints for Implementation” which gives action steps for building the infrastructure for RtII. These steps include advice for developing a data collection plan; organizing logistics of materials, personnel, and schedule for instructional groups; and making professional development plans. The principal is recognized as the lead architect of these plans, in conjunction with district administrative support.

4. Shared expertise

In the ongoing work of RtII teams, there occurs an interesting interplay of talented team members. Their collaboration over time leads to shared expertise and to their ability to make more effective and informed decisions. There is no “lone ranger” in this process. Everyone’s expertise is necessary, as reflected here:

There is a crucial connection because of the need to know the students and a variety of intervention strategies. If the team cannot work well together and rely on each other as resources, the process is hindered and could become ineffective.

Critical. The work happens and sustains over time in the context of a school, not separate from the culture. The practices need to become how we do business and that means working collaboratively. Teacher training programs do not teach the affective, problem-solving and decision making skills to sustain working with others.

When we talk about developing shared expertise, we can look at the concept of building professional capital over time (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Professional capital includes the components of human capital (individual skill), social capital with its strong collaborative group
influence, and decisional capital—the ability to make wise and sound judgments. Overall, the collaboration process develops wise judgment for RtII’s decision making. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) advise educational leaders to first focus on using social capital for school improvement, because of its quick power of influence. They say, “Use the group to change the group. This means developing how teachers as a team or group can best identify and respond to the needs of individual students” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013, p. 37). When one principal gave this insightful comment above, “Teacher training programs do not teach the affective, problem-solving and decision making skills to sustain working with others,” it seems the principal was referring to the skills developed through this ongoing process of collaboration and use of professional capital.

5. Success breeds success

When teachers observe the successes of RtII for student achievement, they are likely to solidify their support and intensify their efforts toward higher goals. These remarks allude to that principle: “Collaboration is essential to the sustainability of RtII. Every team member needs to see his or her role as important to the success of our students,” and “They also believe in the process and have seen how effective and accurate it is.”

Success does breed success. Small wins yield the type of self-efficacy seen in the statement, “Every team member needs to see his or her role as important to the success of our students.” Teams need to be applauded for reaching their grade-level goals, and schools need to celebrate the achievement of short-term and long-term gains. DuFour, et al. (2010) view celebrations as an effective way to build team effort leading to sustainability, and when planning celebrations, they advise to focus on the behaviors and commitment that led to the success.

6. Principal support

The last quote of this question’s discussion highlights the central theme of this survey, that leadership is crucial not only for designing RtII infrastructure and overseeing implementation, but also for establishing the process on the path to sustainability:
“If the principal is a major force in supporting and sustaining the RtII process, collaboration is easy.”

Table 36. *Obstacle to Sustainability by Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Obstacle</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patience with the Process</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 37. *Topic of Advice for Building Sustainability by Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Advice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold Perspective of a Long-term Process</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion.** Principals made comments that shed light on the topic of “The Connection between the Team Collaboration Process and the Sustainability of Your RtII Plan.” Solutions and advice for the obstacle of impatience with the process are discussed below:

One of the biggest things I believe is PATIENCE—-with some of our learners who are having difficulties, we don't see the immediate growth that is desired by folks and some want to have them "identified" right away. Folks don't often want to exhaust all possibilities, practices, programs, instruction and give them time—this can become a ‘rub’ as we see other kids grow and those in tier 2/3 not growing compared to their peer group. The other thing is just seeing the PROGRAM as the solution vs. the teacher and instruction.

We are struggling to hit our achievement goals in our school, but we are hitting our ‘growth’ goals. This is a huge let down for our faculty and we need to continue to get better at differentiating our Tier 1 and raising our expectations of what students can do.

“Know that it is going to be a long process and that it requires that the principal dive into all aspects of the RtII process.”
Burns and Gibbons (2012) support the principals’ view that all faculty members need to be patient with the process. They advise to begin the RTI process with the knowledge that it will be a four-year phase-in process whereby a foundation for school-wide assessment is developed, and then trainings for interventions, instructional strategies, and use of a problem-solving model are provided. When teachers are informed that the process will be long, they are more likely to stay the course. It is understood that ongoing training and support must be provided throughout the process. The characteristics of patience and flexibility are valued, because the system itself will need to be regularly examined and refined (Burns and Gibbons, 2012). Michael Fullan (2001) terms the lengthy process of developing leaders in a culture of change as “slow learning in context over time.” This certainly is the perspective necessary for building sustainability into the RtII context.

Recognizing and celebrating success along the way, as previously discussed, can also help to ease discouragement. Achieving short-term results, such as in the principal’s comment above, “but we are hitting our ‘growth’ goals,” should be celebrated and perceived as making good progress. Principals are advised by Fullan (2005) to take action to achieve early results. These interim wins gain the support of the school community and possibly the moral and financial support of local businesses and community foundations.

In summary, these principals view collaboration as a direct link to sustainability. First, principals view sharing leadership and expertise as a practical way to build sustainability. They expressly request their staff to share opinions and feedback, and they listen with a receptive attitude. They delegate responsibility for leading meetings, data analysis, and instructional planning. Second, they respect their staff. They foster personal connections to the mission and serve as mentors. Third, they seek to create a culture of continuous improvement.
Limitations and Directions for Future Research

One limitation to this study was that due to time constraints, face-to-face conversations with these principals were not possible. On-site visits may have procured more in-depth answers and advice. Another limitation is that while the results of this study give many helpful insights on building capacity for collaboration from principals who are leaders in the implementation of RTI, a more complete picture of challenges and solutions might be gleaned by surveying the teachers who teach in these same schools. A follow-up study could include teachers’ views of which practices have yielded the most support and success for them and their students. A third limitation is the small sample size. However, for the purpose of this study, to aid schools who are working to strengthen their own MTSS-RTI process, the sample does give experiential advice. It is not meant to be representative of all schools with established RTI ventures.

Consistent with another primary component of RTI implementation, that of parent engagement, future research could include views of parents who represent students receiving services in all tiers of RTI implementation. The focus could center on obstacles which have hindered parent-school collaboration and those practices which have strengthened their home-school connections. It could also ask what policies the school has designed to report progress monitoring of students and to facilitate families’ collaboration with teachers and administrators.

Another avenue of research may be to survey university programs of Educational Leadership in order to investigate the degree of preparation these programs offer to prepare future teachers and administrators for MTSS-RTI collaboration and implementation. Types of collaborative partnerships between these university programs and state departments of education or regional research centers could also be investigated.

Implications for Practice

When a school district decides to implement a MTSS-RTI process, it needs to design an integrated system of instruction and intervention that is steered by data analysis and team problem
solving. What we have learned from these principals’ survey responses is that when a principal acts as the lead engineer of schoolwide implementation, he plans for infrastructure and organized resources, but concomitantly, he builds a healthy culture of collaboration in order for the system change to function and continue to the sustainable stage. These two endeavors strengthen and perpetuate each other. As one principal advised, “Policies and procedures are helpful, but building the people skills and culture is paramount to sustain change.” A culture of respect and acknowledgement of everyone’s place on the team is essential.

The principals shared some of their insights from experience that could be used by RTI practitioners. First of all, collaboration among administration and staff members is the mortar that cements and strengthens each sequential step in RTI implementation. These principals related that the groundwork is laid when they set established times in the annual calendar for team meetings and intervention time, and when they ask for staff input to design workable schedules. They experienced that infrastructure requires the traits of flexibility and the willingness of all to compromise, as staff yields to having planning time set aside for team meetings and principals forego faculty meeting time.

Second, these principals shared how they fostered collaboration for the data analysis teamwork. One-third of the principals shared the facilitator role with all members of the team, and thereby allowed this shared expertise to result in designing differentiated interventions. The principals established several non-negotiables to ensure productivity of data analysis meetings. These included use of protocols and report forms and a non-arbitrary method to determine the rate of each student’s improvement. Although principals distributed some of their leadership, they remained committed to being actively involved during data analysis meetings. Seventy-six percent of them attended meetings weekly or monthly.

Third, the majority of principals used the practice of accentuating the positive to encourage collaboration and commitment. This helped to build a culture conducive to RtII, a
culture that understands, “this is how we will do business and that it is not going away.” They reminded staff of RtII’s purpose of “growing each child,” and that this is everyone’s responsibility.

Fourth, principals advised using staff collaboration and shared leadership to sustain RtII. Teachers were asked to share ideas that were incorporated into planning and were given responsibility for data analysis and instructional planning. Participation engendered more ownership and “personal connections to the mission and vision.” The RtII process was supported by actively involved principals throughout every phase—building infrastructure, preparation for data analysis, collaboration for carrying out instruction, and provision for sustainability through shared leadership.

Michael Fullan (2005) encourages schools to learn from each other, and to share “what works” and what may need improvement. He has termed this as building “lateral capacity.” Just as teachers collaborate with one another within a school, so principals can establish connections with other principals within and outside of their district to grow in capacity-building skills and to share insight only gained through experience. Districts can establish communication with “sister” districts. These collaborative relationships can be furthered even more by creating networks using web-based technology. This would be an ongoing process of everyone learning and encouraging together.

It has been the purpose of this study to share wisdom from Pennsylvania principals who willingly voiced their lessons learned, both with the building of infrastructure and the development of collaboration, both with the “skill” and the “will” of RTI. It is hoped that readers will sense the excitement of these committed principals and will also embrace this challenge. It is a process that calls for organization of resources and relationships, and the resolve to keep improving. It truly is a process that is driven by moral purpose and social justice.
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Appendix A

Literature Review

Effective Elements of RTI

*What is Response to Instruction and Intervention?* A composite of several definitions would relate that RTI is a process of getting help for those students who need it before they fail. It is a process of identifying students who aren’t meeting grade-level skills and giving them not only differentiated instruction during core classroom time, but also supplemental instruction with the goal of bringing students’ skills up to grade level. Universal screening is used to initially assess a student’s skill level, and then scheduled progress monitoring gives the information necessary for a team of teachers to fine-tune instruction and move a student into increasingly intense instructional tiers.

Although number of tiers differs in RTI implementation around the nation, the process is often comprised of three tiers, the framework espoused by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network [PaTTAN], 2012b). Tier 1 is the daily core instruction delivered by classroom teachers and aligned to state standards. It is the foundational component of tiered instruction, and the expectation is that 75%-80% of students should achieve proficiency levels with Tier 1 instruction alone (Shapiro, RtI Action Network). Administrators need to ensure that this instruction is researched-based (Foorman, 2007). This assurance is crucial for two reasons. First, educators have a limited amount of time to remediate literacy deficiencies. Younger students can accelerate to grade level much faster than older students whose reading levels may become two or more grade levels behind (Allington, 2009). Second, when students show signs of slow progress, it is important for educators to be able to rule out poor classroom instruction as the cause (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Hughes & Dexter, 2008; Yell & Drasgow, 2007).
When students are identified as falling below grade-level benchmarks in skill areas, they receive supplemental instruction in Tier 2 targeted to specific needs. This is scheduled at times other than the core curriculum instructional time and is usually organized in small groups of five to eight children (Shapiro, RTI Action Network). Tier 3 is more intensive intervention that is given to those students who don’t reach benchmark levels even after receiving Tier 2 instruction and are considered at “high risk” for failure. Tier 3 differs from Tier 2 in that instruction becomes more intense in number of skill sessions and also in duration. These small groups are usually composed of three to five children (Mellard & Johnson, 2008; Shapiro, RTI Action Network). A grade level or school should aspire to having no more than 15% of its students in Tier 2 and not more than 5% of its students in Tier 3 (Burns, Appleton, & Stehouwer, 2005; PaTTAN, 2011c). If this scenario is not the case, a school must re-examine its core instruction to find weaknesses and design stronger first instruction (Burns & Gibbons, 2012).

**Research base for the RTI process.** Randomized research trials cannot be found for the RtII system as a whole, and thus, it is not yet possible to state that there is a strong causal connection between RTI and increased academic success. From a practical standpoint, this type of research would not be welcome by districts that are making serious systemic plans to boost student learning. Districts would understandably be hesitant to ban some of their students from the process, and thereby jeopardize their district’s improved learning outcomes. The public is not left without evidence of beneficial aspects of RTI, however.

Burns et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis study of RTI implementation that included four large-scale RTI models: the Heartland Agency (Iowa) model, Ohio’s Intervention Based Assessment (IBA) model, the Minneapolis Public School’s Problem Solving Model (MPSM), and Pennsylvania’s Instructional Support Teams (IST) model. They included other RTI models that were research driven and evaluated 21 articles in all. Although the studies were not controlled randomized trials, the results of this meta-analysis suggested that the RTI process is effective for
systemic outcomes and for student learning. Included studies reported large effects for reductions in special education referrals and also large effects for increased reading scores. Implementation of these large-scaled RTI models also led to fewer students being identified as LD (less than 2% of the student population), compared to the rate of 5.7% reported by the Twenty-Fourth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (U. S. Department of Education, 2002).

Hughes and Dexter (2008) also reviewed published studies to present findings of the effectiveness of various multi-tiered RTI models. They used only peer-reviewed studies that included method and data analysis descriptions. These 16 studies included both standard protocol (preselected) interventions and problem solving (individually tailored) models of intervention. Seven studies focused on reading progress and six dealt with the impact of RTI on special education referral or placement. Other measurements included math performance, behavior, retention rates, or task completion. Similar to the results of the Burns et al. (2005) meta-analysis, Hughes and Dexter reported that the studies examining academic achievement showed some level of improvement for at-risk students after utilizing tiered intervention. This conclusion applied primarily to early reading skills in elementary grades, and Hughes and Dexter (2008) categorized these findings as “emerging evidence” of RTI effectiveness.

Several studies in the review of Hughes and Dexter (2008) reported decreases in special education referral and placement rates. For example, VanDerHeyden, Witt, and Gilbertson (2007), in their meta-analysis, found that RTI models reduced the number of student evaluations for special education services and thereby the costs of unnecessary evaluations, and that RTI almost eliminated the disproportional rate at which male and ethnic minority students were referred for special education evaluations. Bollman, Silberglitt, and Gibbons (2007), in their St. Croix River District, MN study, reported a decrease in placement rates over a ten-year period. Callendar (2007), in his study of the Idaho Results-based Model, reported a decrease in placement
for districts with at least one school implementing RTI, and O’Connor, Harty, and Fulmer (2005) found that placement rates dropped over a four-year period. However, similar to other researchers’ conclusions (Burns et al., 2005; VanDerHeyden et al., 2007), Hughes and Dexter (2010) pointed out that evidence for RTI effects was weakened by limited research designs.

In lieu of having empirical research that showcases the strong benefits of the process as a whole, we are able to look at solid research that focuses on the core process of RTI, the use of a multi-tier system of supports (MTSS). In PA, this includes Tiers 2 and 3 beyond the core curriculum of Tier 1 (PaTTAN, 2010b). It is imperative that research-based instruction be used in all three tiers of intervention, and this principle is fundamental to Tier I core instruction. According to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, scientifically based research utilizes systematic, empirical methods with rigorous data analyses and provides reliable and valid data across multiple measurements, evaluators, and studies (U. S. Department of Education, National Institute for Literacy, 2006). Additional elements of the MTSS system include fidelity of instructional implementation and team-based data analysis which is used in progress monitoring and resultant student placement decisions.

**Tier 1.** Tier 1 core curriculum includes the five reading components outlined in the 2000 National Reading Panel (NRP) report. This publication, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), was a meta-analysis of published peer-reviewed research on quality reading instruction. It identified the “Big 5” components of an effective reading program that need to be included in all Tier 1 reading programs. These include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Phonemic awareness instruction, which includes blending and segmenting of letter sounds, was proven as effective for reading and spelling, particularly when instruction was explicit, given to small groups, and focused on only one or two skills at a time. Teaching phonics systematically improved decoding, spelling, and even comprehension. Explicit and
repetitive vocabulary instruction was effective in improving comprehension skills. Corroborating these findings was Torgeson’s study (2002) on the prevention of reading difficulties, in which he reported that lack of phonemic awareness and lack of spoken vocabulary/oral language contributed to reading difficulty.

General effective instructional strategies are integral to Tier 1. Throughout several decades of studies, direct and explicit instruction that is highly structured has been reported to lead to improved student learning (Archer & Hughes, 2014; Foorman, Francis, Fletcher, Schatschneider, & Mehta, 1998; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007). The Florida Center for Reading Research (2006) recommends that instruction within each component be explicit and systematic. This means that a teacher gives a clear explanation of a strategy, models it, guides students through multiple practice periods with corrective feedback, and then gives support for students’ independent application of the strategy. Al Otaiba, Kosanovich-Grik, Torgeson, Hassler, and Wahl (2005) stressed that effective reading programs include explicit instructional strategies and consistent instructional routines.

**Tier 2.** There is strong research support for utilizing Tier 2 small group intervention that incorporates the major components of effective reading instruction. Research studies showing evidence that small groups have been effective with supplemental instruction were reported by a panel gathered by the Institute for Education Science (Gersten et al., 2009). Each of the following referenced studies showed statistically significant effects in at least one domain of reading instruction: Gunn, Biglan, Smolkowski, and Ary (2000) in decoding; Jenkins, Peyton, Sanders, and Vadasy (2004), Mathes et al. (2005), and Vaughn et al. (2006) in decoding and comprehension; and Lennon and Slesinski (1999) in decoding and phonemic awareness. In another synthesis of extensive early reading interventions, Wanzek and Vaughn (2007) reported that the most effective studies of intensive interventions used both phonics instruction and text reading, were provided early in grades K-1, and had the smallest group sizes.
Regarding the intensity of reading interventions, the meta-analysis of Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, and Moody (2000), in ascertaining the effectiveness of one-to-one and small-group interventions for at-risk students, found that although longer intervention duration (number of weeks) did not significantly influence outcomes, the same amount of instructional time delivered more intensively did tend to have more powerful effects in reading gains. Gersten et al. (2009) included studies incorporating small group sizes of from two to six students that met daily or four times per week. Session times ranged from 30-50 minutes.

The report of Gersten et al. (2009) included the following recommendations for small groups:

- Target the reading components the student lacks.
- Implement instruction for 20-40 minutes three to five times each week.
- Build skills gradually while utilizing high student-teacher interaction and frequent practice of specific skills accompanied by feedback.

**Tier 3.** Tier 3 intervention is for those students who have not responded to Tier 1 classroom instruction or Tier 2 supplemental instruction, meaning that their progress monitoring assessment scores have not reached benchmark levels for their grade. Because their achievement levels fall within the significantly below average range, these students are reviewed by a data analysis team and are assigned more focused, targeted, and intensive instruction in very small groups. This intervention time is usually additional to Tier 2 instruction.

Tier 3 interventions should be focused on individual student needs and planned to include the necessary resources to remediate those deficiencies (Burns & Gibbons, 2012). Two categories of interventions are used to plan this instruction. Standard protocol interventions have a manual that guides a teacher through a set range of research-based strategies and systematic instruction. Problem-solving interventions are research based, but not pre-selected. They are flexible and responsive to individual needs (Eich, 2013).
Several effective interventions for students with learning disabilities that can be applied to Tier 3 instruction were identified with the meta-analyses of Forness and Kavale (1997) and Swanson and Sachse-Lee (2000). Among these were the following: explicit reading comprehension instruction and direct instruction techniques, including the routine of drill-repetition-practice-review; use of strategy cues, visual representations, and mnemonic strategies; and organization of students into small interactive groups.

**Fidelity of implementation.** Fidelity of implementation is crucial to the RTI process for several important reasons. First, it impacts the quality of both core curriculum instruction and intervention instruction. Second, it is essential in the learning disability identification process. Without this component, it cannot be known whether a student’s lack of progress is due to a disability or to a lack of appropriate instruction. Furthermore, if little attention is given to implementation fidelity in a school setting, there is a tendency for intervention implementation to weaken in quality over time (DiGennaro, Martens, & McIntyre, 2005; Noell et al., 2005).

Fidelity checks are initially important to ensure instructional integrity, but they are also an integral part of the RTI progress monitoring system. Since data analysis teams must make adjustments to instruction based on the effectiveness of intervention instruction over several weeks, fidelity checks must be maintained over an extended period of time (Gable, Hendrickson, & VanAcker, 2001). It is crucial that calculated rates of improvement remain reliable for decision-making purposes and Tier assignment.

Documentation of instructional fidelity itself is an important issue. Since The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act regulations (IDEIA, U. S. Department of Education, 2006) stipulate that an evaluation team must consider data that the child was given appropriate instruction and must document the strategies used, it is imperative to document whether or not interventions were administered with fidelity. In Pennsylvania, multiple tiers of
progressively intense instruction/interventions are implicitly required by law, and fidelity measures are explicitly recommended by the state’s guidelines (Zirkel & Thomas, 2010).

Two approaches have been linked to stronger maintenance of fidelity. Fidelity or integrity can be measured by direct methods, such as systematic observations, or can be measured by indirect methods, such as self-reports or rating scales (Kovaleski, Marco-Fries, & Boneshefski, 2013). The easiest method of assessing fidelity is the practice of using a teacher’s self-reported data, sometimes in the form of checklists. This offers the advantage of helping teachers to pinpoint weaknesses in their instruction and improve them (Kovaleski et al., 2013). Unfortunately, the easiest route is subjective and has not been found to be reliable or lead to more exacting implementation (Noell et al., 2005; Wickstrom, Jones, La Fleur, & Witt, 1998). A more objective method is using direct observation by trained personnel along with a collection of a teacher’s instructional materials and student work samples in order to rate the level of adherence to the critical steps of the intervention (Gansle & Noell, 2007). Glover (2010) suggests that schools can more efficiently use a mixture of self-appraisal with periodic direct observations for fidelity assessment.

Using direct instruction techniques to train teachers in intervention implementation resulted in better implementation than by using didactic training alone (Sterling-Turner, Watson, Wildmon, Watkins, & Little, 2001). A standard training protocol can ensure consistent training and should be used in conjunction with direct coaching and feedback (Telzrow, McNamara, & Hollinger, 2000). Additionally, holding brief weekly performance feedback meetings with teachers where their implementation data is reviewed has been effective in maintaining and improving fidelity (DiGennaro et al., 2005; Noell, Witt, Gilbertson, Ranier, & Freeland, 1997).
Building Capacity for Data Analysis Teams

**Work of the data analysis team.** Data analysis teams (DATs) meet after benchmark screening measures to review grade-wide data, to select students for tiered interventions, and to suggest instructional strategies. These screenings are administered at least three times per year (Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007). Data teams have historical precursors in problem-solving models such as Pennsylvania’s Instructional Support Teams (Kovaleski & Black, 2010; Kolvaleski, Gickling, Morrow, & Swank, 1999). These teams are especially beneficial for the problem analysis that occurs when special education, general education teachers, program specialists, and administrators collaborate over data and interventions (Burns, Vanderwood, & Ruby, 2005). RTI differs from prior models in that assessment and instruction are now integrated into a system that utilizes (a) universal screening that informs Tier 1 core curricula and (b) standard protocol interventions at Tiers 2 and 3 (Kovaleski & Black, 2010).

DATs use the results of the screening measures that are given routinely in the fall, middle, and end of the school year to gauge the reading level and progress of all students and to identify students who are at-risk (Torgeson, 2002). Additionally, the teams analyze progress monitoring assessments given to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students and make instructional adjustments. Ongoing progress monitoring is crucial for determining the effect of an instructional strategy (McMaster, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2005). The most widely-used assessments are curriculum-based measures (CBMs) which are relatively efficient and easy to administer (Deno, 1992). These involve repeated measurements on equivalent forms of a grade-level task across extended time periods and are able to measure a student’s rate of change or progress. Examples include the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS, Good & Kaminski, 2005) and Aimsweb (Shinn & Garmin, 2006). These two assessments give oral reading fluency scores (words read correctly per minute), as well as phonemic awareness and letter naming measures for kindergarten and first grade.
CBM tools have been found to be reliable and valid in monitoring progress. They have strong predictive validity to norm-referenced standardized tests, especially in primary grades (Reschly, Busch, Betts, Deno, & Long, 2009). Relative to making decisions regarding learning support placement, CBM tools have been found to accurately identify students who did not respond to intervention when looking at performance that was low on reading level and on slope of improvement (McMaster et al., 2005). Vellutino, Scanlon, and Lyon (2000) found that using progress monitoring embedded within an RTI model was the better method of discriminating between students who will respond to intervention and those who will not, when compared to the method of using intellectual assessments alone.

Regarding the data analysis team’s work of planning for improved student learning, Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders, and Goldenberg (2009) found that it was critical to define and use a protocol that articulates inquiry steps in the data analysis process. Prescriptive guidelines help to streamline the work of a data analysis team. The Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) office has published a practical guide to use that gives a protocol for data analysis, the “Data Analysis for Instructional Decision Making: Team Process Script” (PaTTAN, 2008). The recommended format is based on Kovaleski and Pedersen’s (2008) work on best practices in data analysis teaming. The teams, often grade-level teams, also meet at regular intervals to discuss progress monitoring and assignment of students to Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. Students who continue to make inadequate progress through the year are discussed for special education evaluation referral. The “Team Process Script” details how to plan and conduct the meetings with chronological steps and suggestions for discussion, decision making, and record keeping. Teams are led through the decision-making process sequentially for Tier 1, Tier 2, and then Tier 3 students. The steps include the following:

- Generate measurable goals for improvement.
- Identify specific skills to target.
• Select research-based instructional strategies.
• Plan for team assistance to teachers learning the strategies.
• Plan for progress monitoring.
• Plan for self-monitoring of strategy use.
• Review individual student rate of growth or slope of improvement.

The “Screening and Intervention Record Form” (SIRF), developed by Kovaleski and Marco (2005), is the PaTTAN suggested recording form for this data analysis process. Completion of the form will include goals, chosen strategies, and decisions regarding student placement.

Because attention is focused on the data and its implications, using a systematic DAT approach allows all staff to share the responsibility of planning for students’ academic progress and to be accountable for the results (Sparks, 2013). Teachers and administrators are able to share their knowledge of students’ strengths and needs and also share their expertise in instructional strategies.

**Principal Leadership.** Principal leadership plays an important role in the implementation of DATs and their framework for decision making. Kovaleski et al. (1999) found that Pennsylvania schools with high rates of Instructional Support Team implementation were characterized by having strong principal leadership, continuous data collection which guided decisions, and strong supportive teachers. Principals of effective schools have also been characterized by being able to develop data-based decision-making cultures (Crum, Sherman, & Myran, 2009; Sammons, Gu, Day, & Ko, 2011).

PaTTAN’s “Team Process Script” (2008) states important logistic responsibilities for principals or a designee to carry out, such as preparing data packets for teachers to have in advance, identifying a session facilitator, and arranging meeting plans that entail the date, time, place, and agenda. A large part of building capacity for data teaming is arranging for trainings in
the RtII framework. These include training in data analysis and in effective instructional strategies. PaTTAN offers training modules for schools such as “RtII and Tier 1: An Overview for K-12,” “RtII: Specific Learning Eligibility Module,” and “RtII and School Organizational Change: Promoting Sustainability and Shared Leadership” (www.pattan.net). PaTTAN also regularly offers training on important literacy instruction strategies; for example, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETERS) training (PaTTAN, 2016). RtII Implementers Forums have been held annually to bring together researchers, PaTTAN trainers, school practitioners, and administrators to provide training and to exchange lessons learned in the field. Large assessment companies and packaged instructional programs offer their own professional development training sessions for districts.

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) model can extend our understanding of the importance of collaboration during data analysis and a principal’s responsibility to build capacity in this area. The PLC model is a school improvement process that uses staff collaboration at the core of school and district efforts to improve student learning (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; DuFour & Fullan, 2013). It includes an ongoing cycle of data analysis and professional learning to meet student needs. As defined in Learning By Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work (DuFour et al., 2010), a PLC is “an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (p. 10). PaTTAN (2011a) advises using the PLC process within the implementation of an RtII framework. The collaborative culture of a PLC is conducive to tackling the problem solving that is required throughout the structured procedures of data team analysis.

Using the PLC process, a principal focuses a team’s work on achieving results. The principal addresses these two priority questions to staff (Buffam, Mattos, Weber, 2009): “What do we want students to know and be able to do this year?” and “How will we know if and when
they’ve learned it?” (p. 8). The principal then asks teachers to create incremental and measurable learning goals within a time-frame for achievement. These inquiry steps are a reinforcement of the process used in PaTTAN’s “Team Process Script” (2008) mentioned earlier. DuFour & DuFour (2012) use the acronym SMART to represent these goal elements:

- **S**- Strategic and specific action steps
- **M**- Measurable with percentages of students meeting the target scores
- **A**- Attainable
- **R**- Results-oriented with printed reports of progress with target dates
- **T**- Time bound with target dates. (p. 30)

**Developing Norms.** In order to conduct these intense data-analysis meetings, members must choose to respond to each other in a respectful manner. The data analysis process, because of its complex work of discussing assessment results and the effectiveness of instruction, can at times feel threatening to team members. Discussion inevitably includes what has or has not been working in classrooms. Teams need clarity regarding how they will interact with each other and how they will express disagreement constructively. Fullan (2011) observes that collaborative teams need to work with positive attitudes that can fuel energy and avoid negative cultures that can deplete energy. A principal can facilitate the development of collaboration norms for data teams to use.

Learning Forward (2013) has included a process for developing norms on its website (www.learningforward.org). The process includes the following: come to a consensus on the elements of time limits; encourage listening; keep confidentiality; make decisions; deal with conflicts; encourage participation; and communicate expectations and requirements. DuFour et al. (2010) recommend that each team should create its own norms, because these are commitments that individual team members make to each other. Norms clarify roles and responsibilities. They should be stated as commitments to behave in certain ways rather than as
Building Capacity for Collaboration

**Developing collective capacity for the “skill” of RTI.** The term “developing skill and will” to express core concepts of RTI practice was used in a PaTTAN conference, “RtII Implementers Forum,” in 2013. It is used here because of the apt naming of the categories for developing the capacity to carry out the RTI collaboration process.

The use of collaboration as essential for teaming has been regarded as a foundational practice in pre-referral teams (Burns et al., 2005). It is especially crucial to develop collaborative practices for the RTI process, because the use of teams has been expanded to include remedial and general educators, content area specialists, psychologists, and administrators, working in an integrated and ongoing way to meet the needs of all students (Glover, 2010). *The RtI Blueprints for Implementation: District Level* (National Association of State Directors of Special Education [NASDSE], 2008a) gives implementation guidelines and includes numerous references to the pivotal role of collaborative teams.

Collaboration skills enable the work of a professional learning community to plan for student progress. A succinct description of a PLC, given by the superintendent of a U.S. Department of Education award-winning school (Honawar, 2008), describes a PLC as “teachers working smarter by working together” (p. 25). The work is summarized by these three ideas (DuFour et al., 2010):

1. Our school’s purpose is to ensure all students learn at high levels.
2. Helping all students learn requires a collaborative and collective effort.
3. To assess our effectiveness, we must focus on evidence of students’ learning, use these results to inform and improve our professional practice, and respond to students who need intervention or enrichment. (p. 14)
This PLC perspective on the purpose and goal of collaboration dovetails with the goals of the RTI process. The professional learning community model can be used to drive the structural and procedural practices of RTI (Buffam et al., 2009). In effect, the team becomes the powerhouse of the process.

Collaboration is not only used for decision-making regarding student assignment to tiers or for choice of intervention programs. Collaboration is also effective for developing teachers’ skills in instructional strategies (Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010). Because collaboration is always focused on helping students succeed at high levels of learning, teachers, themselves, must continuously add to their craft. How do principals foster collaboration for developing collective skill?

A principal facilitates the increase of teachers’ capacity to deliver effective research-based instruction by organizing job-embedded professional development that often relies upon colleagues for training and improved practice (DuFour & DuFour, 2012; Marshall, 2005). In the 2010 McKinsey Report that answered the question, “How do the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better?” a key finding was that the educational systems that moved from “great to excellent” in school improvement had schools where administration had established structures that made teachers responsible to each other for their professional performance (Mourshed et al., 2010). Records showed that teachers engaged in mentoring, lesson observation, and co-teaching practice. Similarly, the professional development methods of mentoring, co-teaching, and coaching were used in the Office of Special Education Program’s K-3 Reading and Behavior Intervention Models Project, and positively influenced teacher practice and improvement in student outcomes (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007). Additionally, Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, and Birman (2002), in a longitudinal evaluation of the Eisenhower Professional Development Project, found that embedded professional
development structures, such as teacher study groups and networks, were more effective than traditional workshop formats for changing teacher practice.

Shared expertise expedites the process of school improvement. Gallimore et al. (2009) recorded that dramatic gains in student achievement occurred when collaborative teams jointly identified appropriate learning goals and brought to the table the expertise of colleagues who could assist in accomplishing those goals. Phillips (2003) noted that when teachers were provided with scheduled meeting times, they were able to provide critical feedback on each other’s instructional practices and develop successful innovative programs. Additionally, teachers were more likely to implement interventions when they had the opportunity to develop them through collaboration (Nevin, Thousand, Paloucci-Whitcomb, & Villa, 1990).

When Bean and Lilienstein (2010) conducted field research on RtII implementation in PA, they asked RtII practitioners to give the skills and competencies needed by personnel in order to function effectively within the RtII implementation process. Collaboration, when working toward a common goal, was the most frequently mentioned disposition, attended by value for diverse expertise. In agreement with that finding, John Hattie (2012) observed that excellence in education requires that teachers work in collaborative teams, discuss the effectiveness of their teaching, and focus their professional dialogue on evidence of student learning.

Principals can serve as instructional leaders who promote collaborative school systems (Kratochwill et al., 2007; NASDSE, 2008b). As informal staff developers, they can locate research-based methods and strategies that teachers can add to their repertoire. They can put structures in place for team members to try various strategies and then compare the results of that instruction (Wilhelm, 2013). The following suggestions are practical tips for building a collaborative culture (DuFour et al., 2010):

- Ask teams to build shared knowledge, to make decisions on the basis of evidence.
- Provide teams with essential tools—research, timelines, templates, etc. Link teams with resources within and outside the building. Make sure teams receive data that is user-friendly and timely.

- Monitor and assess team progress through team products, regular meetings with team leaders, and written self-evaluations. Check to make sure that teams include evidence of learning that answers the question, “How will we know that students are achieving this goal?” (p. 177)

**Developing Collective Capacity for the “Will” of RTI**

*Common commitment.* The capacity to improve a school’s ability to increase academic learning for all students does not emanate from the pronouncements of external mandates. Capacity comes from the *commitment* of all of a school’s members together—administration, teachers, and staff, to contribute individual efforts toward the goal. When principals connect peers to purpose, staff members begin to think of all of the students in the school as “our” responsibility and exhibit a strong sense of “we” (Fullan, 2010), and thus a shared commitment ensues. How do principals foster collaboration for developing this collective *will*?

Goal setting is critical to the team process (Fleming & Monda-Amaya, 2001); however, mere expostulation of goals won’t advance a school’s efforts. Fullan (2001) states that effective leaders lead with moral purpose to accomplish goals. They build relationships and establish a link with people’s intrinsic commitment to work toward a higher goal such as school improvement. In a synthesis of research on effective school leadership, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) concluded that a key leadership responsibility is to create a *purposeful community* that is clear on its goals. Katzenbach and Smith (2004), in their book, *The Discipline of Teams*, highlight this same concept of common commitment when they state that in order to achieve powerful performance, groups require a purpose in which team members can believe; and further, the best teams translate this common purpose into specific performance goals.
Goals are established upon the foundation of an understanding of a school’s mission, vision, and values. The mission clarifies priorities and sharpens focus; vision gives direction; values guide behavior; and goals establish priorities (DuFour et al., 2010). During the RTI process, principals create meaningful teams that share common goals such as content area teams or grade-level teams.

**Culture and climate.** Several elements related to the team process are central to effective functioning. Among these elements are developing trust, being an authentic leader (the “real deal”), and showing recognition and appreciation. Issues surrounding trust and respect are vital to the team process (Fleming et al., 2001; Slonski-Fowler & Truscott, 2004). Trustworthy leaders are able to foster other trusting relationships within a school. Leaders build trust in the following ways: engaging teachers in creating the school’s vision; communicating an attitude of caring while confronting; mediating conflict and training others to do so; and modeling respectful conduct (Tschannen-Moran, 2007).

John Hattie (2009) advises that leaders create respectful environments where teachers feel safe to discuss and analyze student learning, free of negative consequences, “to create school, staffroom, and classroom environments where error is welcomed as a learning opportunity, where discarding incorrect knowledge and understanding is welcomed, and where participants can feel safe to learn, re-learn, and explore knowledge and understanding” (p. 239). When problems in implementation or results do occur, Hattie contends that it is vital to suspend judgmentalism. Seeking a new tact, leaders can choose to perceive poor results as an opportunity to build capacity, to restate implementation strategy, and to strengthen the shared vision (Fullan, 2010).

Leaders who are engaged in the work of system change and who invite others to lead with them need to model their new action plans. In other words, they need to “walk the talk.” When Kouzes and Posner (2007) studied the dynamic process of leadership in successful companies, they discovered one common attitude across all of their case studies, the resolve to
model the behavior you expect from others in order to gain commitment from them. Leaders’ behaviors included voicing their beliefs and values, serving in practical ways, and working side by side with colleagues. More importantly, the principal can embody the values by acting with consistent behavior, because, as Kouzes and Posner quip, “People first follow the person, then the plan” (p. 65). It is important for principals to lead with humility, to acknowledge that they are fellow learners in order to lead others in organizational renewal and high levels of learning (Barth, 2007). Leading by example, principals meet with teams regularly, work on school learning goals with those teams, and honor collective commitments (DuFour et al., 2010).

As leaders attempt to reinforce common commitments to school improvement and RTI, it is important to link successful efforts to a recognition and celebration of staff’s contributions (DuFour et al., 2010; NASDSE, 2008b). Celebration can significantly influence the culture of a school if it is arranged for “many winners” to be recognized and rewarded (Kanold, 2006). Along with celebrating many contributors, it is advisable to celebrate often. As Katzenbach and Smith (1993) observe in their book, The Wisdom of Team, “Specific goals should allow the team to achieve small wins as it pursues its purpose. Small wins are invaluable to building members’ commitment and overcoming the inevitable obstacles that get in the way of achieving a meaningful long-term purpose” (p. 54). Kouzes and Posner (2007) term the leadership actions of celebration and recognition as “encouraging the heart,” and chronicle many case studies where these actions have linked rewards with performance and have forged a collective identity that can face difficult challenges.

Marzano et al. (2005) have distinguished between first-order organizational change and second-order change. The former operates within existing paradigms, follows established sequences, and utilizes and improves existing staff skills. Second order change modifies the very culture of the organization, its relationships, roles, and norms. The process of designing and implementing an RTI process can be viewed as a second order change, situated in a multi-year
school improvement process. Therefore, when facilitating this long-term improvement plan, a leader must work to positively influence the culture and climate of a school in order to nourish and sustain a collective commitment to the goals of RTI.

English schools that had increased their achievement levels were asked to identify the most important cultural traits that they associated with school improvement (Hay Group Management, 2004, as cited in Fullan, 2011). Among them were measuring and monitoring targets and results, holding high hopes and expectations, raising capability by helping people learn, and working together and learning from each other. To result in sustainability, the culture in which shared leadership vests itself is one where “moral purpose is fueled by a focus on value-added high expectations for all, raising capability, pulling together, and an ongoing hunger for improvement” (Fullan, 2011, p. 59). Printy and Marks (2006) noted that a culture of trust facilitates regular faculty interaction which, in turn, strengthens trust. A culture of collaboration, shared ownership, and trust is clearly valued for sustainability.

**Building Capacity for Sustainability of School Improvement**

**Stages of sustainability.** Michael Fullan (2011) defines sustainability as “the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose” (p. ix). RTI is a systemic change for school improvement, and therefore, it is a process that develops through the following series of stages (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, and Wallace, 2005):

1. Exploration and adoption
2. Program installation
3. Initial implementation
4. Full operation
5. Innovation
6. Sustainability
Although the stage of sustainability comes last in the process, it is prudent to consider weighting the chances for sustainability even from the beginning of a school’s RTI journey. When a study in team functioning and its relationship to sustainability was undertaken for community-based prevention teams (Perkins et al., 2011), it was found that the quality of team functioning in early stages of implementation was strongly related to later preparation for sustainability. Therefore, the lesson learned here is that it is important to lay the foundation for effective team functioning during the initial stage, before rushing too quickly into full implementation.

The initial stage of RTI implementation, as outlined by NASDSE (2008a), is the time for consensus building, when RTI concepts are communicated and “why” questions are answered. Although collaboration is crucial for teacher acceptance, “buy-in” may be difficult to gain (Mahdavi & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2009). Principals need to consider how to build regard for RTI as a valued process and increase educator investment (McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan & Sugai, 2010).

In viewing a wider perspective, Fullan (2006) gives leaders a caution to consider during this initial stage, because he has observed that people may become waylaid in the process with too much comprehensive planning. He states that teachers will be more likely to change and grow when they implement new strategies and see their success. For increasing motivation to invest in school improvement, Fullan places emphasis on leaders employing strategies that are socially based and action oriented. Teachers are more likely to implement practices and interventions when they’ve had experience with them, when they’ve been given support for them, and when they carry a belief that these processes work (Noell & Gansle, 2009). We motivate people by attempting to have them experience what it feels like to improve and succeed. External accountability (Fullan terms this “command and control”) by itself does not motivate (Fullan, 2006, p. 43.)
A principal’s groundwork for sustainability. A school’s RTI process must be supported by a state education department and district administration (Fullan, 2006), but sustainability of RTI will ultimately rest on the shoulders of a school’s principal (Burns et al., 2013). Research has given us some advice for a principal to use when addressing sustainability issues. Sustainable program implementation, in part, hinges on the pragmatic aspects of implementation (Noell & Gansle, 2009). Leaders must provide necessary resources and provide supports for training and rehearsal of instructional strategies. They must also assess fidelity and offer performance feedback to teachers. Johnson, Pool, and Carter (2012) found that it was important to streamline processes, build on school personnel’s existing knowledge, and use a clear communication system between classroom teachers and teachers providing interventions.

Regarding clear communication, RTI needs to have set-aside times for problem-solving collaboration that addresses implementation issues (Cooper, Slavin, & Madden, 1998; Shapiro, Sauers, Metzger, & Weiler, 2013; Stringfield & Datnow, 1998). With sustainability in view, Fullan (2005) calls for collaborative teams to systematically engage in what he has termed “deep learning,” to apply what has been learned from data and experience to the solving of difficult problems. As a result, student learning makes gains and becomes “deeper” because of adjustments and revisions to policies and strategies and the exchange of good ideas. This concept can serve as an example of what occurs during the stage of “innovation,” the fifth stage of Fixsen and colleagues’ school improvement process mentioned earlier (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Fullan (2005) lists another concept that aligns a school on the path of improvement sustainability; that is, to always keep the commitment to long-term results in view while working to garner short-term winning results. The public and government are more apt to trust and financially invest in an agenda that is winning. For example, it is important to show accountability for the task of increasing assessment scores. At the same time, it is important for a
school leader to build capacity for staff at every juncture, in order to design “assessment for learning” and to tailor instruction to match students’ needs (Fullan, 2005, p. 92).

**Generalization theory.** It may be helpful for principals to attend to the theoretical process of generalization when planning for RTI’s sustainability. Generalization occurs when expected behaviors are maintained, or when a learned behavior continues to occur across setting and time in the absence of the training conditions that promoted its acquisition (Stokes & Baer, 1977). Burns et al. (2013) uses the techniques belonging to the generalization process to discuss how leaders can “frontload” implementation efforts to strengthen sustainability for RTI. These are the summarized suggested actions that leaders can utilize:

- Use natural maintaining contingencies so that skills will be naturally reinforced. For example, “involve school personnel in implementation decisions” and “use efficient data collection procedures.”

- Train to generalize or suggest using skill sets across contexts and situations. For example, leaders can discuss the expansion of RTI from reading to the areas of math or behavior.

The next three summarized activities that Burns et al. (2013) suggest for building RTI sustainability expressly use the teaming aspects of RTI and highlight the centrality of collaboration:

- Use numerous examples during training. For example, “Provide ongoing professional development in the core components/skill sets of RTI. Train personnel to implement multiple aspects of the grade-level and problem-solving team processes.”

- Train loosely, or expose teachers to diverse situations where skills will be used. For example, “monitor progress in multiple areas”; train for “teaming strategies for
effective decision making”; and use multiple facilitators who take turns leading team meetings.

- Incorporate into training common stimuli across contexts. For example, “Use grade-level teams as professional learning communities to make decisions at various tiers” and “configure teams of consistent members who will address a variety of contexts and situations together.” (pp. 83-85)

**Sustainability of PA pilot programs.** Sustainability is the goal of any school improvement process and particularly with a comprehensive Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) process. Pennsylvania’s Department of Education had made a strong commitment to incubate and mature new RtII sites around the state, and in 2006, PaTTAN launched seven pilot sites in urban, suburban, and rural areas. These sites were given comprehensive assistance in developing these core components: universal screening, progress monitoring, data-based decision-making teams, tiered interventions, a plan for ongoing professional development, technology supports for data analysis, and plans for parental engagement. The pilot programs lasted three years, and at the end of six years of implementation, the sites were re-visited to ascertain the degree to which the sites had sustained their programs (Shapiro, 2012). Four of the seven sites had remained in full RtII implementation, and Shapiro studied the pertinent factors leading to sustainability in these schools.

In the sites exhibiting strong sustainability, Shapiro (2012) found that the process of using universal screening and progress monitoring data for decision making was retained, and that collaborative teams continued to examine and use the data to assign students to tiers and fine-tune instruction. The results of the study showed that the schools with strong commitment to RtII had enduring and resilient programs, even in the face of financial downturns. Also, the need for continuing professional development in all aspects of RtII was highlighted. Additionally, it was
evident that principal leadership played a key role in sustainability. Collaborative teams, professional development, and principal leadership were all found to be central to sustainability.

**Sustainability and shared leadership.** Sustainability comes when there is a multiplication of staff who take on leadership characteristics and roles. Jim Collins (2005) describes the characteristics of a great leader as one who invests in the company, relies on inspired standards to motivate staff, and sets up successive leaders who will be able to continue even farther toward the company’s goals. A principal can intentionally develop processes to share leadership and grow leaders with a plan to continue the positive direction.

It is not enough for a good leader to start a school on the path to success; that leadership must be continued long enough for the new patterns and ways of thinking to become engrained in the culture. Fullan (2006) describes distributed leadership which readies new leaders for the next phase of school improvement in this way: “The main mark of a principal at the end of his or her tenure is not just the impact on the bottom line of student achievement but equally how many good leaders the principal leaves behind who can go even further” (p. 62). Hargreaves and Fink (2003) corroborate this principle with research on school districts and their school improvement process. They advise to plan for leadership succession so that initiatives not yet established in implementation can survive the frequent turnaround of principals.

Shared or distributive leadership relies on the intelligence and creativity of all staff in the school community. Complex problems need complex solutions, and when collaboration to meet student needs is supported, effective problem solving can be multiplied. This kind of leadership involves building supportive networks of relationships, structures, and culture (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Stringfield & Datnow, 1998).

Marzano et al. (2005) undertook a meta-analysis on the topic of school leadership practiced by principals. Their research summary listed twenty-one pivotal responsibilities for school leaders. Viewed from the perspective of shared leadership, the collaborative team
structure of a professional learning community actually makes it possible for teacher and administrator collaboration to mutually carry out nineteen of these twenty-one leadership responsibilities (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Specifically, one responsibility is to involve teachers in giving input to design and implement important decisions and policies. This includes using leadership teams in decision making. Other opportunities to share leadership are to engage teachers in the discussion of current researched practices for improved learning, to establish processes of strong communication, and to focus on clear goals and pursue the school’s priorities (Marzano et al., 2005).
Appendix B

Open-Ended Survey Results

Survey Question 10. What is your role in aiding the data team process?

Principal reports of how they engaged in the data team process included these categories:

Providing Infrastructure, Facilitating Data Analysis, and Facilitating Collaboration. In general, principals worked to make the RtII process possible. They worked on scheduling for tiered intervention time and data analysis collaboration.

Providing Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procure Tier Materials</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Adequate Staffing for Tier Times</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Schedule for Tier Times</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Schedule for Data Team Meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Assessment Dates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilitating Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather &amp; Share Data</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Data Analysis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Protocol Use</td>
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</table>

Facilitating Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assist with Decision Making</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Collaboration to Address Identified Areas</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Culture of Shared Responsibility/Ownership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating as a Team Member</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Discussion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43% of the 44 total references

Provisions for “Providing Infrastructure” included the following:

“I make sure that tier times are adequately staffed and that materials are available.”
“assist with materials to meet student needs”

“support the process, secure the resources”

“I also support teams by designing a schedule or offering coverage to provide time for supports to happen.”

“Meet with teams during August in-service to establish meeting schedule for the year to ensure grade level meetings do not conflict and to ensure that Learning Support, Title I, Instructional Coach, classroom teachers and I can attend.”

Facilitating Data Analysis

Under “Gathering and Sharing Data,” comments included these actions:

“I am able to share data information not typically viewed by individual teachers. This helps us make more specific plans for our students not hitting targeted benchmarks.”

“I work with the learning facilitator to gather appropriate data to use and then lead and participate in the discussions with the grade level teams, learning facilitator, reading specialists and intervention specialists.”

“My academic learning facilitator and I preview data to consider elements that might be helpful for classroom decision making.”

“share [knowledge] of students academically and behaviorally”

Evidence of regard for monitoring included these remarks:

“ensure that students not making academic progress or growth are identified and that there is a change in instruction”

“following up with interventions”

“[I] also monitor the movement of students via an online google doc that teams complete during meetings that I do not attend.”

“I review the protocol that teachers complete for the additional grade level analysis meetings.”
The “Facilitate Protocol Use” comment listed this action: “Establish data meeting protocol and facilitate meetings following the protocol.”

Facilitating Collaboration

Assuming the role to “Assist with Decision Making” during collaboration included this evidence:

“assist with decision making, [and the] team process to determine the meaning and ramifications of the data”

“Sometimes I need to remind people of . . . the need to make data-driven decisions.”

“Maintain a balance between discussion of data and making instructional decisions based on the data.”

“advise on discussions or when staff cannot agree on a particular student’s needs”

“When/if discussions are at an impasse I intervene and decide or determine a course of action.”

“help decide on placement of students”

“I assist, ask questions to promote discussion with a solutions orientation.”

The category “Facilitate Collaboration to Address Identified Areas” included these comments:

“facilitate collaboration of team to address identified areas”

“I participate in or lead discussions to determine the intervention type or duration for individual students.”

“I advocate for student needs.”

“I identify interventions that match student needs.”

The category “Promote Culture of Shared Responsibility/Owernership” included these remarks:

“We try to maintain a collectivist culture—‘all of the students are all of our responsibility.’

Sometimes I need to remind people of this.”
“I am in my third year and am working towards giving more responsibilities out to team members.”

“We want our teacher teams to feel efficacy to dig into the data to have ownership over future decision making.”

“Participating as a Team Member” included these comments:

“As an active member of the team, I listen and provide additional thought and brainstorming with other members of the team on data analysis, tier design, instructional planning ideas, intervention ideas.”

“another consistent member of the teams”

“I am another voice at the table.”

Under “Promote Discussion,” these remarks were recorded:

“Ask the questions to get the teachers to dig deeper into the data.”

“facilitate analysis and data conversation”

Survey Question 24. What problems or obstacles have you faced while trying to build capacity for effective team collaboration for RtII? What policies or procedures have helped to overcome these?

Frequency Count for Obstacles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Obstacle</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling Time for Meetings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Recording and Use for Instructional Decisions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Purpose &amp; Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience with the Process</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training New Teachers in RtII</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Wanting more Authority Over Placement Decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Implement at 4th &amp; 5th Grade Levels</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The two most mentioned categories of obstacles were “Scheduling Time for Meetings” and “Data Recording and Use for Instructional Decisions.” Responses for scheduling time for meetings included the following solutions:

Time is always a challenge. We do not have a 40 minute common planning time, but do the best we can with 20-25 min. every morning. Other responsibilities, however, do supersede time together. Providing subs for RtII meetings has helped and allowing time on Act 80 days for team meetings is helpful.

We had to give up 2 faculty meetings a month and make them data analysis meetings in order to find the time for teams to get together. That is sometimes a challenge when there are topics that I would like to share with my faculty—I am limited to one 50 minute meeting a month. The trade-off has been worth it, though. Teachers must turn in a meeting summary/protocol after each data meeting and it serves as a roadmap for tiers until the next meeting.

“Lack of team planning and PLC time. Was able to restructure schedule and meetings in order to provide time needed.”

“We struggled with creating intervention blocks at the very beginning of the process. That was resolved by working together to create times outside the core time allowing each grade level to be serviced separately.”

Responses for data recording and use for instructional decisions included the following solutions:

Team members that mistakenly identified behavior needs for academic needs and struggle with the fact that the small group instruction of tier 2 or tier 3 is not what is in fact needed for the student as it is an intervention. To overcome this we look at the data and base the needs on the data in front of us. Also, at times, we can be too data
dependent on just one data point so we have worked hard to take a well-rounded view of the data before making a decision.

The school's RtII protocol was well established and highly functional when I arrived as the principal. The only modification was to meet with each individual teacher rather than the grade level teachers allowing the team to focus on the needs of students in their respective classes. The monthly division data meetings were terribly inefficient. Most of the time was spent on data analysis and little time or no time was spent on making instructional decisions and identifying the strategies and resources necessary to improve student performance. Establishing a division data meeting protocol in collaboration with the division teachers ensures instructional strategies and resources are identified to meet student's needs.

“One problem is getting grades K-2 to analyze their data as often as grades 3-6 do. They have to have analyzed the data prior to scheduled quarterly meetings. This is a beginning for them.”

“Among the grade levels, the data collection and entering into the share drive is something that needs to be a shared responsibility. This coming school year, we will make changes and designate shared responsibility from the classroom teachers.”

“We have to always focus on the data and evaluate the results in an objective manner. The obstacle to overcome is the insistence on a continued focus on the causes while discarding the we've already tried that mentality.”

“Meet w/ individual teachers or as a team when reviewing/discussing data and needed interventions.”

Responses for understanding purpose and culture included these solutions:

Changing the culture to understand that this is how we will do business and that it is not going away. Building trust, accountability and staff skills are cornerstones. Policies and
procedures are helpful, but building the people skills and culture is paramount to sustain change.

“The number one obstacle was getting everyone to understand our purpose for RtII implementation. Once they understood that RtII was to improve our teaching practices and to provide the best instruction for ALL students, our job became much easier.”

“We've been fortunate that we've built this collaboration from the beginning. By listening to teacher ideas, concerns, and suggestions, and then tweaking the framework accordingly, everyone knows we are all in it together.”

Responses for patience with the process included these solutions:

One of the biggest things I believe is PATIENCE—with some of our learners who are having difficulties, we don't see the immediate growth that is desired by folks and some want to have them "identified” right away. Folks don't often want to exhaust all possibilities, practices, programs, instruction and give them time—this can become a "rub" as we see other kids grow and those in tier 2/3 not growing compared to their peer group. The other thing is just seeing the PROGRAM as the solution vs. the teacher and instruction.

We are struggling to hit our achievement goals in our school, but we are hitting our "growth" goals. This is a huge let down for our faculty and we need to continue to get better at differentiating our Tier 1 and raising our expectations of what students can do.

One solution was listed for training new teachers:

“It is challenging when new teachers come into a grade level team. Keeping them up to date and doing RtII refresher sessions at faculty meetings is crucial to keep everyone on track.”

One solution was listed for weak collaboration:

“In some cases, there are grade levels that do not collaborate as well together and this may require additional intervention from staff beyond the grade level teachers.”
No solutions were listed for the obstacles of financial support, how to implement at 4th and 5th grade levels, and teachers wanting more authority over placement decisions.

Survey Question 25. What advice would you give to other schools that are developing their team collaboration routines and policies for RtII?

*Frequency Count for Topics of Advice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Advice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasize RtII’s Purpose &amp; Culture</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish the Data Meeting Protocol</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build Staff Capacity</td>
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<td>Celebrate Successes</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold Perspective of a Long-term Process</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Leadership</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The four most mentioned categories were “Build a Schedule for Team Meetings & Intervention,” “Establish the Data Meeting Protocol,” “Emphasize RtII’s Purpose and Culture,” and “Build Staff Capacity.”

Responses regarding the importance of “Schedule” included the following advice:

“Schedule time in your annual calendar for all meetings.”

“The RtII meetings and intervention periods need to be ‘sacred’ and part of the master schedule.”

“Build a schedule and provide the TIME to give them, so they can meet, analyze data, progress monitor, plan, come back together.”

“Every child gets an intervention whether they are excelling or are in need of support in reading or math.”

When principals referenced “Protocol”, they referred to these uses:

I would advise them to look at the protocols that are already working in other places, but to consider what can work or fit for your team. . . . Most importantly, once you determine
what will work for your team, be consistent and specific about what you do and when you do it.

“Have an agenda at the beginning to keep the meetings on track.”

“Make sure your tier criteria are clear and do not waiver from using the data to make decisions.”

“Select or develop a discussion protocol for evaluating progress monitoring data. Avoid discussions that ‘admire the problem’ and replace them with a persistent focus on determining best courses of action to address solutions.”

“Use protocols for meetings. They may seem sort of ‘childish’ at first, but they should become the norm whenever there are professional meetings. People need this time to be run extremely efficiently.”

“Establish a protocol, share it with staff so they understand it and have questions answered, and then, follow the protocol.”

“Emphasizing RtII’s Purpose and Culture” is an important theme. The advice included these statements:

Know that it is going to be a long process and that it requires that the principal dive into all aspects of the RtII process, and in many cases, the principal will need to remind teachers WHY RtII processes are valuable and necessary.

I would also suggest that they always keep a focus on the goal or purpose (growing each child) and to adjust when something just does not work for your setting or faculty. Most importantly, once you determine what will work for your team, be consistent and specific about what you do and when you do it.

It’s about keeping an open mind and accepting that all kids learn differently and are at varying levels/stages in their academic acquisition. . . It’s also about not thinking ‘my kids vs. your kids.’ They are all of our kids and we need to work together in helping them achieve growth.
“Make sure communication of the school’s or district’s purpose for implementing RtII is shared over and over and over again.”

“Keep working at it through open communication and problem-solving.”

“Listen to all of your staff’s concerns; try to facilitate professional discussions and brainstorming meetings when they seem to get frustrated. ALWAYS celebrate the success stories.”

“It is important to celebrate when students do move back into only needing Tier 1 support, and serves to remind teachers that RtII does work when all are committed to the success of the most struggling students.”

Principals mentioned several policies under the category of “Build Staff Capacity.”

These are their suggestions:

There must be support from the Board and District Administration first and foremost. Then, work extensively with your faculty and staff to build understanding and investment. LISTEN to them, as they are your “instructional experts.” Then, build a schedule and provide the TIME to give them, so they can meet, analyze data, progress monitor, plan, come back together. Also, COMMUNICATE with parents. They need to be on board with it too. It’s not impossible…we’ve done it and it works!

“Also give the staff credit for what skills and expertise they already exhibit, and then build on from there.”

“Provide proactive training prior to starting RtII implementation to build buy-in of staff.”

“Be flexible. Utilize times that used to be centered on other topics. Give teachers time to collaborate and teach them how to do it.”

Under “Share Leadership”, this one salient comment was given:

“If we expect our teachers to be leaders within their own right, we must give them the opportunity to feel the thrill of leading on behalf of kids.”

“Hold Perspective of a Long-term Process” included these responses:
“Know that it is going to be a long process and that it requires that the principal dive into all aspects of the RtII process.”

“Then let the staff know that it is a process that will take time (possibly a couple of years).”

Other topics, mentioned once, included gathering support from school board and district administration, communicating with parents, and relying on data for decision-making.
Appendix C

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

Title of Project: How Principals Facilitate Team Collaboration within an RtII Framework

Principal Investigator: Colleen Kane

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Phone: 570 596-4390

Advisor: Ed Fuller

204 D Rackley Building, Penn State University
ejf20@psu.edu 814-865-2233

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to ascertain how PA principals have facilitated team collaboration within their RtII framework. The results will be analyzed to summarize productive practices.

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to answer survey questions regarding your experience and perspective in planning for RtII team collaboration.

3. Benefits: Sharing your advice and experience may be valuable in assisting other schools seeking to develop strong RtII programs.

4. Duration/Time: It will take about 30-40 minutes to complete the survey.

5. Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored in a password-protected file. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.
6. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Colleen Kane at (570) 596-4390 with questions or concerns about this research. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or concerns regarding your privacy, please contact The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections (ORP) at (814) 865-1775.

7. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Your participation implies your voluntary consent to participate in the research.
Appendix D

RtII Team Collaboration Survey

RtII Team Collaboration Survey

How Do Principals Facilitate Team Collaboration within an RtII Framework?

District Name, School Name, Position Title

What is the size of your school?

- [ ] Fewer than 249 students
- [ ] 250-499 students
- [ ] 500-750 students
- [ ] 750+ students

How would you describe your school community?

- [ ] Primarily urban
- [ ] Primarily suburban
- [ ] Primarily rural

What is the percentage of students who qualify for the federal free/reduced price lunch program?

What grade levels are served in your school?

- [ ] Pre-K
- [ ] K
What is the percentage of ELL students in your school?

- □ <1%
- □ 1-3%
- □ 4-6%
- □ 7-9%
- □ 10-14%
- □ 15-19%
- □ 20% or greater

What is the percentage of IEP students in your school?

- □ <1%
- □ 1-3%
- □ 4-6%
- □ 7-9%
- □ 10-14%
All PDE approved schools use data meetings after universal screenings (usually three per year). How often do you hold other grade level data analysis meetings that discuss progress monitoring, class/tier instruction, and matching interventions to student needs?

- Weekly
- Every two weeks
- Monthly
- Other: [ ]

Who facilitates these grade level data analysis team meetings?

- Principal
- Reading Specialist
- Literacy Coach
- Psychologist
- Teachers
- Members take turns
- Other: [ ]

How often do you attend these data analysis team meetings per grade level?

- Once per week
- Once per month
Once per quarter

Other: 

What is your role in aiding the data team process?

How do you make room in the school schedule for these collaborative data team meetings?

- Use the teachers’ common planning time
- Use professional development days
- Use faculty meetings
- Use early student dismissal
- Other: 

For the problem-solving process of matching interventions to student needs, what established written order of steps do you use?

- SIRF plan (Screening and Information Recording Form) by Kovaleski & Marco 2005
- Data Analysis Team Process Script from PDE
- Other: 

What has been a practical method of making data available to all team members?
- Performance Tracker
- Excel
- Google docs
- Other: __________

How do your school's teams determine an adequate rate of improvement?
- Dual discrepancy using slope of improvement and end performance level
- Median split- Slope of improvement meets the rank ordered median
- Slope discrepancy- Slope of improvement compared to a normative cut-point
- Final benchmark using a criterion referenced benchmark
- Final normalization-Standard scores on a mastery test meet a given percentile rank
- Other: __________

What collaboration guidelines did you choose to facilitate respectful interactions?
- Team-developed norms
- Administrator-supplied norms
- Other: __________

How do you direct teacher teams to work collaboratively to implement intervention instruction?
- They will develop a "menu" of possible strategies and standard protocol programs
They will develop plans for differentiation within Tier 1

They will use peer modeling and coaching to increase instruction skill

They will collaborate in professional learning communities other than data analysis teams

Other: 

How do team members collaborate on assessing the quality of services provided to students?

Discuss completed fidelity of implementation checklists

Discuss amount of time scheduled for an intervention (frequency and intensity)

Discuss how many weeks the intervention should be given (duration)

Discuss refinement plans with supports to improve implementation

Other: 

How do you monitor/assess how well team members are collaborating to meet students’ needs?

Team meeting report forms

Collaboration rubric

Team progress self-assessment from Team to Teach: A Facilitator's Guide to Professional Learning Teams

Other: 

List the titles of helpful trainings chosen for your staff to develop skill in progress monitoring and data analysis and the agency or district member who provided each.

List the titles of helpful trainings chosen for your staff to develop stronger collaboration or consensus-building skills and the agency or district member that provided each.

What actions or policies did you implement that have been effective in building a culture and climate of collaboration?

- Working together to develop curriculum (materials and instructional resources) aligned to PA Core Standards
- School celebrations of success
- Staff recognition
- Other: 

What actions on your part have supported shared leadership/shared responsibility during your RtII process?
What connection do you see between your team collaboration process and the sustainability of your RtII plan?

What problems or obstacles have you faced while trying to build capacity for effective team collaboration for RtII? What policies or procedures have helped to overcome these?

What advice would you give to other schools that are developing their team collaboration routines and policies for RtII?
100%: You made it.

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Appendix E

Alignment of Survey Questions to the PDE Application for Approval

Although the entire system of Response to Instruction and Intervention relies on collaboration and teamwork, we can identify elements of collaborative practice in the PDE Application’s domains of Universal Screening, Shared Ownership, Data Based Decision-making, Multi-tiered Intervention and Service Delivery System, and Central/Building-Level Leadership. It is these elements of collaborative practice which were explicitly mentioned in the PDE Application “RtII/SLD Scoring Guide” that guided the design of the survey (PaTTAN, 2012c).

Survey Questions 1-6 are descriptive of the school’s size and population. The other questions, 7-25, are derived from the domains of the PDE Application listed above and each domain’s examples of desired supporting evidence. Using the PDE Application as the basis for the survey questions ensured that the principals had experience with the required elements in the RtII framework, and therefore the ability to respond. What follows is a listing of the Domain Indicator topics in the order as they appear in the Application, then the survey questions aligned to these:

Domain Indicator 2. Universal Screening, item 2c: Identify the timeline and meeting structure that is used to facilitate grade level analysis and goal setting relative to honing tier 1/core instruction after screening/benchmarking is conducted.

Example of Evidence: Meeting structure to help educators conduct analysis and generate instructional implications is provided (e.g., IDEAL plan, SIRF, 4SIGHT protocol).

Survey Question # 12. “For the problem-solving process of matching interventions to student needs, what established written order of steps do you use?”

Domain Indicator 3. Shared Ownership, Collaboration Cluster, item 3a: Provide an example of collaboration that specifies how general education, special education, ESL, reading specialist, school psychologist and others work together to align curriculum, instruction and assessment.
Example of Evidence: Collaborative structure (e.g., routine meetings with observable/embedded problem-solving process; protocols to facilitate collaborative problem-solving; establishment of collaborative norms to follow during problem-solving meetings).

Survey Question #15. “What collaboration guidelines did you choose to facilitate respectful interactions?”

Survey Question #16. “How do you direct teacher teams to work collaboratively to implement intervention instruction?”

Survey Question #17. “How do team members collaborate on assessing the quality of services provided to students?”

Survey Question #18. “How do you monitor/assess how well team members are collaborating to meet students’ needs?”

Domain Indicator 3, Shared Ownership, Collaboration Cluster, item 3b: Provide an example of professional development that has targeted the development of consensus-building strategies, facilitation, and/or collaborative communication skills.

Example of Evidence: Response should list title of event or structure that supports the ongoing development of these skills and any supporting resources that teams use to continue to develop these skills.

Survey Question #20. “List the titles of helpful trainings chosen for your staff to develop stronger collaboration or consensus-building skills and the agency or district member that provided each.”

Domain Indicator 3, Shared Ownership, Collaboration Cluster, item 3d: Provide an example of how the person(s) responsible for coordinating RtII implementation brings key decision-makers together to develop action plans and monitor/evaluate the impact of actions on student learning.
Example of Evidence: *Collaborative structure (e.g., routine meetings with observable/embedded problem-solving process; protocols to facilitate collaborative problem-solving; establishment of collaborative norms to follow during problem-solving meetings).*

Survey Question #7. “All PDE approved schools use data meetings after universal screenings (usually three per year). How often do you hold other grade level data analysis meetings that discuss progress monitoring, class/tier instruction, and matching interventions to student needs?”

Survey Question #8. “Who facilitates these grade level data analysis team meetings?”

Survey Question #9. “How often do you attend these data analysis team meetings per grade level?”

Domain Indicator 4, Data based Decision-making, Goal Setting/Assessment Cluster, item 4b: *Describe any systems or tools that are used to assist educators with user-friendly access to student and classroom performance data and interpretative reports.*

Example of Evidence: *Response meets criteria above—specific examples of data bases used are referenced (e.g., AIMSweb, DIBELS Next, Performance Tracker, Excel spreadsheet, Easy CBM).*

Survey Question #13. “What has been a practical method of making data available to all team members?”

Domain Indicator 4, Data based Decision-making, Goal Setting/Assessment Cluster, item 4d: *Describe the extent to which the design of the building schedule (from year to year) supports opportunities for ongoing “data examination.”*

(No Example of Evidence given.)

Survey Question #11. “How do you make room in the school schedule for these collaborative data team meetings?”
Domain Indicator 4, Data based Decision-making, Goal Setting/Assessment Cluster, item 4j:

*Provide an example of professional development that has served to advance skills across all educators relative to the areas of data analysis and instructional matching in each tier.*

Example of Evidence: *Response references data analysis activities/school improvement planning process, articles, guided practice, outside technical assistance, webinars, etc.*

Survey Question #19. “List the titles of helpful trainings chosen for your staff to develop skill in progress monitoring and data analysis and the agency or district member who provided each.”

Domain Indicator 5, Multi-tiered Intervention and Service Delivery System, Decision-Rules Cluster, item 5f: *Provide an example that shows the process for determining student-specific rate of improvement and how this information was used to inform the instruction/intervention that was provided to this student.*

Example of Evidence: *Response shows that the team has assessed the at-risk student’s performance level (e.g., mean of correct words per minute on the last two probes) and calculated slope (e.g., number of correct words per minute each time they were monitored) for the at-risk student and an average student. In addition, there is an explanation of the student’s growth relative to increasing intervention and instructional intensity and/or re-assessing fidelity as a first line of defense/inquiry when a student or group is demonstrating “inadequate response to instruction and intervention.”*

Survey Question #14. “How do your school’s teams determine an adequate rate of improvement?”

Domain Indicator 8, Central/Building Level Leadership, item 8b: *As a building administrator, describe specific ways that you have provided supportive accountability related to enhancing instructional effectiveness and student outcomes.*
Example of Evidence: *Targeted professional learning- establishment of PLCs; Providing leadership through clear vision and reinforcement of behaviors that support the vision (commendations, celebrations, etc.)*

Survey Question #10. “What is your role in aiding the data team process?”

Survey Question #21. “What actions or policies did you implement that have been effective in building a culture and climate of collaboration?”

Domain Indicator 8, Central/Building Level Leadership, item 8d: *As a building administrator, describe your efforts to transform your school and facilitate shared leadership among all stakeholders.*

Example of Evidence: *Response cites specific examples related to systems change efforts.*

Survey Question #22. “What actions on your part have supported shared leadership/shared responsibility during your RtII process?”

Because the concern of sustainability is crucial to every school improvement plan, it was prudent to include Survey Question #23: “What connection do you see between your team collaboration process and the sustainability of your RtII plan?” The remaining survey questions were developed to induce responses that give advice:

Survey Question #24. “What problems or obstacles have you faced while trying to build capacity for effective team collaboration for RtII? What policies or procedures have helped to overcome these?”

Survey Question #25. “What advice would you give to other schools that are developing their team collaboration routines and policies for RtII?”
VITA

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DEGREES AWARDED

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership 2016

Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, Mansfield, PA
Master of Education in Elementary Education 1988

Houghton College, Houghton, NY
Bachelor of Arts 1975
Majors: Elementary Education, English
Minor: Psychology

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Title I Reading Specialist 2004-2016
Federal Programs Coordinator 2004-2009
Northeast Bradford School District, Rome, PA

Early Intervention Teacher, Pre-K Teacher 2001-2004
Elmira City School District, Elmira, NY

Elementary Teacher 1989-1999
Athens Area School District, Athens, PA

CERTIFICATIONS

Administration K-12
Reading Specialist K-12
ESL K-12
English K-12
Elementary Education K-6

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Delta Kappa Gamma State Scholarship 2012
Northeast Bradford Foundation Grant, $3,020 2012
Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers Grant, $2,250 2011

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Golden Key International Honour Society
Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Society
International Reading Association