

Minnesota Principals Academy - Action Learning Project
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Rtl
One Middle School's Effort to Increase Proficiency as Measured by
Statewide Assessments

Abstract

This Action Learning Project was initiated as a result of our continuous performance below the state average on both Math and Reading MCA's. Our goal for implementing Rtl was not only to improve our proficiency levels on the statewide assessments, but also to help students realize their maximum growth potential. This, in turn, would open up "windows of opportunity" vs. roadblocks to success! Our school had spent a number of years working hard to improve culture of the building by implementing PBIS. The next logical step for the team to tackle was student performance.

Vision:

The vision for this project was to investigate Rtl and best practices around it. We went, as teams, to statewide MTSS Conferences to get both an understanding of Rtl and guidelines for implementation. Our next steps were to get the ball rolling!

Background/Context:

Central Middle School is part of ISD #595. It is a district located in NW Minnesota. Our MCA Scores over the past 5 years in Reading and Math have been below the state average (regarding number of students who are proficient) a majority of the time. (All 5 years in math; 4 of the 5 in reading); 2017 official scores are not in yet.

What we did:

We began by researching Rtl. We, along with a team of teachers, attended two Rtl conferences. We built a schedule to accommodate both Rtl Study Skills and common Reading time (Grade 6). We used data from multiple sources (NWEA, MCA, classroom performance) to identify students who would receive targeted instruction. We brainstormed ways to integrate Rtl into an existing homeroom time in Grade 6. In addition, we switched our benchmarking tool after the first year. We implemented a new tool year two, and are switching again for the upcoming school year.

What We found out:

This year's students grew, but did not grow enough to reach proficiency levels on the statewide assessment (MCA's) - at least not according to preliminary data:

Students in Rtl Study Skills (2016-2017)

- Grade 8 Math: 66.7% grew (MCA's)

- Grade 8 Reading: 60% grew (MCA's)
- Grade 7 Math: 50% grew (MCA's)
- Grade 7 Reading: 66.7% grew (MCA's)
- Grade 6 Reading: 38% grew (MCA's)

While a large number of students showed growth, only 9 reached proficiency on MCA's. (out of 54; 16.7%)

Implications for Practice:

We need to pick an assessment tool and stick with it! Changing two years in a row did not provide the consistency of data that we need to make informed decisions. We need to provide comprehensive training on the benchmarking/progress monitoring/intervention tool we are going to be using (STAR Enterprise). We will need to look closely at growth data for our Rti students (really for all students). Are they making low, medium or high growth? To close the achievement gap, they are going to have to be making high growth!