

Minnesota Principals Academy Action Learning Project
Becky Carlson
Creating a Schoolwide RtI Program

Abstract

This Action Learning Project examined the idea and feasibility of extending the current RtI program from grades K-3 to grades K-6 over a two-year span without losing the success of the K-3 program. The reform was begun due to the success of the RtI program in grades K-3, the not-so-successful performance of the 7-12 grades, and the opportunity to hire a full time Title I teacher. This study intends to implement a more intentional approach to planning and implementing RtI in the Goodridge Elementary School, decrease below average grades in the high school, and decrease students who are progress monitored as they advance in grade levels.

Vision:

To provide a multi-tiered system of support for all elementary students, leading to all students being prepared, and successful, in high school and beyond.

Background/Context:

Our faculty and staff want what is best for our students--to be successful and prepared for high school and beyond, but with our small population we have not had the resources to offer more safety nets for our students other than what they receive in the classroom. By having the ability to progress monitor all of our elementary students we are able to implement effective practices both in the classroom, in small groups, and individually, by using data and collaboration. The school does not have a very diverse population: 88% white; 5% hispanic; 6% American Indian; 2% Asian; and 0 black students. 54% of students receive free/reduced lunch; 21% are special education students; and the school has no ELL or homeless students. Goodridge is a traditional elementary school with 7 classroom teachers, 2 special education teachers, 1 music teacher, 1 phy. Ed teacher, and 1 Title I teacher serving grades K-6.

Why a Change?

Although the school was seeing success in the RtI program in grades K-3, there was still a large percentage of below average or failing grades in the high school. This led to the idea of possibly continuing to support those students who struggled throughout their entire elementary careers, with the hope that the added years of interventions and monitoring would help them be more prepared for high school.

What We Did:

When the opportunity to hire a full time Title I/RtI teacher presented itself, we began the two-year process of implementing RtI in grades 4-6. Over the two years the team worked on incorporating RtI into their classrooms schedules, researched best-practice regarding RtI, held team meetings, evaluated, reflected, and adjusted the program to fit our school and our students.

What We Found Out:

Over the last two years we found out that we have an exceptional staff that are willing to go the extra mile for our students. It was also apparent that in order to have a successful RtI program you need a passionate person who believes in kids to lead the way. We have seen an increase in achievement, growth, and proficiency in the last two years, and we hope to see that continue into our high school.

