

**FIRST YEAR IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION  
AT APPOQUINIMINK HIGH SCHOOL**

**by**

**Keisha T. Brinkley**

An executive position paper submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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Approved:

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Ralph P. Ferretti, Ph.D.  
Director of the School of Education

Approved:

---

Carol Vukelich, Ph.D.  
Dean of the College of Education and Human Development

Approved:

---

Ann Ardis, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

I certify that I have read this executive position paper and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an executive position paper for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

---

Joan L. Buttram, Ph.D.  
Professor in charge of executive position paper

I certify that I have read this executive position paper and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an executive position paper for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

---

Elizabeth Farley-Ripple, Ph.D.  
Member of executive position paper committee

I certify that I have read this executive position paper and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an executive position paper for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

---

Jacquelyn O. Wilson, Ed.D.  
Member of executive position paper committee

I certify that I have read this executive position paper and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an executive position paper for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

---

Debbie Panchisin, Ed.D.  
Member of executive position paper committee

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This manuscript is dedicated to my grandparents Elwood and Helen Young. To my *grindad* for making me feel like the favorite of your 29 grandchildren and letting me climb on your lap to read when I was a little girl. You fostered my love of reading. To my *grumum* for having the vision for me to be a teacher when I was a ‘little lady’ even though I disagreed with you. You were the best teacher model a girl could have; my first memory as a student was learning Psalms 23 in your Sunday school class with my cousins and friends.

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## **ABSTRACT**

In a school district with mostly high-performing students, a subgroup of students was not meeting the standard for reading according to the state assessment. The superintendent and high school principals agreed that a systemic intervention was necessary to address the needs of struggling learners. The Appoquinimink High School principal led a team of teachers in the development of a formal Response to Intervention (RTI) process for ninth grade reading during the 2014-2015 school year. The goal was to create an infrastructure for RTI that could be adapted for other grade levels and content areas. Establishing the RTI process focused on various aspects including reviewing research around RTI, addressing staffing and scheduling implications, creating a communication plan for stakeholders, and developing an evaluation of student progress and perceptions.

At the end of year one, an analysis of student assessment data and teacher and student surveys revealed positive teacher and student perceptions of the initial RTI process. Student data also revealed positive results for students in the program, and the majority of students showed growth and most students met their target goals. Teachers reported having a clear understanding of their role to support students in the RTI program, found value in the work that they were doing and had high expectations for their students. Support of school leadership and professional development was rated positively. Student survey results indicated that students had positive perceptions of teacher care, challenge of the class, and clarity of their teachers. Recommendations are

offered for other secondary schools considering implementing RTI programs to support struggling students.

## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Response to Intervention (RTI) programs are a growing practice to address academic difficulties within a comprehensive system and improve student outcomes (Canter, Klotz, & Cowan, 2008). During the 2014-2015 school year, a team from Appoquinimink High School (AHS) established a formal RTI process for ninth grade reading. Our team investigated strategies for supporting struggling adolescent readers and as well as components of exiting RTI models. This research was used to develop a process to match the needs of AHS students. In addition, resources were identified to support implementation of an RTI process at AHS, including a staffing plan, materials for interventions, and support for professional development.

There are five chapters and appendices included within this portfolio. Chapter 1 introduces the work my team completed on RTI implementation at AHS during the 2014-2015 school year and presents the problem addressed in my portfolio. Chapter 2 describes the improvement strategies we employed to address this problem and Chapter 3 shares the results of our improvement strategies. Chapter 4 reflects on the success of our improvement efforts during year one of RTI implementation at AHS. In Chapter 5, I share my thoughts on my own leadership development. Finally, the appendices anchor this paper with my proposal and nine artifacts that address my problem statement. The artifacts are titled as follows:

Artifact 1: Annotated Bibliography

Artifact 2: Lessons from other RTI models

Artifact 3: Staff the RTI at AHS

Artifact 4: Professional Development

Artifact 5: White Paper for Staff

Artifact 6: Schedule Students for the RTI Process

Artifact 7: Response to Intervention Parent and Community Presentation

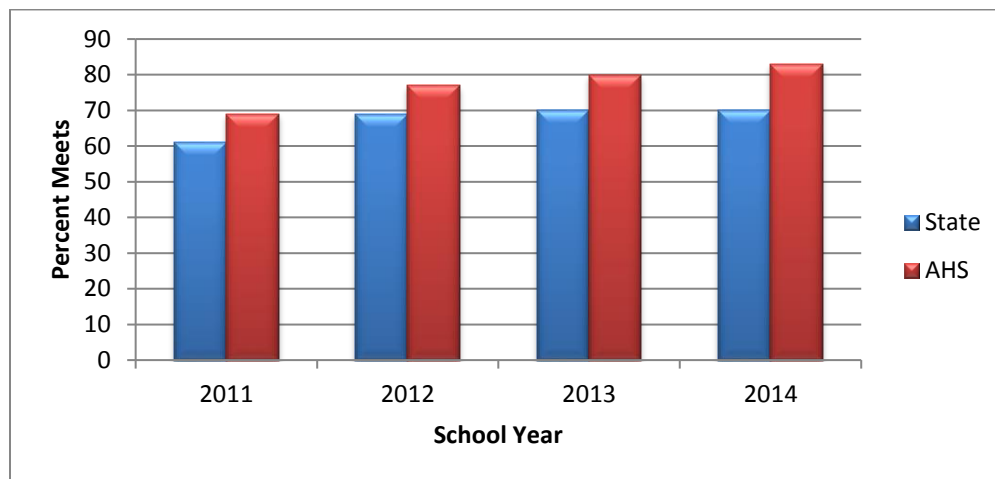
Artifact 8: Interventions for Support

Artifact 9: Program Evaluation and Design

### **Organizational Context**

Appoquinimink School District (ASD) is one of the fastest growing school districts in the state of Delaware. ASD has been recognized as a top performing district with great academic achievement, first-rate facilities and a globally-focused, 21st century curriculum. ASD Annual Report, 2013). ASD has 16 schools on 10 campuses, serving more than 10,000 students in grades PK-12. With more than 600 teachers and 150 instructional support professionals, ASD schools have a reputation in the state of Delaware for being good schools with high expectations for students. Assessment scores rank among the highest in the state. AHS, one of two high schools in the district, has consistently scored above the state average on state assessments, including DCAS Reading (See Figure 1).

Figure1. Percent of Students that Meet DCAS Reading Standard



As one of Delaware's youngest comprehensive high schools, AHS opened its brand new facilities in 2008 to 9th and 10th grade students. Over the next two years, the school grew into a full 9-12 grade high school and graduated the first group of seniors in May of 2011. Enrollment continued to increase, but at a much slower rate over during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. Since 2010, AHS enrollment has grown from 1,350 to slightly under 1,600 students.

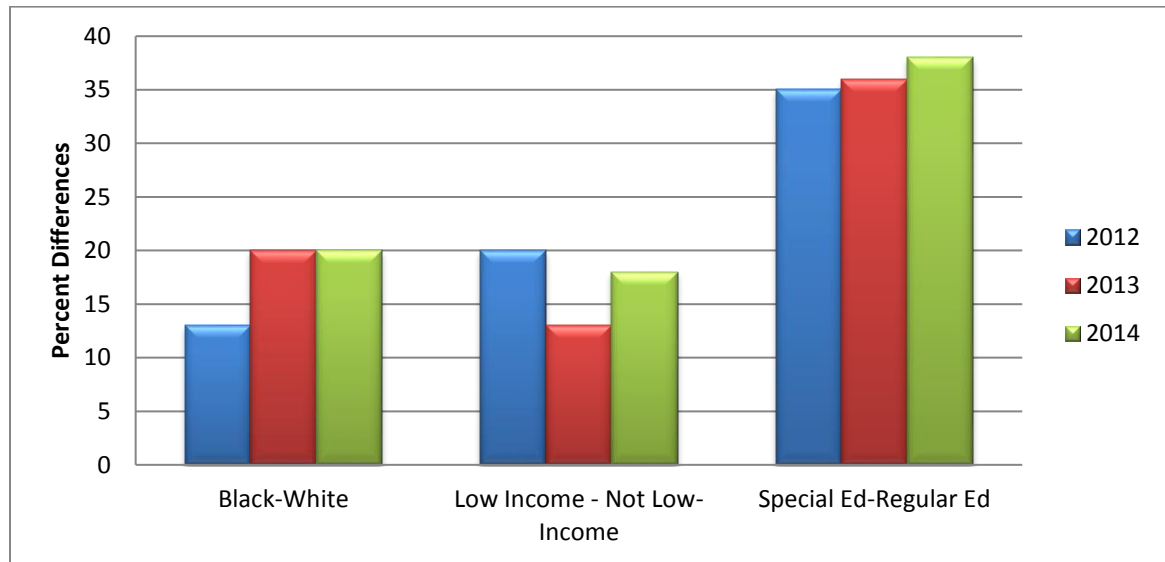
While the student population increased, demographics remained fairly stable. At the start of this project (2014-2015) school year, the student population at AHS was 65% White, 26% African American, 4% Asian, and 5% Hispanic. Students with disabilities accounted for 7% of the total population. Students that are economically disadvantaged comprise 18% of our population. The AHS staff was relatively young. Our staff included 94 teachers, one librarian and eight support staff. One quarter of the staff had 4 years or less experience. About 38% of the staff had between 5 and 9 years of experience. The racial makeup of the staff was 87% white and 11% African American. Although the staff

was young, highly qualified teachers teach 100% of classes. More than 50% of the teaching staff held a master's degree and above. Hiring highly qualified teachers remains a priority in the district and school.

Our young staff in our young school has continued to meet achievement goals set by the district. AHS has met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to state of Delaware measures. The subgroups of African American, Low SES, and Special Education have made progress under the growth model. For the 2012 school year, AHS was a *Recognition School* for closing the achievement gap. The Department of Education commends schools for high performance or closing the achievement gap among groups of students.

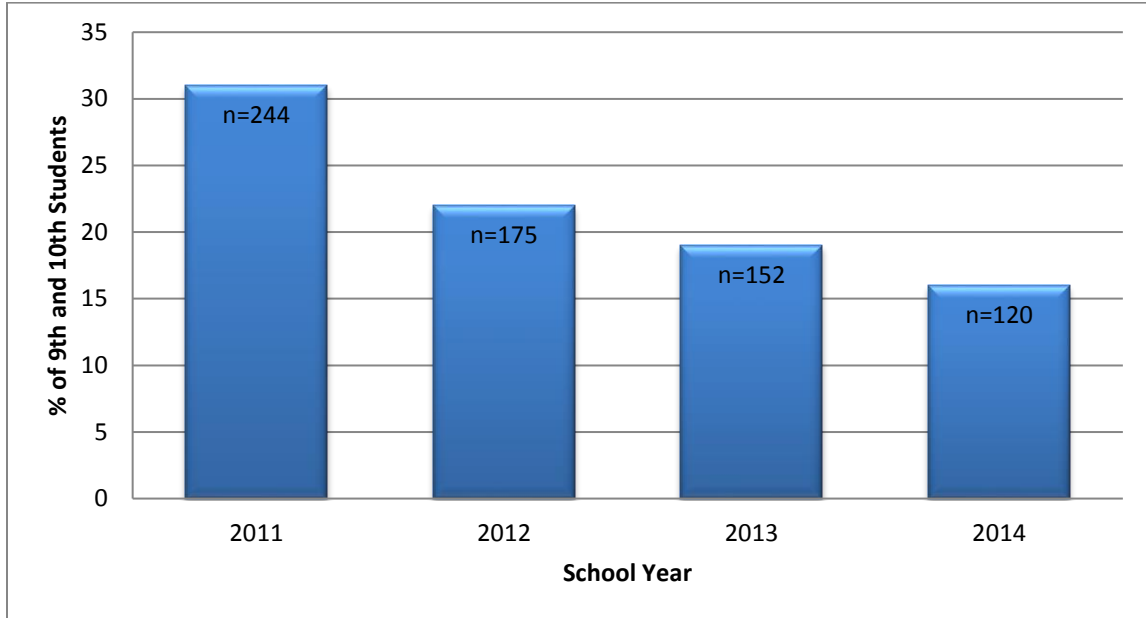
In addition to the state measures for AYP, ASD has set challenging growth goals for each school in the district. Two of the goals in the district's academic progress plan include closing the achievement gap between new and existing students, and decreasing the achievement gap between black and white students, non-low income and low-income students, special education and non-special education students. The achievement gaps at AHS continued to fluctuate. The Black-White Reading gap was reduced to 13% during the 2012 school year. The Black-White Reading gap was 20% during the 2013 school year and remained consistent at 20% during the 2014 school year. The targets for the other groups were all met except for the Reading gap between low income and non-low income students. The goal was to reduce the gap to 17% and it increased to 18% (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. 2012 – 2014 AHS Reading Achievement Gaps



Despite the high achievement of many students, a group of struggling learners still existed that were not proficient in reading. During the years leading up to the project, the numbers consistently decreased (see Figure 3) even as school population increased. AHS takes pride in the decrease in the number of students not meeting the standard, going from 244 to 120. Nevertheless, our team considers the number of students not meeting the standard significant.

Figure 3. AHS Students Not Meeting Reading Proficiency



### History of Interventions at AHS

AHS attempted a number of different intervention models in the past, including pullout during the school day, extended time after school, and individual modules delivered via computer software. We tried scheduling at-risk students within the same course sections to address academic deficiencies. In our attempts to seek effective intervention strategies independently, we maintained our commitment to providing an effective general education program for all students. We had varying degrees of success with our different modes of intervention, but most included meeting with students during lunch or after school on a voluntary bases or meeting with students during other instructional times. We also had limited resources and professional development applied during these efforts.



## **Problem Statement**

At the end of the 2014 school year, 120 students were not meeting the standard for reading according to DCAS results. When reviewing the demographics of students not meeting the standard, we found that 60% of the students not meeting the standard are boys, 40% are girls. The ELL population at AHS is very small but almost 100% of students receiving ELL services are not meeting the standard. Close to 25% of the students not meeting the standard are students with disabilities. In 2014, 43% percent of students that did not meet the proficient mark failed one or more courses and 31% of students that were not proficient did not meet requirements for promotion to the next grade level.

The superintendent and high school principals agreed that a systemic approach to intervention was needed to address the needs of these learners. As a result, the superintendent charged high school administrators with developing and implementing a Response to Intervention process (RTI). Canter et al. (2008) report that RTI programs are increasingly used to address academic difficulties and improve student outcomes.

State regulations surrounding RTI are also directly related to the superintendent's charge. Section 12.0 of Delaware Administrative Code outlines the RTI Process that all districts must follow. ASD has not established procedures or processes at the district level for high schools that meet the state regulations. Delaware Admin Code 925.6.11.3.1 through 6.11.3.2 specifies that school districts should implement RTI for all students no later than the beginning of 2009-2010 school year. The district aimed to complete these

procedures for high school for the 2014-2015 school year to be in compliance with state regulations.

Delaware supports a three-tiered model for RTI. In this model, all students receive quality instruction in Tier 1. Tier 2 is comprised of students with inadequate progress using Tier 1 instructional strategies. Students receive increased support using individual and group researched based interventions. Tier 3 is comprised of students that make inadequate progress with Tier 1 or Tier 2 interventions. ASD will use the definition of RTI used by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE, 2014).

RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to the student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data. (NASDE, 2006).

ASD made a commitment to providing the time and resources to support a successful implementation. I was part of the district committee that explored available research on secondary RTI, considered different RTI models and dedicated time to RTI planning and professional development to support RTI implementation. I led the committee at my school for RTI planning. The district and school based RTI planning teams began their work in the winter of 2014. The work by the committees included: (1) reviewing Delaware's Regulations for RTI to gain a better understanding of the law and requirements for implementation, (2) visiting established RTI Programs, (3) researching RTI programs and strategies for struggling adolescent learners, and (4) organizing and developing school based teams for RTI.

## **Organizational Role**

As of July 1, 2014, I was the newly appointed principal of AHS. While this was a new role for me in the school, I was not new to the school. In the fall of 2009, I joined the AHS administration team as an assistant principal. During my five years as assistant principal, I directly supervised approximately 25% of the faculty and worked with all faculty and staff in some capacity. I developed the master schedule, coordinated school testing, and supervised the ninth grade academy, mathematics, world language and student services departments. These were all key areas that required my constant monitoring of student progress at very intimate levels. At the high school level, administrators may very easily compartmentalize their priorities based on their supervisory roles. My areas of supervision had a direct connection to student achievement.

During my time as assistant principal, my role in addressing the needs of struggling learners varied. I worked with teachers to assign students and organize time for various modes of intervention. I monitored the achievement for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students through DCAS, grades and teacher feedback. I provided some professional development and reviewed data with teachers periodically. During this time, we faced several challenges including a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership of our intervention process, consistency with interventions, limited resources, insufficient professional development or intervention planning time for teachers, and lack of accountability on the part of the students.

In my role as principal, I directly oversaw year-one of the RTI implementation process. I led the team that collaborated, planned, and problems solved. In my new role, with primarily a new team, I hoped to address the challenges that we had in this area previously. Together with my school leadership team, I determined the instructional focus for the 2014-2015 school year included:

- increasing rigor through higher order thinking
- maintaining a high level of student engagement,
- increasing literacy across the curriculum, and
- developing a framework for RTI in our school.

### **Improvement Goal**

During the 2014-2015 school year AHS's RTI team established a formal RTI process for ninth grade reading. Our team set out to create an infrastructure for RTI that we could replicate or adapt to other grade levels and content areas. Our work included leading the design and implementation process at AHS. Establishing the RTI process focused on the following: (a) building knowledge base about RTI, (b) creating staffing plan for RTI classrooms, (c) designing a professional development plan, (e) developing an RTI structure and schedule that works best for AHS, (f) monitoring student progress, (g) informing key stakeholders, and (h) identifying research-based interventions.

## **Chapter 2**

### **IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

My RTI team began the process with limited knowledge about RTI. In our efforts to establish an RTI process at AHS during the 2014-2015 school year, we did the following: reviewed research, visited other districts, defined staff roles and responsibilities, engaged in professional development, scheduled students for RTI, engaged our parents as partners, and provided interventions for students. My team and I agreed at the onset of this project that we should seek out as much information as possible to determine what would work best for our student population.

The research that we completed and the work that we did is outlined in artifacts 1-8: Artifact 1: Annotated Bibliography, Artifact 2: Lessons from other RTI models, Artifact 3: Staff the RTI at AHS, Artifact 4: Professional Development, Artifact 5: White Paper for Staff, Artifact 6: Schedule Students for the RTI Process, Artifact 7: Response to Intervention Parent and Community Presentation and Artifact 8: Interventions for Support.

#### **Building Knowledge Base**

We built our knowledge base about RTI in several different ways. We reviewed journal articles, academic books and policy statements to inform initial work on creating a formal RTI process. We read what current literature said about systematic approaches to RTI at the secondary level and how to address reading challenges for high school students. I

created an annotated bibliography that served multiple purposes. It provided the AHS RTI team with an opportunity to begin research on the broader topic of RTI and more specifically locate information about struggling adolescent readers and existing RTI programs. The annotations cite examples of RTI programs, highlight key practices in successful RTI programs, present guiding questions to consider when addressing struggling adolescent learners, and share current best practices for struggling adolescent students in the areas of reading comprehension and fluency.

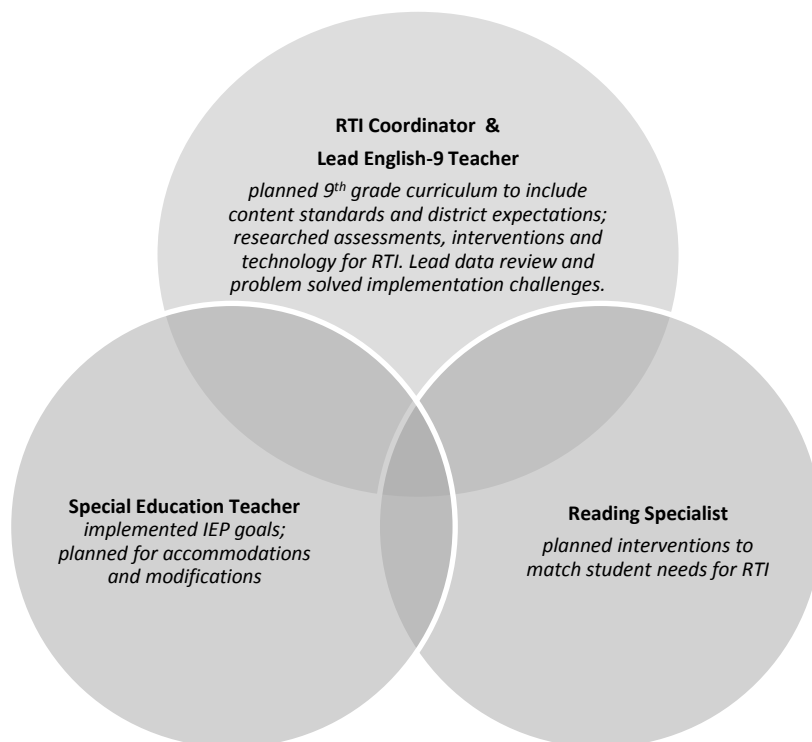
In addition to reading about struggling adolescent readers and best practices in RTI programs, our team visited, talked with, or researched schools in the state of Delaware and a few from across the country cited in journals, briefings and articles. Questions focused on topics such as years of implementation, schedule and structure, interventions and assessments, resources, progress and perceptions of the program, staffing and professional development and finally lessons learned during the process. Artifact 2 in Appendix B summarizes data from the visits and the lessons our team learned from the reviewing other school models. A key lesson we took away from these interactions was that RTI implementation could work using existing teachers and structures. Another major lesson was learning that the implementation of a quality RTI program requires multiple years to accomplish.

### **Creating Staffing Plan for RTI Classrooms**

Artifact 3 in Appendix C addresses how our team staffed the RTI process. McMackin and Johns (2011) assert that each member of an RTI team must have clearly defined roles and expectations for the team to work toward success. During the first year

of implementation, the AHS RTI team determined that three teachers would collaborate for each of the two sections of RTI English-9; this decision was reached after the superintendent approved an additional teaching unit for the first year of implementation. The collaborative team included a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and a reading specialist. We reviewed existing student and teacher schedules, teacher roles, and expectations for collaboration. Wilcox, Murakami-Ramalho, and Urick (2013) suggest that there will be a merging of professional roles and responsibilities of general and special education teachers. Role merging occurred at times with the RTI teaching team, but there was a framework with clearly defined roles for each teacher (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Teacher roles and responsibilities in AHS RTI program. The figure also areas in which their work overlapped.



## **Designing Professional Development Plan**

Guskey (2000) states that “at the core of each and every successful educational improvement effort is a thoughtfully conceived, well-designed, and well supported professional development component” (p. 32). Artifact 4 in Appendix D discusses the professional development plan during the 2014-2015 school year. Our team agreed that PD was integral for the success of the RTI process. Professional development at AHS included a two-fold plan to help all teachers understand the RTI framework: (a) educating the general teaching staff of the RTI process and its progress at AHS and (b) equipping the teachers in the RTI program with the tools to teach, assess, monitor, and evaluate students in the program.

The school-based literacy committee provided staff with multiple approaches to support reading comprehension and writing. Strategies for providing background knowledge and introducing vocabulary were reviewed and resources were provided for all staff during PLCs and available online through the school’s shared drive and video segments. A white paper titled “RTI @ AHS” included a description of RTI and what it would look like at AHS during the 2014-2015 school-year was shared with staff (see Appendix E). Our administration team met with teachers in PLCs for small group discussions on the information shared in the white paper about the RTI process.

Our RTI team set an expectation for ongoing professional development which included training specific to the RTI teaching team. The teachers on the team benefited from the professional learning for instructional planning, the integration of technology, and databased decision-making throughout the year. My administrative team, along with



the district ELA specialist provided feedback on instruction with walkthrough tools. The entire RTI team discussed progress monitoring during monthly meetings to reflect on the successes, the challenges, and the areas for growth.

### **Developing an RTI Structure and Schedule**

Literature surrounding RTI at the secondary level discusses the challenges with structure and scheduling (Bender, 2012; DDOE, 2014; Duffy, Scala, & National High School Center, 2012; Canter et al., 2012; and Klotz et al., 2008). Our first challenge came with determining structure. Secondary schools find it difficult to schedule time to support the needs of struggling learners who need individualized instruction. In our research about RTI, our team saw three major three major structures for implementation emerge at the secondary level.

These structures included: specially designed courses, support in classes that run concurrent with content classes, and a skinny period where all students are engaged in an academic enrichment or support classes (Bender, 2012; Burns 2008; DDOE, 2014; King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012; Martinez & Young, 2011). Through discussion with our superintendent, we learned that he was not in favor of the skinny period. He was concerned with the academic planning for the rest of the student body. The concurrent class option posed a challenge for scheduling students for other graduation requirements. As a result, our team focused on a modified English-9 class for RTI.

### **Monitoring Student Progress**

As we focused on scheduling students for the RTI sections, our team used a series of data points to determine placement and movement between tiers. Artifact 6, Appendix

F, focuses on the data and assessments the AHS RTI team used for RTI universal screening and progress monitoring. *RTI Universal screening* is the process of identifying students who have reading difficulties and could benefit from evidenced based interventions. *Progress monitoring* is specific to students receiving RTI interventions. Data collected allows educators to review student response to interventions, differentiate instruction for small groups, and determine if RTI students are making progress toward their RTI goals.

The 2014 Delaware Comprehensive Testing System (DCAS) and English-8 grades were used to identify students that struggle with reading. The AHS RTI team used a z-score analysis of DCAS plus final grades as part of a universal screening process for incoming ninth grade students. DDOE replaced DCAS with Smarter Balanced assessment during the 2014-2015 school year. Data from Smarter Balanced assessment would not be available for decision making at the end of the school year. As a result, ASD used NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to gain instructional information and measure student progress in the areas of reading and mathematics for all students in grades two through ten during the 2014-2015 school year. NWEA MAP data provided schools with data similar to what a school typically gains from the DCAS assessment.

Our team established a regular cycle of progress monitoring for students in the English-9 RTI sections. The SRI, NWEA MAP, instructional software, Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs), and grades were integral in screening and monitoring student performance during each progress monitoring cycle. The various data points allowed the

team to determine how to group students for differentiated instruction and what interventions they might receive. At the end of each cycle, groups were re-evaluated based on student progress during the nine-week cycle.

### **Informing Key Stakeholders**

Another key lesson was the importance of keeping key stakeholders informed of the process. Artifact 7 in Appendix G focuses on our stakeholder communication plan regarding the RTI process at AHS. We considered three primary groups of stakeholders: parents, teachers and the board of education. The parents of the targeted students need an understanding of the expectations to provide support. Our team determined that all teachers in our school needed an understanding of RTI to support the process. Finally, the board of education needed to know what efforts teachers are making to ensure success for all students and have an understanding of how resources are allocated for the process.

While researching other programs, our team noticed that parents were not fully aware of the RTI process in most schools. In most cases, parents understood their child was receiving added support, but they did not understand the cycle of intervention and assessment nor the RTI jargon. The AHS planning team familiarized parents with RTI language at the start of the school year. Our team developed a plan to include parents as support from the start and made the RTI process transparent to parents. During the fall open house with parents, the RTI teaching team reviewed the goals and expectations for the class. Teachers shared the structure of the class, emphasizing students would receive their English-9 curriculum as well as support for their challenges with reading. Teachers reviewed the assessments that the student would complete and discussed the progress

monitoring cycles. We invited parents to participate in parent conferences throughout the school year.

Internal communication of program expectations and goals is just as important as external communication. As I mentioned earlier, one of our first steps was to inform all staff about RTI and the importance of meeting the needs of struggling students. The white paper (see Appendix E, Attachment 1) provided the staff with details about RTI and the process at AHS during the 2014-2015 school year. A cycle of communication throughout the school year kept all teachers involved and informed about the process.

Finally, our team developed a presentation for board of education members. Presentations at monthly board of education meetings are great avenues for public engagement. Board presentations afford school and district leaders the opportunity to present progress of programs and allow the board members to ask questions about the process on behalf of the community. The intent of our presentation was to review the high school RTI process. This included an evaluation of the first year, student progress, implementation challenges and successes.

### **Identifying Research-Based Interventions**

One of the core principles of an effective RTI process outlined by the (DDOE, 2014) is the use of research-based interventions to match student needs with continuous progress monitoring. The AHS RTI team defined evidenced based strategies as supplemental small group instruction (Tier 2) or targeted individual (Tier 3) instruction that focuses on student deficiencies. Based on student needs, Tier 2 interventions occur in small groups with a standardized approach. Based on student needs, Tier 3 interventions

occur in small groups with a standardized approach or in individual settings. Teachers shall use prescribed programs or research-based strategies that are intense, focused on specific skills and efficient for students to catch up to their grade level peers.

The team's approach to supporting struggling learners was to assemble a portfolio of strategies for the English-9 course that would eventually become a resource for all content areas. We used a program that supports increased achievement in reading called Read180 for a targeted group of students (Scholastic, 2012). The Read180 instructional model provides opportunity for whole group, teacher-directed instruction; small group differentiated instruction, independent individualized software practice and modeled independent reading that focuses on vocabulary and comprehension. We also used Jamestown Education, a leveled text series that supports several evidenced based strategies (McGraw Hill, 2014). The RTI team understood the school may not be able to sustain Read180 implementation beyond 10<sup>th</sup> grade and all teachers would need evidenced based strategies to support a school wide systematic change across all content areas.

In collaboration with our district ELA specialist and recommendations from the school-based reading specialist, our team discussed strategies to best support struggling adolescent readers. We started with interventions that the teachers had some level of familiarity with and that teachers perceived as simple to implement at the start of this process. We developed a portfolio of intervention strategies (See Table 2, Appendix I) based on these discussions with research to support the team decisions. We used explicit comprehension strategies such as paraphrasing of text using Read, Ask Paraphrase and

QAR: Question Answer Relationship. Our teachers focused on the seven strategies with the intention of growing the portfolio over the next few years.

All of the improvement strategies were undertaken to implement a high quality RTI program at AHS. The next chapter presents evidence about our success in accomplishing this goal during the first year of implementation.

## **Chapter 3**

### **EFFICACY OF IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

It was important to assess the work that we did during the first year of the RTI implementation process. We needed to clearly identify our success as well as any challenges along the way. I designed an evaluation to review the first year of implementation of a RTI Program at AHS. The evaluation focused on whether students met their target goals (see Appendix D), students' perception of the RTI program assistance (Appendix C), and teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities as well as their perceptions of the adequacy of the professional development and the overall RTI program implementation (see Appendix B). Findings for each are summarized below.

#### **Student Achievement Findings**

Student data on the SRI Lexile and NWEA MAP RIT scores were analyzed by the RTI team to determine if students met their individual growth targets. Analysis of Lexile growth and NWEA MAP RIT scores also helped determine if students were on grade level for reading. The team also reviewed class grades to make sure students were on target to pass the course at the end of the school year.

A review of SRI Lexile data revealed 24 students in the program reading at least one grade level below their target Lexile range at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

Final Lexile scores showed that 80% of students showed growth with a mean increase of 175L. The year ended with 17 (71%) of the students reading in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level range.

MAP produces an individual RIT score for students. Similar to Lexile growth, individual student growth in RIT scores can vary. The typical increase for RIT scores is 2 points for students in ninth grade (NWEA, 2014). Students with an initial score below the grade level average typically have higher growth. Expected growth was between 3 to 10 points based on individual target growth set in the fall. Teachers used the Fall MAP assessment to set goals for success in the RTI program. The team established a goal of 80% of students reaching their individual RIT growth goal and 80% of students reading in the grade level Lexile range for year one of RTI implementation. Despite relatively low initial data, many students reached their goals. Eighty percent of students in the RTI sections of English-9 met their spring RIT goal. This goal was higher than the goal set by other English-9 teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1

AHS Teacher Target Goals for NWEA MAP

<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exceeds</b>
Less than 50 percent of students will reach their individual RIT growth goal for the NWEA MAP.	50 - 64 percent of students will reach their individual RIT growth goal for the NWEA MAP.	65 percent or more students will reach their individual RIT growth goal for the NWEA MAP.



## Student Survey Findings

Twenty-nine of the 42 (69%) students enrolled in the RTI English-9 at Appoquinimink High School completed an online survey about their perceptions of the class. Appendix C summarizes their ratings. Students in the RTI program, on average, held positive perceptions about the English-9 RTI class. Means of 3.3 to 3.4 indicated that students tended to agree or strongly agree with perceptions associated with teacher care, challenge of the class, and clarity of their teachers. For 17 of the 27 (63%) questions, students reported high levels of agreement.

Within the survey, series of questions related to different areas of student perception. Six questions on the survey asked students to rate their perceptions on the challenge of their English class. Ninety-three percent of students indicated that they learned to correct their mistakes. The majority of the students agreed that teachers accept nothing less than their full effort and that that they learn in class daily. Another highly rated group of questions dealt with confer. Students typically agreed that they are encouraged and given opportunities to explain their thinking and share ideas. Ninety percent of students agreed they get to learn things in more than one way. Eighty-six percent of the students agreed that teachers want them to share their thoughts. In addition to high ratings of agreement about confer, there was also less variability in the student ratings. Students positively rated four questions about consolidation. Ninety-three percent of students said teachers “*check to make sure we understand what they are teaching*” and 90 percent of students indicate that teachers “*take the time to summarize what they learn daily*”.

Fifty-five percent of students had concerns about some aspect of their teachers' clarity. These students felt that teachers sometime "*think we understand when we don't.*"

The final set of questions asked students to rate their perceived benefits of the English class. While students generally agreed (82%) that they like the support they are receiving from their teachers and they are learning strategies in their classes that help them better understand, only 62% of students liked being in the yearlong English class and only 69% indicated they are using ideas or strategies from English class in other courses.

### **Teacher Survey Findings**

Four teachers at AHS completed the online survey about their perceptions of the RTI process. Three of the teachers were directly involved in the class. A fourth teacher participated in some of the professional development and used some of the instructional strategies in her small group/high intensity special education class. Her participation was for consideration for future steps with the RTI program.

According to the survey results, the teachers in the program had generally positive perceptions about the RTI process at AHS. Teachers understood their role and responsibilities in the RTI program. All four teachers surveyed strongly agreed that they were to provide small group instruction for identified students. All of the teachers strongly agreed that they felt a high degree of personal responsibility for the work they did with the RTI program. Teachers agreed that all students could meet grade level expectations and teachers also thought that all students could meet state reading standards.

All four teachers believed that my administrative team and I supported the RTI program. This includes agreeing that in my role as the principal, I maintained a student-learning focus and a commitment to quality education for all students. All teachers strongly agree that I listened to their ideas and concerns about RTI. Teachers shared in the open-ended question that weekly meetings with me and provided time for immediate reflection and problem shooting during the first year of the process.

Overall three of the four teachers found the professional development helpful. They identified a need for more training in the areas of data analysis. One of the teachers rated this set of questions negatively. She did not participate in all of the RTI professional development, nor did she collaborate as extensively as the rest of the team. In the open feedback section of the survey, comments related to this set of questions included a teacher sharing that they liked the time afforded to try to match interventions with student needs.

When reflecting on the availability of resources, intervention strategies and assessments, all four teachers strongly agree that they have tried different intervention strategies in the RTI program. They all agreed to some degree that they investigated different interventions strategies, matched interventions with student needs, investigated different instructional strategies and used assessments to inform instruction.

Teachers were asked to share what components of the RTI program they felt were going really well and what challenges they faced during year one of implementation. Three of the four teachers cited the flexibility and reflection as key components in year one. One teacher discussed the cycle of RTI programming at AHS, “we plan, we develop,

we implement, we reflect.” Another teacher shared similarly, “Meeting with admin every week to discuss progress, working with a team teacher to plan and analyze data, extra planning to discuss and plan strategies best to implement RTI has been great.”

When discussing challenges three of the four teachers felt that the most challenging component was not having an established model that would meet AHS needs. While teachers’ appreciated the flexibility, they sometimes liked the idea of having a preexisting program that they could use and adapt to their needs. Another challenge is the lack of CBMs that are readily available. Teachers wanted to focus on instruction and remediation. They said that the process of creating standards based CBMs was an important but arduous task.

### **Other Anecdotal Evaluation Findings**

The positive assessment and survey results supported the positive regards of the RTI process from the RTI team and other teachers in the school. As a new process in our school, our general teaching population was interested in the success of the students and teachers participating. Several teachers, including members of the leadership team made visits to the classroom and participated in discussions with the RTI team. In discussions with teachers, they indicated their curiosity was peaked when they saw the teaching team was truly collaborative in nature and that the teachers participating in the RTI process had sense of ownership and pride about the work they were doing. Upper level English teachers, math teachers and world language teachers were especially interested in strategies and interventions used in the English-9 RTI classes.

## **Chapter 4**

### **REFLECTIONS ON OUR IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS**

As I reflect on the first year of implementation of a RTI at AHS, I feel that I led my team in a great direction according to our vision and goals for the process. Our superintendent gave high school principals a charge to establish a RTI process with limited parameters and a great deal of support. The expectation was to develop a process that worked best for our students. As the principal of the school and the leader of this implementation process, I was afforded the opportunity to base my group's work in research. This provided an excellent framework for our work, especially for a team that was anxious about developing a new process. Our work was instrumental in focusing on students that were struggling learners and more specifically, struggling readers. Since then, we have built on the work from year one in English-9 and expanded to English-10. During the 2016-2017 school year, we are also applying some of the same principles to level one Mathematics and Spanish classrooms. This strategy aligns with our original vision to replicate what we were doing in year one to other grade levels and content areas.

We achieved our overarching goal to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students that could be replicated and adapted for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics. During year one, we met our target goals for student success on the reading assessments. In our evaluation,

both teachers and students found value in the RTI process. Teachers indicated they felt that they were helping students and students indicated that they liked the support. The assessment data showed that students demonstrated growth in reading achievement, working toward our district and school goal to ensure success for all students. I also reviewed our improvement efforts by reflecting on teacher roles and teacher responsibilities, teacher perceptions, student perceptions, and student achievement results. In order to help our students achieve success, I provided a significant amount of support to my teachers during the process. The great work our teachers did during year one led to the increased achievement of our students.

As secondary administrators seek systematic ways to respond to the needs of their struggling learners, I would recommend the development of a RTI process. If they decide to follow that recommendation, I would offer the following advice as they begin the journey:

*Research RTI programs.* My team did extensive research prior to and during year one of implementation. This is where I took advantage of looking at the current research and the practical applications around the state. The articles we read and the site visits we conducted gave us access to critical information. We were able to see the success and limitations of different approaches to RTI.

I captured several of the articles within the artifact that contained the annotated bibliographies (see Appendix B). This included expert opinions or empirical research focused on struggling adolescent readers that provided us with guiding questions and best

practices for reading instruction. There were also articles about existing RTI programs which provided us with examples of programs and key practices.

Our research also included lessons we learned from other RTI models. Our visits to Milford High School, our discussion with Cape Henlopen, our visits to our three middle schools, calls across the state and research across the country provided us with information about all levels of the process from scheduling students to professional development. We were able to see the success and limitations of different approaches to RTI.

*Be flexible and patient.* RTI is a simple idea with many complex components. In order to have a school wide system in place, it will take time and there will be challenges along the way. I would start small scale, allowing flexibility to respond to challenges. In order to grow a school wide system of support, teachers need training and resources. In the artifact focused on professional development (see Appendix E), I discussed our plan to have a general awareness for our entire staff and a cycle of PD for the teachers directly involved. That included time to problem solve along the way.

*Get teacher buy-in.* If teachers are involved in every aspect of planning and implementation, they will take ownership of the process. I feel like the RTI process at AHS belongs to our teachers. After we did the research and engaged in discussions, they were on the front lines: testing, conferring, adapting, and implementing. I discussed the roles and responsibilities of the team in Artifact 3, Appendix D, that focused on staffing RTI at AHS. During year one, we had the RTI coordinator/ELA-9 Lead, the special education teacher, and the reading specialist. There was an expectation for collaboration,

an expectation to participate in professional development and an expectation to have flexibility. The teachers that were added to the RTI process after year one, looked to the original teachers for support. Teachers across the building are looking to them for strategies for all struggling learners.

*Seek support from the district office.* The support we received from our district office was critical. They provided an additional teaching unit, funding for resources, and professional development from specialists and continued teacher support. I was fortunate to have a superintendent that made addressing the needs of struggling learners a priority. If this were not a top priority, I suggest using research and school data to inform the district office about the challenges the school faces. In addition, I would suggest writing a school goal focused on meeting the needs of struggling learners. In most districts, school goals are typically reviewed and supported by the superintendent's office.

*Build in time for reflection.* It is important for the team to discuss the process and to be able to respond to challenges immediately. It is also important for the team to recognize areas of strength and to build on them. Artifact 9, Appendix J, communicates my evaluation of the program; it allowed me to reflect on not just the student achievement data, but also teacher and student perceptions. It was especially rewarding to hear directly from the students that they found value in what we were doing in this class.

The advice that I offer above are things that we did on our journey. Even with following this advice, there were limitations to our process and some challenges faced along the way. One limitation was the absence of a control group. The group initially wanted one of the two sections of English-9 RTI to follow a typical 9<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum



for comparison. Due to the academic growth we observed with partial use of some of the interventions during the 2013-2014 school year, we determined that we wanted all of the identified students to have immediate access to interventions and resources. We did a cursory comparison to students from previous years with similar characteristics, but a control group could have strengthened our discussion that growth was based on the RTI process we employed. Based on identified challenges, there are some things that I would have done differently including:

*Planned better for CBMs.* I understood from the beginning that progress monitoring was a key component for RTI. I wished that my team could have planned better for CBMs in the summer prior to the start of year one of implementation. Having quality CBMs at the onset of our project would have allowed us to focus time during the school year on problem solving around student interventions. Instead, we had to devote time during the school year to creating assessments. Quality curriculum based measures are important to provide clear indication of student progress toward the curriculum standards and serve as a way to measure the instruction students are receiving.

*Planned data professional development prior to year one.* My teachers had previous experience with data analysis, but not to the extent that we were asking for in RTI. I wished that I had engaged the team in professional development around responding to student data in the year leading up to RTI implementation. We were responding to data in a new way. Although our teachers responded to data in the past, our new process was immediate and systematic. There were opportunities within our existing English-9 curriculum to allow us to practice responding to data.

*Responded to staffing concerns sooner rather than later.* One of the three teachers on the team was struggling. Since the process was new, we were being flexible and supportive. In retrospect, I had an opportunity to change staff mid-year and I should have taken advantage of that. The decision to change staffing mid-year is a difficult one in a high school. Teacher schedules are determined during the summer and notice is provided contractually. While a principal has authority to make changes, any modification will have a ripple effect and can impact an entire department. Two of the three teachers were very strong, and essentially carried the team. If the third teacher was equally contributing, our results could have been even better.

## **Chapter 5**

### **REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

I consider myself a lifelong learner and I absolutely find joy in learning new things. I appreciate great books, insightful articles, interesting movies and documentaries, travel and rich discussions with colleagues and peers that challenge my thinking. After earning my bachelor's degree almost 20 years ago and two master degrees in recent years, I still had a desire to participate in a program that would increase my growth as a scholar, problems solver and partner. My time in the UD Educational Leadership program has improved the way I look at community and global issues and more specific to my work for my ELP, it has improved my approach in my professional role and responsibilities.

#### **My Growth as a Scholar**

My path to becoming a better scholar has been a great journey since starting the UD Educational Leadership program. The use of research literature and data in planning and decision-making has increased in my work in my school and my district. My time in the program was aligned with a time when we have become a very data rich district and we face several challenges that we want to address within our building and throughout our district. We have access to standardized testing data, school climate data, comprehensive school review data, parent and student focus groups among the myriad of data available. As a team, we needed to have systematic way of responding to our school-

wide data when planning. Our district also requested that we integrate data as we developed our annual school success plan. This was not a new request, but our team's ability to do this has grown. I found value in some aspect of every course in the UD Educational Leadership program. The work completed in EDUC828: Concept Methods of Decision Oriented Research, EDUC827: Data Analysis for School Improvement, EDUC879 Internship in Education and EDUC: Principles of Educational Evaluation contributed to my growth as a scholar the most. In these classes, I was challenged to access, read and analyze scholarly articles and case studies. I also gained a better understanding of reviewing the results of an evaluation and creating my own program evaluation.

At the onset of the UD Educational Leadership program, I was an assistant principal with the responsibility of supervising few departments directly, including Mathematics. Within the Mathematics Department, we identified a challenge of limited background knowledge for students that were struggling with some key lessons in our integrated program. I collected data within the department connected to units that enroll students with typically lower scores. Teachers completed a survey, interview, participated in classroom observations and shared assessment data. During professional learning communities, I shared literature and research with teachers regarding the impact of background knowledge. During that semester we were able to focus on a unit of study and determine ways to integrate better background knowledge for students and find ways to activate any existing knowledge students may have connected to the lesson.

As the current principal of AHS, I stress the importance of using data and research to guide our work. This philosophy is stressed to my all of my work groups including my instructional leadership team, my assistant principals, department chairs, and the district content specialists. In the past, this was not consistently the case. Prior to my work in the program, there were times we may have just gone on educator recommendation only. Now, teachers will jokingly say, “I know Keisha....you want to know what the data and research says!” This is tremendous growth for us. My teacher leaders are discovering that typically if they think it’s a good idea, there is probably some research to back it up. This allows us to discuss the challenges and limitations of an idea. We are having richer discussions during our planning phases. We are shifting from a culture of doing what feels good to doing what has been proven to work.

### **My Growth as a Problem Solver**

Problem solving has always been an area of strength for me. Since starting the leadership program, I continued to increase this capacity. Over the years, I have learned that many people like to admire problems, they will repeatedly point out the problem, the challenges; indicate what we cannot do and what will not work. My attitude has always been solution oriented and focused on what we can do to address the concerns. If it is a huge challenge, I ask myself, what little piece we can address first to make some headway with this challenge. Since starting the UD program, I have a more consistent focus on using data and research to guide the problem identification and the problem solving. Again, the work in the program that focused on action- oriented research and evaluation were critical to my growth as a problems solver.

Our district has an expectation that we respond to our Comprehensive School Review, School Climate Data and assessment data to develop our School Success Plan. We develop school wide goals as an instructional leadership team. Each department develops departmental goals as well. At least one of the goals has to be a reaction to an area of challenge based on data. The teachers have to determine how they will measure success and include check points along the way. Although we live in a very data rich system, my work in the ADPO program has encouraged me to follow these practices with more fidelity and to see the value and worth of using data and research.

### **My Growth as a Partner**

I am very fortunate to be part of a district that is collaborative and educators support each other. Support occurs within our building, between schools and from the district level. I collaborated with teams throughout my entire professional career and I feel like the work has been elevated. My experience in the UD program provided me with a lens that helps me to leverage the contributions of multiple stakeholders as I focus on leading our school vision and meeting our annual goals.

Inclusion of new or multiple stakeholders happens more readily now. Our instructional leadership team is made up of administrators and department leaders that represent each content area in the school, parents and students. When we introduce an idea, the stakeholders at the table share how they can contribute and how they think other stakeholders might contribute. If we feel that we are missing knowledge or experience in the room, we seek that information through research or a consultant. All department goals are shared with the instructional leadership team. The team is able to provide feedback

and support to each other. The actions in each department influence the entire school. Everyone is essentially connected to the work that everyone else is doing. Our RTI team understood that what we were building would affect the entire school, not just a few students or a few teachers. In our work, we discussed the importance of our support for RTI teachers, our communication to all teachers, our plan to communicate to our parents and the community at large.

My collaboration as a partner extends beyond our district and community. Through the program, I have developed relationships and made connections that strengthen the work I do in my building and the advice and experiences that I am able to share with others. I have an informal network of administrators that talk on an almost daily basis. Our knowledge and experiences became richer over the past few years and our approach to problem solving and collaborating continued to develop with the work we completed in our doctoral programs.

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## **Appendix A**

### **ELP PROPOSAL**

#### **RTI IN APPOQUINIMINK SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS**

##### **Overview**

Appoquinimink School District (ASD) has boasted one of the fastest growing school-aged populations in the state of Delaware. ASD has two high schools at the secondary level, Appoquinimink High School (AHS) and Middletown High School. Despite the high achievement of many students, a group of struggling learners still exists. Too often struggling learners are failing or only meeting minimum expectations in ASD high school courses. As principal of AHS, I will lead my team's work this school year to establish a Response to Intervention (RTI) process for 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading. The goal is to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students that can be replicated and adapted for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics. Implementation will occur at both ASD high schools, but this paper will provide focus on AHS.

##### **Organizational Context**

###### **Students**

ASD has boasted one of the fastest growing school-aged populations in the state of Delaware for many years. The district has 14 schools, including two high schools. As one of Delaware's newest comprehensive high schools, AHS opened its brand new facilities in 2008 to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Over the next two years, the school grew into a full 9-12 grade high school and graduated the first group of seniors in May of 2011.

Enrollment continues to increase, but at a much slower rate over the past two years. Since becoming a full high school, AHS enrollment has grown from 1,350 to slightly under 1,600 students during the past four years.

While the student population has increased, the demographics have remained fairly stable with one exception. The student population at AHS is 65% White, 26% African American, 4% Asian, and 5% Hispanic. Students with disabilities account for 7% of the total population. Students that are economically disadvantaged comprise 17.5% of our population. Over the last four years, there has been an increase in the number of AHS families facing financial hardships. This percentage has slowly increased.

### **Teachers**

The staff of AHS includes 94 teachers, one librarian and eight support staff. The AHS staff is relatively young. One quarter of the staff has 4 years or less experience. About 38% of the staff has between 5 and 9 years of experience. The current racial makeup of the staff is 87% white and 11% African American. Although the staff is young, highly qualified teachers teach 100% of classes. More than 50% of the teaching staff has a master's degree and above. Hiring highly qualified teachers is a priority in the ASD and at AHS.

### **Curriculum**

ASD offers college preparatory, honors and advanced placement programs at both high schools. College Preparatory courses provide a rigorous curriculum aligned with state standards. These courses prepare students for a variety of post-secondary experiences including higher education and the workforce. The district has adopted the

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for college preparatory and honors courses. The expectations outlined by the College Board are used for advanced placement coursework. ASD is Delaware's only school district named to the AP Honor Roll for the past two years.

In addition to the core content areas, ASD offers several of the state approved Career and Technical Education programs. This includes courses in the areas of Agri-Science, Allied Health, Business, Family and Consumer Science, Technology Education, and Military Science. There are also successful fine arts and performing arts programs.

The district has curriculum maps and student learning maps aligned to the CCSS. Alignment to the CCSS began in 2011 and ASD continues to improve practices and expectations related to CCSS. The district is working to provide quality common assessments in all core content areas and world languages at the high school level. Over the past five years, the district has adopted new instructional materials for all core academic areas at the high school level.

The typical teacher to student ratio is 1:30 at the high school level. ASD high schools operate on a 4X4 90-minute block with some modifications, this year the high schools will share an identical bell schedule. The band, chorus and some advanced placement courses run all year on an A/B rotation. AHS students have an advisory class that meets weekly for 40 minutes by grade level. Freshmen and sophomore advisory curriculum focuses on transition and study skills along with literacy and test taking strategies. The junior advisory curriculum focuses on SAT preparation. The senior

advisory provides students with guidance for completing their senior project and preparing for their post high school plans.

### **History of Interventions at AHS**

AHS has attempted implementing a number of different intervention models in the past, including pull-out during the school day, extended time after school, and individual modules delivered via computer software. At AHS we have tried scheduling at-risk students within the same course sections to address academic deficiencies. In our attempts to seek effective intervention strategies independently, we continued to work under district leadership to provide an effective general education program for all students.

The pull-out model was one model of intervention attempted at AHS. In this model ELA teachers pulled students out of other classes. Teachers were assigned small groups of three to five students for a specific time frame. The benefits of this mode of intervention were small group size and personalized attention. The challenge with this mode of intervention was that students were missing instruction from other courses, participation was a priority but not mandatory by students, and resources and teacher professional development were limited.

A variation of the pull-out model included meeting with students during their lunch period in small groups of five to ten students. Teachers met with students individually to offer them this option. Many liked the idea of not missing class or after school activities. The benefits of this mode of intervention included small group size, student motivation, no disruption to student's normal schedule and personalized attention.

Students that elected to be in this program typically had after school commitments. The challenge with this mode of intervention was the limited sustained time for intervention. Again, participation was encouraged but not mandatory by students and resources and teacher professional development were limited.

An extended time program afterschool has existed for seven years with limited success. Students were invited to attend the program each semester. The extended time program operated from 2:30-4 pm after school twice a week. Typically, eight to ten students attend consistently. Similar to the lunch program, the benefits of this mode of intervention include small group size, student/parent motivation, no disruption to student's normal schedule and personalized attention. Some challenges for this mode of intervention included limited teacher professional development and resources. The major challenge with this mode of intervention was the time of day we offered the intervention coupled with lack of a mandatory attendance policy for students. At one point, our letter to parents included strong language regarding mandatory participation and non-attendance could impact scheduling and summer school. We did not have a strategy for implementing consequences consistently for students that were involved in extracurricular activities or had other after school commitments and responsibilities.

A final type of intervention included individual modules delivered via computer software. We have used both the Study Island and Compass Learning programs. The benefits of this mode of intervention include student motivation, no disruption to student's normal schedule and personalized practice. The challenge with this mode of intervention was reliance on student independence and access to technology. Similar to

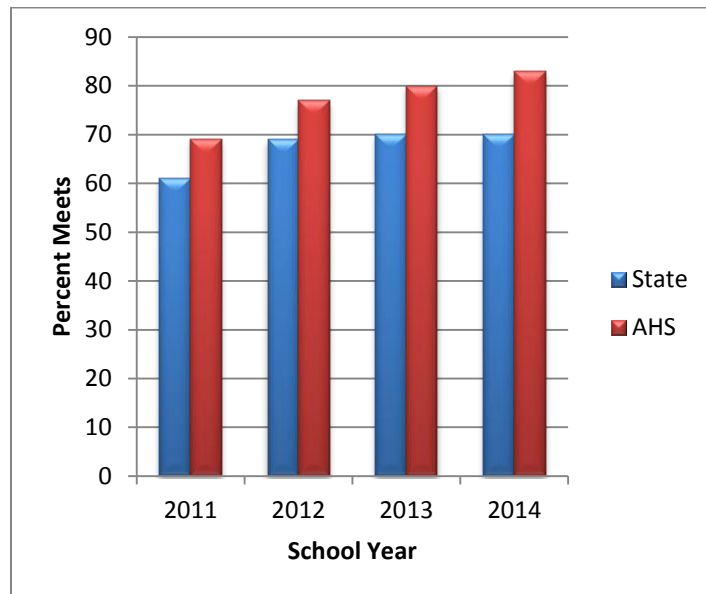
other modes of intervention, we lacked the ability to make the intervention mandatory. Some teachers found this intervention program promising for some students, but teachers requested more professional development for the computer software. Again, participation was encouraged but not mandatory by students and resources and teacher professional development were limited.

### **Achievement**

AHS has met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) implementing both the growth model and the original model (see Figure 5). The subgroups of African American, Low SES, and Special Education have made progress under the growth model. For the 2012 school year, AHS was a Recognition School for closing the achievement gap. The Department of Education commends such schools for high performance or closing the achievement gap among groups of students.

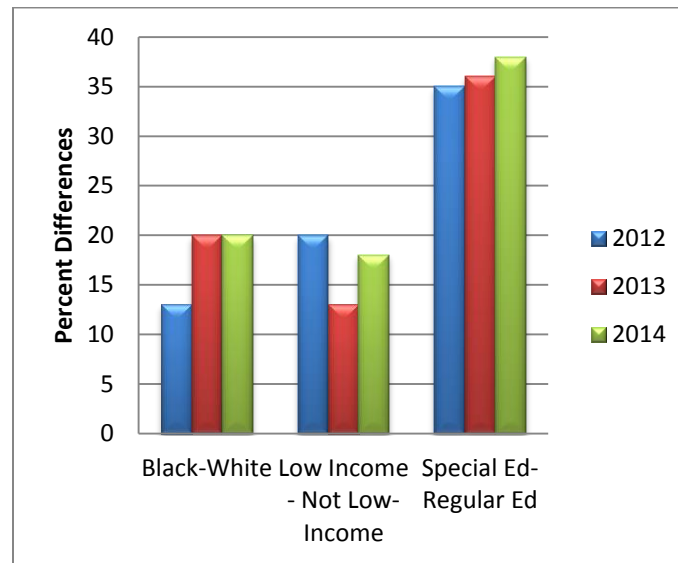


Figure 5. Percent of Students Meeting DCAS Reading Standard



In addition to the State measures for AYP, ASD has set challenging growth goals for each school in the district. Two of the goals in the district's academic progress plan include closing the achievement gap between new and existing students, and decreasing the achievement gap between black and white students, non-low income and low-income students, special education and non-special education students. The achievement gaps at AHS continue to fluctuate. The Black-White Reading gap was reduced to 13% during the 2012 school year. The Black-White Reading gap was 20% during the 2013 school year and remained consistent at 20% during the 2014 school year. The targets for the other groups were all met except for the Reading gap between low income and non-low income students. The goal was to reduce the gap to 17% and it increased to 18% (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. 2012-2014 AHS Reading Achievement Gaps



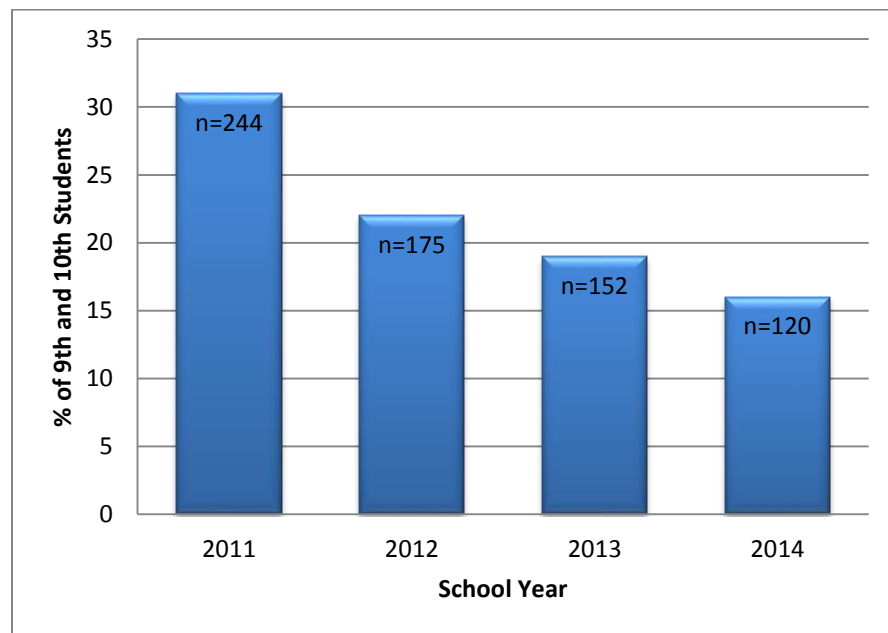
### Problem Statement

ASD high schools have a reputation for being good schools with high expectations for students. Assessment scores rank among the highest in the state. AHS has consistently scored above the state average on DCAS Reading Assessments (see Figure 6 above). Despite the high achievement of many students, a group of struggling learners still exists that are not proficient in reading. Over the past four years, their numbers have consistently decreased (see Figure 7). AHS nevertheless considers the number of students not meeting the standard significant.

At the end of the 2014 school year, 120 students were not meeting the standard for reading according to DCAS results. When reviewing the demographics of students not meeting the standard, we found that 60% of the students not meeting the standard are boys, 40% are girls. The ELL population at AHS is very small but almost 100% of

students receiving intensive services are not meeting the standard. Close to 25% of the students not meeting the standard are students with disabilities. In 2014, 43% percent of students that did not meet the proficient mark failed one or more courses and 31% of students that were not proficient did not meet requirements for promotion to the next grade level.

Figure 7. AHS Students Not Meeting Reading Proficiency



The superintendent and high school principals agreed that a more systemic approach to intervention is needed to address the needs of these learners. As a result, the superintendent has charged high school administrators with developing and implementing a Response to Intervention process (RTI) at the high school level. The high school RTI approach should be aligned with the philosophies and current practices of ASD elementary and middle schools. Results in ASD primary grades have been similar to research cited by King, Lemon and Hill (2012) that asserts that RTI has repeatedly shown

success at the elementary level, including improved performance with at risk and ELL students, and has resulted in less students identified for special education. Canter, Klotz, and Cowan (2008) report that RTI programs are increasingly used to address academic difficulties and improve student outcomes.

State regulations surrounding RTI are also directly related to the superintendent's charge. Section 12.0 of Delaware Administrative Code outlines the RTI Process that all districts must follow. ASD has not established procedures or processes at the district level for high schools that meet the state regulations. Delaware Admin Code 925.6.11.3.1 through 6.11.3.2 specifies that school districts should implement RTI for all students no later than the beginning of 2009-2010 school year. The district must complete these procedures for high school for the 2014-2015 school year to be in compliance with state regulations.

Delaware supports a three-tiered model for RTI. In this model, all students receive quality instruction in Tier 1. Tier 2 is comprised of students with inadequate progress using Tier 1 instructional strategies. Students receive increased support using individual and group researched based interventions. Tier 3 is comprised of students that with inadequate progress with Tier 1 or Tier 2 interventions (DDOE, 2014). ASD will use the definition of RTI used by the Delaware Department of Education (2014):

RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to the student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data. (p. 4)

## **District RTI Planning Committee**

Canter et al. (2008) assert that the implementation of a successful RTI process will require considerable planning, preparation and leadership from school and district administrators. The district formed committees at the high school and district levels to support implementation of RTI in ASD high schools. The district committee has taken the time to explore available research on secondary RTI, consider different RTI models and dedicate time to planning and professional development. Burns (2008) states that a successful RTI program will require collaboration and teamwork among all stakeholders. ASD has made a commitment to providing the time and resources to support a successful implementation.

Our superintendent appointed a committee for RTI, chaired by Director of Secondary Curriculum Ray Grauver. The committee initially included Matt Donovan, Principal of Middletown High School; Gayle Rutter, former Principal of Appoquinimink High School; and Keisha Brinkley, Principal of Appoquinimink High School. Gayle Rutter assumed a new role at the elementary level and is no longer a member of the team. Laura Crawly, district ELA specialist; Lynn Windley, Assistant Principal of Middletown High School; and Christiana Smith, Assistant Principal of Appoquinimink High School have also joined the team. The team communicates closely with the superintendent and assistant superintendent and school-based teams.

The District RTI planning team began their work in the winter of 2014. The work by the committee included the following:

- reviewing Delaware's Regulations for RTI to gain a better understanding of the law and requirements for implementation,
- visiting established RTI Programs,
- reading about RTI programs, and
- creating a school based teams for RTI.

The team continues to meet monthly under the direction of Mr. Grauver. The high school principals are reporting progress, needs and challenges.

### **Organizational Role**

As of July 1, 2014, I am the newly appointment principal of AHS. While this will be a new role, I am not new to the school. In the fall of 2009, I joined the Appoquinimink High School administration team as an assistant principal. During my five years as assistant principal, I directly supervised approximately 25% of the faculty and worked with all faculty and staff in some capacity. I developed the master schedule, coordinated school testing, and supervised the ninth grade academy, mathematics, world language and student services departments. Together with my school leadership team, I have determined the instructional focus for the 2014-2015 school year includes increasing rigor through higher order thinking and maintaining a high level of student engagement, increasing literacy across the curriculum, and developing a framework for RTI in our school.

Over the past five years my role in addressing the needs of struggling learners has varied. I have worked with teachers to assign students and organize time for interventions. I monitored the achievement for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students through DCAS,

grades and teacher feedback. I have provided some professional development and reviewed data with teachers periodically. During this time, we have faced several challenges including a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for leadership of our intervention process, consistency with interventions, limited resources, insufficient professional development or intervention planning time for teachers, and lack of accountability on the part of the students.

### **Improvement Goal**

During the 2014-2015 school year AHS's RTI team will establish a formal RTI process for ninth grade reading. We will build on the work already completed by the District RTI Committee to create an infrastructure at AHS that can be replicated or adapted to other grade levels and content areas. Our work will include leading the design and implementation process at AHS. Establishing the RTI process will complete the following:

- establish an RTI structure that works best for AHS,
- identify students,
- address scheduling implications,
- address staffing implications,
- create a communication plan for stakeholders,
- identify research based programs that using DOE approved rubrics, and
- create an evaluation of the process we develop.

We will measure the progress of our program in several different ways. First, we will review the academic growth of the students. Throughout the school year we hope to

see movement between tiers. As evidenced based interventions are applied, students should demonstrate a decreased need for interventions. At the end of each cycle we will assess the progress of students, hoping for a reduction in the number of students in Tiers 2 and 3. We hope that students will meet target growth goals set for the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and NWEA MAP testing, each assessment will be given three times this year. We will also analyze marking period grades and assessments. At the end of the school year we will look at the overall promotion rate of students identified to receive academic interventions in 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading.

Canter et al. (2008) indicate that the success of RTI processes can be attributed to the use of evidenced-based strategies. They further state that instructional strategies are central to Tier 2 and Tier 3 implementation. Our team has generated a list of interventions to implement based on the needs of the students. A successful RTI process needs an effective process to select, organize and deliver interventions (Martinez and Young, 2011). Our team will evaluate the success rate of the different interventions at the end of each cycle.

A successful RTI program will require consideration of all stakeholders. (Burns, 2008). We will measure the perceived benefits from the students and the teachers participating in the program. We will meet with students to determine if they feel as if they are benefiting from being in the RTI sections of 9th grade English. Similarly, we will survey the teachers participating in the program to determine their perceived benefits for the students.



List of Artifacts				
Number	Artifact	Type	Audience	Description
1	Annotated Bibliography	Review of Literature	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team	Used to inform decisions about RTI throughout the year, develop White Paper for staff, and plan professional development.
2	Investigate RTI Models	Program brief	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team	Research existing RTI models through site visits and literature; examining structure, resources and benefits with school and district based teams.
3	Staffing RTI	Product	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team	Develop the expectations for the RTI teachers by evaluating the roles and responsibilities during year one implementation.
4	RTI Professional Development	Professional development plan	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team, All Staff	Build staff awareness and capacity to support and instruct struggling students.
5	White Paper for Staff/Literature Table	White paper	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team	Build staff background and knowledge about RTI.
6	Schedule Students for RTI	Product	Building RTI Team	Identify students for the RTI sections of ELA and schedule all other 9 <sup>th</sup> grade classes. Determine groupings for each RTI cycle.
7	Response to Intervention Parent and Community Member Presentation/ Communication	Communication plan	Stakeholders: Parents & Community members	Develop a communication plan for parents of students participating in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade RTI sections of English. Develop a communication plan for community stakeholders to present at February or March Board of Education meeting.
8	Interventions for Support	Product	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team	Intervention resources for RTI instructors developed from research and expert input for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
9	Evaluation of First Year's Work Survey RTI Students Survey of Teachers	Empirical study	District Office; Building Administration; Building RTI Team	Examine the perceived benefits of Tiered instruction from teacher participants during year one RTI implementation at AHS. Review of data results from pilot year of Response to Intervention in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade reading.

**1. Annotated Bibliography** – A review of current research regarding RTI used to build background knowledge, inform decisions, support white paper for staff, professional development and community presentations.

**2. Investigate RTI Models**

Our school-based committee wanted to learn from existing RTI models. We visited schools with operational RTI programs, contacted school administrators and teachers via phone and email, and read about existing programs. Site visits were also made to our middle school programs. A summary of each model, including structure, challenges and successes were considered as a part of the AHS committee's decision-making process for developing a structure and format for year one implementation.

**3. Staffing RTI**

A chronicle of the process for staffing the RTI classrooms will document the evolving roles and responsibilities of the selected teachers. During the first year of implementation, it will be important to determine how to best leverage their skills and resources for the RTI students.

**4. RTI Professional Development**

An ongoing professional development plan will support the development and implementation of year one of implementation of RTI at AHS. Professional development will include support from district ELA specialist, an AHS administrator with a strong literacy background, Data Service Center, and Read180 Coaches.

**5. White Paper for Staff**

A look at current research and state regulations to introduce staff to RTI and the processes that will be implemented at AHS during the 2014-2015 school year.

**6. Schedule Students for RTI**

Review data from middle schools performance to select students for 9<sup>th</sup> grade RTI process. Review course selection, IEP needs and graduation requirements to determine placement in appropriate 9<sup>th</sup> grade English sections. Develop the RTI sections and schedule Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Review progress at the end of each cycle to determine movement between Tiers.

**7. RTI Presentation for Parents/Community Members**

Develop a communication piece for parents and community members since this will be the first year for a formal RTI process at the high school level.

**8. Intervention for Support**

Intervention resources for RTI instructors developed from research and expert input for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support. Teachers will be able to pull from and build on this bank of interventions and strategies throughout the semester.

**9. Evaluation of First Year's Work** – An evaluation of year one of RTI implementation at AHS will include the survey of the RTI students, the survey of teachers in the program, progress monitoring and assessment data. Examine the perceived benefits of Tiered instruction from student and teacher participants during year one RTI implementation at AHS.

## **Appendix B**

### **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Appoquinimink School District (ASD) superintendent asked high school principals to develop a systematic approach to intervention during the 2014-2015 school year. A formalized Response to Intervention (RTI) process was necessary to address the needs of struggling learners at the high school level. Ninth grade reading became the focus of the first year of implementation. The goal was to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students that can be replicated and adapted for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics. The Appoquinimink High School (AHS) RTI team did several things to learn about struggling adolescent readers and response to intervention. The RTI team reviewed journal articles, academic books and policy statements to inform initial work on creating a formal RTI process. The team wanted to know what current literature said about systematic approaches to RTI at the secondary level and how to address reading challenges for high school students.

This annotated bibliography served a few purposes. It provided the AHS RTI team with an opportunity to begin research on the broader topic of RTI and more specifically locate information about struggling adolescent readers and existing RTI programs. In the search for literature, peer reviewed articles were selected that included a combination of expert opinions and empirical research. Key search words included, but were not limited to: *Response to Intervention, struggling readers, reading difficulties, adolescent, literacy, secondary, reading instruction, and teacher role*. The district

English Language Arts specialist also suggested articles from specific researchers in the field of reading. Early searches led to a larger bank of articles by providing additional search words, authors and studies. The initial bank of resources was streamlined from 40 pieces of literature to 24. The team narrowed the focus to articles that addressed RTI programs holistically and the challenges of adolescent struggling readers.

An RTI system at the secondary level is a relatively new concept so many of the included works are recent. The annotations cite examples of RTI programs, highlight key practices in successful RTI programs, present guiding questions to consider when addressing struggling adolescent learners, and share current best practices for struggling adolescent students in the areas of reading comprehension and fluency (see Table 2). To help narrow the initial focus, the team discarded or filed articles that did not provide guiding questions, key practices or examples of existing RTI programs. The team focused on literature that could help answer two broadly cast questions before beginning work: “What is the framework for RTI at the high school level?” and “How do we address the needs of struggling adolescent readers?”

Table 2

Articles read by AHS RTI Team						
	Struggling Readers		Existing RTI programs		Article Type	
	Guiding Questions for Reading Instruction	Best Practices for reading instruction	Examples of RTI Programs	Key Practices	Expert Opinion	Empirical Research
Allington, R. L. (2013). What really matters When working with struggling readers. <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , 66(7), 520-530. doi:10.1002/trtr.1154	X				X	
Alvermann, D. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. <i>Journal of Literacy Research</i> , 34(2), 189-208. doi:10.1207/s15548430jlr3402_4		X			X	
Dudley, A. M. (2005). Rethinking reading fluency for struggling adolescent readers. <i>Beyond Behavior</i> , 14(3), 16-22. Retrieved May 12, 2014, from <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/24011427?ref=no-x-route:c889ab2b12877778f429d239a251368b">http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/24011427?ref=no-x-route:c889ab2b12877778f429d239a251368b</a>		X			X	
Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Content area vocabulary learning. <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , 67(8), 594-599. doi:10.1002/trtr.1258		X			X	
Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012). Motivating boys to read: Inquiry, modeling, and choice matter. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> , 55(7), 587-596. doi:10.1002/jaal.00070	X	X				X
Fisher, D., & Ivey, G. (2006). Evaluating the interventions for struggling adolescent readers. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> , 50(3), 180-189. doi:10.1598/jaal.50.3.2	X				X	
Ivey, G., & Broadus, K. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. <i>Reading Research Quarterly</i> , 36(4), 350-377. doi:10.1598/rrq.36.4.2		X				X
Lenters, K. (2006). Resistance, struggle, and the adolescent reader. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> , 50(2), 136-146. doi:10.1598/jaal.50.2.6		X			X	
Melekoglu, M. A., & Wilkerson, K. L. (2013). Motivation to read: How does it change for struggling readers with and without disabilities? <i>International Journal of Instruction</i> , 6(1), 77-88.		X				X
Roberts, G., Torgesen, J. K., Boardman, A., & Scammacca, N. (2008). Evidence-based strategies for reading instruction of older students with learning disabilities. <i>Learning Disabilities Research &amp; Practice</i> , 23(2), 63-69.		X			X	
Shanahan, C., & North Central Regional Educational Lab., N. I. (2005). Adolescent literacy intervention programs: Chart and program review guide. Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL).	X				X	
Burns, M.K. (2008). Response to Intervention at the secondary level. <i>Principal Leadership</i> , 8(7), 12-15.			X	X		
Dennis, D. (2009). I'm not stupid: How assessment drives appropriate reading instruction. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> , 53(4) 283-290.				X		X

Table 2 *Continued*

Articles read by AHS RTI Team						
	Struggling Readers		Existing RTI programs		Article Type	
	Guiding Questions for Reading Instruction	Best Practices for reading instruction	Examples of RTI Programs	Key Practices	Expert Opinion	Empirical Research
Duffy, H., Scala, J., & National High School, C. (2012). A systemic approach to implementing Response to Intervention in three Colorado high schools. Washington, D.C.: National High School Center.				X		
Deno, S. L., Reschly, A. L., Lembke, E. S., Magnusson, D., Callender, S. A., Windram, H., & Stachel, N. (2009). Developing a school-wide progress-monitoring system. <i>Psychology in The Schools</i> , 46(1), 44-55.			X			X
Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Close reading as an intervention for struggling middle school readers. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> , 57(5), 367-376. doi:10.1002/jaal.266				X		X
Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Scaffolded reading instruction of content-area texts. <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , 67(5), 347-351. doi:10.1002/trtr.1234				X	X	
Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., & Compton, D. L. (2010). Rethinking Response to Intervention at middle and high school. <i>School Psychology Review</i> , 39(1), 22-28.			X		X	
King, S. A., Lemons, C. J., & Hill, D. R. (2012). Response to Intervention in secondary schools: Considerations for administrators. <i>NASSP Bulletin</i> , 96(1), 5-22.			X		X	
Marino, M. T. (2009). Understanding how adolescents with reading difficulties utilize technology-based tools. <i>Exceptionality</i> , 17(2), 88-102.			X			X
Martinez, R., & Young, A. (2011). Response to Intervention: How is it practiced and perceived? <i>International Journal of Special Education</i> , 26(1), 44-52.				X		X
Pitcher, S. M., Martinez, G., Dicembre, E. A., Fewster, D., & McCormick, M. K. (2010). The literacy needs of adolescents in their own words. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> , 53(8), 636-645. doi:10.1598/jaal.53.8.2				X		X
Reutebuch, C. K. (2008). Succeed with a Response-to-Intervention model. <i>Intervention in school and clinic</i> , 44(2), 126-128.				X	X	
Vaughn, S, and Fletcher, J. (2012). Response to Intervention with secondary school students with reading difficulties. <i>Journal of Learning Disabilities</i> , 45(3) 244-256.				X		X

## **Struggling Readers**

Allington, R. L. (2013). What really matters when working with struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(7), 520-530. doi:10.1002/trtr.1154

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Guiding questions for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* The author, a professor at the University of Tennessee, summarizes the findings regarding teaching reading. He argues that research has been ignored in lieu of ineffective practices in U.S. classrooms. He calls for U.S. classrooms to switch to researched based reading lessons. Allington criticizes practices around developing decoding proficiencies and using commercial reading programs as a primary source in classrooms. He calls for the use of professional reading instructors and asks to abandon the use of paraprofessionals. The author also points to research that indicates struggling readers are typically engaged in reading at least two grades above their level and completing worksheets. These practices limit students' ability to engage in texts that will improve their reading and motivation to read. The author is critical of current practices but offers five guiding questions for educators to consider for effective reading instruction, including: Do we expect our struggling readers to read and write more every day than our achieving readers?: Have we ensured that every intervention for our struggling readers is taught only by our most effective and most expert teachers?: Have we designed our reading lessons such that struggling readers spend at least two-thirds of every lesson engaged in the actual reading of texts?: Does every struggling reader leave the building each day with at least one book they can read and that they also want to read?: and Do we ensure that the texts we provide struggling readers across the full



school day are texts that they can read with at least 98% word recognition accuracy and 90% comprehension?" (p. 528)

*Implications for Practice:* The AHS RTI team reviewed the expert opinion of Allington to assist in the development of criteria for evaluating reading instruction in the English-9RTI curriculum. The guiding questions in this article provided guidance for the RTI team when determining how to develop effective reading curriculum.

Alvermann, D. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34(2), 189-208. doi:10.1207/s15548430jlr3402\_4

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Donna E. Alvermann, a University of Georgia Professor, examines literature on effective literacy instruction for adolescents. Alvermann looks at five key areas for adolescent literacy. She argues that self-perception about reading competency will predict engagement for adolescent readers. She continues, stating that students have background knowledge and reading comprehension strategies equipped to respond to content area texts; struggling readers need instruction that is specific and responsive to their needs; adolescents need skills to read critically in this age of hypermedia and the internet; and adolescents need to participate in student centered learning experiences with literacy. Alvermann asserts that teachers must promote varied opportunities for students to engage in meaningful texts that expand their current knowledge base. Alvermann indicates the five key areas stem from current research, but this article is limited to a snapshot of the available research.

*Implications for Practice:* Through this article, Alvermann's expert opinion provided context for the RTI team to choose texts that students find interesting, to allow students some choice in reading and to provide students with strategies to read critically. The AHS RTI team used this article to develop the protocol for daily independent reading and for selecting texts to read during small group reading instruction.

Dudley, A. M. (2005). Rethinking reading fluency for struggling adolescent readers. *Beyond Behavior, 14*(3), 16-22. Retrieved May 12, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/24011427?ref=no-x-route:c889ab2b12877778f429d239a251368b>

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* University of Texas researcher Anne M. Dudley examines literature about reading fluency for struggling adolescent readers. She highlights research that indicates low fluency in reading has a direct correlation to low reading comprehension. The neglect of reading fluency for adolescent readers, at times, is problematic as strong fluency skills are critical as adolescents transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Dudley defines oral reading fluency as the reader's ability to accurately and automatically decode text. It also refers to their ability to focus on understanding the meaning of the text. She indicates several ways teachers can measure oral fluency with curriculum based measurements. Fluency instruction must include text that corresponds to students' independent reading levels and reasonable reading goals. Dudley offers examples of methods or programs that are used to improve fluency, but does not discuss the specific success rates when they are employed.

*Implications for Practice:* This article encouraged the AHS RTI team to consider fluency when addressing the needs of struggling students. High school teachers often have a laser focus on comprehension. This article prompted context for the RTI team to review placement of students with the greatest concerns regarding fluency in the section of English-9 that used more of the Read180 instructional software in their model to help attends to fluency.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012). Motivating boys to read: Inquiry, modeling, and choice matter. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(7), 587-596.  
doi:10.1002/jaal.00070

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Case Study

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Guiding questions for reading instruction and best practices for reading instruction.

*Article Summary:* Experts in adolescent reading, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey examine curricular and instructional practices in an urban high school to determine what motivates students to read. In a qualitative study, they reviewed the reading logs of 115 ninth grades students and followed up with a survey and interviews. They also surveyed the eighth and ninth grade teachers of the students to understand how they assigned reading. The authors' study and review of literature on adolescent reading indicated that students value purpose for reading, a space for independent reading, and a great deal of choice in what they read. Students in this study appreciated their teacher's modeling of how they thought about the text to answer the essential questions. Each year, several essential questions served as the foundation for the curriculum in this urban high school. Students had to read independently to answer one of the essential questions.

*Implications for Practice:* The team used the results from this empirical research as evidence to support the decision to provide students with a selection of high interest books. The AHS RTI team was challenged with how to integrate literacy circles, a common practice in English classrooms, within the RTI classroom. This article offers suggestions on how to make reading more meaningful to students by using essential questions to guide their reading. The team integrated ideas from the article on modeling engagement with the text by thinking aloud about the text during small group instruction time.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Content area vocabulary learning. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(8), 594-599. doi:10.1002/trtr.1258

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, experts in the field of reading research, assert that vocabulary is a critical foundation for reading comprehension. The authors cite the value Common Core State Standards (CCSS) place on vocabulary and draws on the work of vocabulary researchers to offer insights on how to increase vocabulary for students. Research indicates knowledge of vocabulary increases as students' progress through grades, with students entering high school expected to know close to 90,000 word families. The authors identify the major strategies for increasing vocabulary as school wide reading, teacher selection of words to teach, modeling word solving, and using words in discussion.

*Implications for Practice:* The AHS RTI team referred to expert opinions in this article to support a choice to use explicit vocabulary instruction. The authors emphasize

the idea that teachers should be selective in the vocabulary they choose to teach explicitly, providing guiding questions for the team to use when selecting vocabulary to teach.

Fisher, D., & Ivey, G. (2006). Evaluating the interventions for struggling adolescent readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(3), 180-189.  
doi:10.1598/jaal.50.3.2

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Guiding questions for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Douglas Fisher and Gay Ivey, extensively published researchers in adolescent reading, propose guidelines for choosing effective reading interventions. Fisher and Ivey review research in adolescent literacy. They assume that schools considering interventions currently provide all students with significant reading opportunities through a school wide focus of literacy across all content areas. The authors provide five guiding principles and a rubric for levels of implementation that include: level of teacher involvement; intervention reflects a comprehensive approach to reading and writing; intervention reading and writing is engaging; intervention instruction is driven by useful and relevant assessments; and intervention includes significant opportunities for authentic reading and writing.

*Implications for Practice:* The expert opinion in this article provides a perspective on evaluating reading interventions. This article prompted the team to look for evaluation tools. The AHS RTI team had to determine which reading interventions they would use and this rubric was one of several the team considered to evaluate selected interventions.

Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students

want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350-377. doi:10.1598/rrq.36.4.2

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Descriptive Study

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Researchers Gay Ivey and Karen Broaddus, assistant professors at James Madison University, examine the perspective of middle school students as they investigate what motivates middle school students to read. Both Ivey and Broaddus have extensive experience with middle school students that struggle with reading and felt that typical studies of adolescent reading and instructional practices neglected student viewpoints. The authors draw on research that describes middle school students as reluctant learners and students' needs are often mismatched with instructional practices. Researchers wanted to find the best fit between adolescent readers and instruction. They examined a large cross section of students from 23 urban and rural schools. The results of this qualitative study indicate students want more opportunities for independent reading of texts they find personally engaging. The study also revealed that students like teacher read-alouds. The authors iterate research that states when students have more opportunities to read, they get better at reading. Ivey and Broaddus indicate that while their survey included a diverse cross section of close to 2000 students, participants were limited to 100-mile radius of the University for their follow up interviews.

*Implications for Practice:* This empirical research supports the team's decision to incorporate independent reading into the daily model of the English-9 RTI classroom. The authors' findings help identify reasons that teacher should allow students to explore their interest for independent reading time.

Lenters, K. (2006). Resistance, struggle, and the adolescent reader. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(2), 136-146. doi:10.1598/jaal.50.2.6

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Lenters examines research from the perspective of adolescents, teachers, and literacy researchers on resistance to reading. Lenters states that the term resistant readers encompasses a few terms including struggling, reluctant, at risk, and marginalized readers. She cites that students in a study indicate their reading resistance is due partially to text complexity, but more importantly to lack of interest in the material. Students want some control over what they read in school. Teachers in the study perceive early struggles with reading with continued resistance once students get to the secondary level. Literacy researchers call for educators to expand their vision of meaningful literature so that students can make more connections to school based literature. If adolescents can make personal connections, they are more engaged in the text. There is a risk for struggling readers to become resistant readers and resistant readers to become struggling readers.

*Implications for Practice:* Through this article, Lenter's expert opinion serves as a caution the RTI team; emphasizing the need for RTI teams to find ways to make in-school reading meaningful to students and help students to connect school based texts with their lives. This supports the need to have high interest texts available for students.

Melekoglu, M. A., & Wilkerson, K. L. (2013). Motivation to read: How does it change for struggling readers with and without disabilities? *International Journal of Instruction*, 6(1), 77-88.

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Survey

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* This study examines students' motivation to read after eighteen weeks of a prescribed reading program. Researchers Macid Melekoglu and Kimber Wilkerson, both professors that have a focus of Special Education at their respective universities, examine research about student motivation to read. They draw on literature that repeatedly states motivation to read is a critical foundation for improving reading for adolescents that struggle with reading. They use the Adolescent Motivation to Read Survey to assess student self-concept as readers and the value they place on reading. Motivation scores for students with disabilities did not significantly change, but students without disabilities improved their self-concept scores. As reading skills improved, students' attitudes about reading became more positive. The authors suggest teachers stress the value of reading to students' lives. If students see value in reading, they may be more motivated to read, which fosters improvements in reading.

*Implications for Practice:* The prescribed reading program in this empirical research was structured very much like the intended structure for one for the English-9 RTI classes at Appoquinimink High School. The RTI team viewed the increased motivation and positive feelings from the students in the study as positive support for choosing their instructional model.

Roberts, G., Torgesen, J. K., Boardman, A., & Scammacca, N. (2008). Evidence-based strategies for reading instruction of older students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 23(2), 63-69.

*Type of Article:* Expert opinion, Peer Reviewed



*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Best practices for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Roberts, Torgesen, Boardman and Scammacca formed a diverse research team from across the United States with experiences in special education, psychology of reading, reading professional development and response to intervention in reading. The authors summarize work they completed for two major reports for the National Center on Instruction focused on evidenced based instruction for struggling adolescent readers. From the reports, the authors shared what they characterized as the five essential areas to focus on when addressing struggling adolescent readers: word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. The researchers make connections between these five essential areas throughout the article, indicating that using multiple strategies in tandem is typical. The authors acknowledge the limited research in closing reading gaps for adolescents but recommend an increase in time and focus beyond what is typically occurring.

*Implications for Practice:* The RTI used this report to initiate research into these five key areas. Members from the team read both of the reports produced by the authors, including seeking more research on comprehension, vocabulary and motivation.

Shanahan, C., & North Central Regional Educational Lab., N. I. (2005). Adolescent Literacy intervention programs: Chart and program review guide. Naperville, IL: *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory*.

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Guiding questions for reading instruction

*Article Summary:* Cynthia Shanahan, University of Illinois at Chicago researcher, produced this program review guide through the North Central Regional Educational

Laboratory. This article includes a description of key characteristics of reading programs for struggling adolescent readers, including a comparison chart and review guide. Due to the focus in recent years on adolescent reading, there are increased resources introduced to the market. Her work attempts to provide support for districts and schools attempting to find an intervention program that works for them. In her own words, Shanahan states that “the chart and the review guide should help schools make good decisions regarding the programs in which they invest.” She creates an operational definition for adolescent literacy intervention programs and describes how to use her intervention chart and review guide. Shanahan suggests that no matter what intervention is chosen, schools must make a commitment to invest time. She cites the growth that Chicago public schools saw after one year of increased time on reading instruction, despite limited resources and professional development.

*Implications for Practice:* As the RTI team began researching programs, resources, and strategies, this article provided a list of existing intervention programs. The review guide included the type of program, focus and goals, theoretical premise, program components, training provided, associated research, and effectiveness. Twenty-five intervention programs were referenced in this article. The team shared knowledge of these programs with the district team. The team did follow up research on programs that showed evidence of research and effectiveness, examining key components of these programs.

## Secondary RTI

Deno, S. L., Reschly, A. L., Lembke, E. S., Magnusson, D., Callender, S. A., Windram, H., & Stachel, N. (2009). Developing a school-wide progress-monitoring system. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(1), 44-55. (Peer Reviewed)

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Case Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Examples

*Article Summary:* A team of researchers, including university faculty and public school administrators collaborated to develop a student progress monitoring system in response to a strategic plan for school improvement. This article describes the focus on a model of screening and progress monitoring for an urban K-6 elementary school in a Midwestern city. The progress monitoring system would focus on reading and serve five functions: (a) school-wide fall, winter and spring growth measurement, (b) school wide spring to spring growth comparisons, (c) efficient screening to identify at risk students, (d) continuous progress monitoring of targeted students, and (e) opportunities to respond to student progress. This article discussed the idea of curriculum based measures (CBM) as a method for progress monitoring and predicting performance on standardized assessments. The model showed high levels of validity and utility, but also presented some limitations. The researchers indicate this was the first time the MAZE assessment was used for school wide screening. This was also the first time a single-level measure was used for the entire school. Other limitations in this two-year study include experimental control related to instructional decisions and modifications made by teachers.

*Implications for Practice:* The authors of this article actually state, “Many aspects of this article may be useful to persons seeking to implement or research the efficacy of such models, such as background information, description of the plan, and graphs and figures regarding data utilization.” While this article focused on an elementary model, the description of the plan and utilization of data were very helpful to the AHS RTI team during discussions about universal screening and progress monitoring.

<sup>1</sup>Burns, M.K. (2008). Response to Intervention at the secondary level. *Principal Leadership*, 8(7), 12-15.

*Type of Article:* Practitioner Guide

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Examples and Key Practices

*Article Summary:* Matthew Burns examines three tiered interventions: describing whole group, small group and individualized interventions while he discusses components of a successful RTI program. Burns’ examination of a RTI model at one particular middle school highlights the most significant outcome was that teachers increased expectations for all students and students had the desire to meet the increased expectations for success. He generalized this case study and included research that cites successful secondary models vary format but maintain some core components that ensure success, including: data-driven decision making with multiple sources of data, “flexible small group instruction in both skill strategy and content; and collaborative problem analysis” (p. 14). Burns indicates that research surrounding secondary RTI is inconsistent, but adhering to the core components of RTI yields various levels of success.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is not from a peer-reviewed source. It represents literature from an educational journal that administrators and teachers found useful as an introduction to their investigation on RTI.

*Implications for Practice:* The RTI team can refer to this article as support to review school wide literacy strategies in the areas of vocabulary instruction and background knowledge. This article also identifies specific resources for RTI including resources specific to assessment, interventions, and general RTI practices.

Dennis, D. (2009). I'm not stupid: How assessment drives (in)appropriate reading instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(4) 283-290.

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Descriptive Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Key Practices

*Article Summary:* Danielle V. Dennis, a middle school teacher and instructor at the University of South Florida, draws on research surrounding literature on reading instruction and his own case study of students that scored low on the Tennessee state reading assessment. Dennis administered reading inventories for each student and developed instructional plans that supported student strengths. He grouped students according to instructional needs. Dennis repeatedly advises leadership teams to provide struggling readers opportunities to read selections at their independent reading level, engage in vocabulary in context, and to build background knowledge. He advises school leadership teams to seek information regarding student strengths and use that as a foundation for increasing reading abilities. This article highlights the importance of going beyond screening for the Response to Intervention process. Initial screening is a good first step for identifying students that struggle, but it is important to have diagnostic tools for student groupings and appropriate interventions.

*Implications for Practice:* The team used this empirical research as an example of how to integrate explicit vocabulary instruction, build background knowledge, and teach comprehension strategies as core elements of the RTI program.

<sup>2</sup>Duffy, H., Scala, J., & National High School, C. (2012). A systemic approach to implementing Response to Intervention in three Colorado high schools. Washington, D.C.: National High School Center.

*Type of Article:* Report, Case Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Key Practices

*Article Summary:* Helen Duffy and Jenny Scala, researchers for the National High School Center at American Institutes for Research, examine how district and state policies effect RTI implementation by completing a case study of three Colorado high schools. Colorado state policies identified six components for RTI implementation and the authors investigated how these three schools navigated state and district policies to achieve success for their students. The authors cite successes and challenges for all three schools over the course of the study with school leadership ranking most important for a successful RTI program. They also pointed to other characteristics that were evident when RTI was successful including: support for all students, data driven decision-making, students appropriately matched with interventions, staff buy in, teacher collaboration, and professional development. All schools requested some level of district support for guidance around assessments, progress monitoring, and data. Schools requested district level guidance to find effective intervention programs as well. This

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<sup>2</sup> This article is not from a peer-reviewed source. It represents case studies from researchers that administrators and teachers found useful as an introduction to their investigation on RTI.

article illustrates how three schools determined what worked best for their students within the parameters outlined by their district and state policies.

*Implications for Practice:* This report makes a case for the importance of the AHS RTI team using district resources effectively. The team collaborated with the English content specialist as integral support during year one of implementation.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Close reading as an intervention for struggling middle school readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), 367-376.  
doi:10.1002/jaal.266

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Randomized Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Key Practices

*Article Summary:* Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey are teacher leaders at Health Sciences High & Middle College in San Diego, CA. Fisher and Frey examine close reading as an intervention for improving achievement as measured by the states criterion referenced English Language Arts Assessment. Students participated in an after school program for 90 minutes a day, three days a week from October through May. Teachers were provided a cycle of professional development and support to implement a close reading program for the experimental group of students that focused on short complex passages, repeated reading, annotations, text-dependent questions, and discussion of the text. A control group participated in the schools' standard supplemental intervention program. Fisher and Frey's study comparison of the two groups showed improvements in both groups, but the close reading group made greater gains. The researchers report that double the number of students in the close reading group made a gain of at least one level increase on the standardized assessment as compared to the other students in the study.

They attribute the gains to shared readings with the teacher, text dependent questions that required critical thinking, and building knowledge about the text. The findings in this study are limited to students that are motivated to participate in an afterschool program. The authors report an attrition rate of 25%. This article offered readers eight immediate steps for implementing close reading, including a video link with close reading instruction examples. The authors assert the idea of providing students with choice in their reading selection, but it also encourages close reading of grade level texts.

*Implications for Practice:* The English-9 RTI class provided support for struggling readers, but also needed to meet requirements for grade level curriculum and text. After reviewing this empirical research, the team investigated close reading strategies. The team was also reminded of the importance of an ongoing professional support cycle.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Scaffolded reading instruction of content-area texts. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(5), 347-351. doi:10.1002/trtr.1234

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Key Practices

*Article Summary:* San Diego State University professors Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey examine research about scaffold reading in content area texts. They assert that they could not find compelling evidence to support leveled reading beyond primary grades that supported achievement gains for students. Their research contends that students should struggle with text at times. The authors cite the Common Core State Standard for English Language Arts that indicates students should read and understand



complex texts independently and proficiently. Teachers should model thinking aloud about complex texts, word solving, and strategies for comprehension. Fisher and Frey further state that scaffolded reading allows students to stretch and improve their comprehension skills. This article cautions about the use of instruction with leveled texts for secondary students. The teacher can serve as the scaffolding variable instead of leveled texts.

*Implications for Practice:* The AHS RTI team used these expert opinions rationale to incorporate grade level texts during small group or independent reading time. The team developed a plan to support the gradual increase to independent and grade level work for students.

Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., & Compton, D. L. (2010). Rethinking Response to Intervention at middle and high school. *School Psychology Review*, 39(1), 22-28.

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Examples

*Article Summary:* Vanderbilt University professors Lynn S. Fuchs, Douglas Fuchs, and Donald L. Compton examine current research surrounding RTI by looking at secondary RTI through the lens of elementary RTI. The authors discuss three differences that exist between the two levels along with considerations for secondary practitioners. They first argue that screening should not be a necessary requirement to identify risk because academic discrepancies are typically established at the secondary level. The second argument is that secondary students require immediate instruction at the tertiary level because they are most resistant to remediation. Finally, the authors assert that

adolescents require different interventions and strategies than their younger counterparts. The authors recommend a flipped model of RTI, starting students with the most intensive interventions and reducing academic deficits as soon as possible. The authors proposed some questions for the RTI team to consider when planning including: What is the best group size for effective instruction? What are effective strategies for students that have struggled throughout their school careers? What are the best assessments to use to determine movement between tiers? How will the RTI team determine targets for students once they are placed in groups for Tier 2 or Tier 3 support?

*Implications for Practice:* The RTI team developed a protocol for the investigation of existing RTI programs. The team also reviewed the questions that these experts in the field of reading posed in this article. Several of the questions were used as part of the process to investigate existing RTI models.

King, S. A., Lemons, C. J., & Hill, D. R. (2012). Response to Intervention in secondary schools: Considerations for administrators. *NASSP Bulletin*, 96(1), 5-22.

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Key Practices

*Article Summary:* University of Pittsburgh professors Seth King, Christopher Lemons, and David Hill examine current literature regarding secondary RTI implementation and provide a basic definition of the practice. The authors assert that secondary administrators have been charged with implementing RTI programs with little guidance because most of the research surrounding RTI focused on elementary level practices. The authors draw on research that shows the two major approaches to RTI

include standard protocol and problem solving. Standard protocol moves students through a series of research-based interventions. Problem solving uses school teams to determine interventions based on individual student. Research indicates that most RTI programs use a combination of both approaches. The authors further point out that critics of RTI recognize the challenges of scheduling at the secondary level. Problem solving models of RTI offer greater flexibility as secondary administrators work to find successful approaches to RTI. Finally, the authors draw on research that declares that school administration leadership is an important component of a successful RTI model. This article describes the basic foundation of RTI, looks at the limited research done at the secondary level, and outlines considerations for secondary administrators as they implement RTI models.

*Implications for Practice:* The expert opinions in this article forced the RTI team to leverage time with teachers and administrators. The team scheduled regular time with school leadership during the year one process. School leadership was an integral part of the problem solving process and important to establishing processes and protocols during year one.

Marino, M. T. (2009). Understanding how adolescents with reading difficulties utilize technology-based tools. *Exceptionality*, 17(2), 88-102. (Peer Reviewed)

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Case Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Examples

*Article Summary:* Washington State University researcher, Matthew Marino, asserts that instructional technology continues to increase in popularity as a method to

scaffold learning and increase achievement. He further states that “Effective instructional technology includes tools that support students’ cognitive processes by presenting relevant information using multiple modalities including pictures, sound, and language”. Marino’s research included four areas of analysis: (1) tools that share cognitive load, (2) tools that support the cognitive process, (3) tools that support out-of-reach activities, and (4) tools that support hypothesis testing. Students were given a pre- and post-test to measure knowledge of scientific concepts, processes and vocabulary. There were 25-item multiple choice test. There were also six open ended problems that tested students’ ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate scientific information. The Degrees of Reading power, a criterion-referenced measure of reading comprehension used to establish group for the study. The study showed that low ability readers benefitted from using the tools, but proficient readers used the tools more frequently. There was a negative impact on scores based on student use of tools that supported out of reach activities. Marino suggest that teachers need to monitor student performance to make sure tools are used properly. Her further suggests teachers conference with students one-on-one on the use of tools and analyze performance data.

*Implications for Practice:* From the early stages in planning, the RTI team considered an invention that integrated technology a key component. This article alerted the team to the challenges that exist for programs that students find interesting and cautioned the team about the importance of teacher monitoring and support. The AHS RTI team integrated the idea of conferencing with students individually regarding the technology use and goals and progress related to technology.

Martinez, R., & Young, A. (2011). Response to Intervention: How is it practiced and perceived? *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(1), 44-52.

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Descriptive Study

*Article Focus:* Struggling Readers, Guiding questions for reading instruction and best practices for reading instruction.

*Article Summary:* Rachel Martinez and Andria Young, researchers from University of Houston, review components of RTI programs as well as the perceptions about those programs. A descriptive study was conducted based on an online study administered to teachers, administrators, and other related personnel regarding the RTI process and perceptions about the process. The authors point out the limited research and information regarding specific RTI processes at the secondary level and perceptions of current programs. In a study of several schools using RTI, the process was perceived positively by educators. Many responded that they already implemented components of RTI. From the districts surveyed, the study revealed that in most cases general education teachers initiated the RTI process. The survey also revealed that RTI teams collaborated to make decisions about goals and interventions to focus on with students. The authors assert that good teachers were involved in some of RTIs activities prior to formalized processes, and there are favorable reviews of the process. Martinez and Young argue that the RTI process will fail if the school does not have an effective process to select, organize, and deliver interventions. They also recommend schools focus on measureable goals prior to beginning interventions.

*Implications for Practice:* The team established goals for each marking period of year one as a result of reading this empirical study. The team evaluated the school's existing strategies for assisting struggling learners to determine what could be integrated into a formalized process. The study supports the idea of having a strong RTI team that works collaboratively to determine goals and interventions. This research also alerts the RTI team about possible challenges measurable goals and data collection.

Pitcher, S. M., Martinez, G., Dicembre, E. A., Fewster, D., & McCormick, M. K. (2010). The literacy needs of adolescents in their own words. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(8), 636-645. doi:10.1598/jaal.53.8.2

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Case Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Examples

*Article Summary:* Pitcher, Martinez, Dicembre, Fewster, and McCormick formed a research team with diverse backgrounds including adolescent literacy, special education, secondary education and curriculum development. The team analyzed the efficacy of reading programs using a collection of seven case studies. Students in the case study received individual reading assessments, surveys on their motivation to read, and both the student and parents were interviewed. All of the students in the study had below level reading comprehension, but none of them received instruction focused on comprehension. Students in the survey expressed challenges with reading in the content area and a lack of strategies to understand the materials. The researchers recommend looking at the individual needs of struggling readers verses putting them into a one size fits all program. The researchers also recommend providing more opportunities for students to select texts they find interesting to increase their motivation to read. They also

suggested that teachers leverage the way students use technology to improve reading comprehension. The authors realize the study is limited in that their research only included seven case studies. While the results may not necessarily be generalized to all struggling students, it provides snapshots of the perspectives of students.

*Implications for Practice:* This empirical research reminded the RTI team to consider the voices of students and parents as they work on an RTI process for the students of Appoquinimink High School. The team developed an action plan to communicate the RTI framework to parents and developed a protocol for conferencing with parents.

Reutebuch, C. K. (2008). Succeed with a Response-to-Intervention model. *Intervention In School and Clinic*, 44(2), 126-128.

*Type of Article:* Expert Opinion, Peer Reviewed

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Key Practices

*Article Summary:* Colleen Reutebuch is a researcher at the University of Texas, Austin in the field of struggling readers, academic interventions and learning disabilities. In this brief article, she summarizes 20 guidelines that support successful implementation of RTI. She includes guidelines that focus on every aspect of RTI implementation including the use of evidences based practices, instructional models, professional development recommendations, goal setting for students, and parental involvement. Reutebuch supports each recommendation with at least one citation for support.

*Implications for Practice:* This brief article provided the AHS RTI team with an initial checklist of guidelines to use during year one. The team used each of these

suggested guidelines at some point to varying degrees during year one of implementation. The citations in the article also led the team to other research in the field of RTI. These guidelines helped to establish some of the questions the team used when they investigated existing RTI models.

Vaughn, S, and Fletcher, J. (2012). Response to Intervention with secondary school students with reading difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 45(3), 244-256.

*Type of Article:* Empirical Research, Longitudinal Study

*Article Focus:* Existing RTI Programs, Examples

*Article Summary:* Sharon Vaughn and Jack Fletcher, researchers at the University of Texas and University of Houston, summarize results from a longitudinal study involving secondary students with reading difficulties. The study examines (a) the efficacy of tiered interventions for secondary students, (b) the probability of resolving reading disabilities in older students, (c) the validity, reliability, and use of screening and monitoring tools for secondary students, and (d) implications of implementing response to intervention in secondary schools. The authors summarize that adolescents can benefit from reading interventions. Older students will make gains with explicit reading instruction that involve vocabulary related to content knowledge, building background knowledge, and comprehension strategies. The authors argue that because most secondary students are already identified as having reading difficulties, they may be placed in the most intensive interventions immediately. The authors also assert that state level reading assessments are strongly considered as a valid and reliable screening tool to minimize assessing students.



*Implications for Practice:* This empirical research stressed the validity and reliability of state reading assessments. The team used the results of the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) scores as primary data point for initial RTI screen.

## **Appendix C**

### **LESSONS FROM OTHER RTI MODELS**

Appoquinimink School District (ASD) superintendent and principals agree that a systemic approach to intervention is necessary to address the needs of struggling learners at the high school level. As a result, the superintendent charged high school administrators with developing and implementing a Response to Intervention (RTI) process. The high school RTI approach should be aligned with the philosophies and current practices of ASD elementary and middle schools. Results in ASD primary grades have been similar to research cited by King, Lemon, and Hill (2012) who found that RTI has repeatedly shown success at the elementary level including improved performance with at-risk and English Language Learners students, and fewer students identified for special education. Canter, Klotz, and Cowan (2008) report that RTI programs are increasingly used to address academic difficulties and improve student outcomes.

Appoquinimink High School (AHS), one of two high schools in the district, had attempted to meet the needs of struggling learners in various ways. This included pullout during the school day, extended time after school, and individual modules delivered via computer software. AHS administrators also tried scheduling at-risk students within the same course sections to address academic deficiencies. In the attempts to seek effective intervention strategies independently, work continued under district leadership to provide an effective general education program for all students. The RTI goal for the 2014-2015 school year was to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies

for ninth grade students that could be replicated and adapted for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics.

Literature surrounding RTI at the secondary level discusses the challenges with scheduling and structure (Bender, 2012; DDOE, 2014; Duffy, Scala, & National High School Center, 2012; Canter Klotz, & Cowan, 2008). Secondary schools struggle to schedule time to support the needs of struggling learners who need individualized instruction. However, both traditional and block schedules create challenges for RTI. Across the country, there are varying degrees of RTI implementation at the high school level. Martinez and Young (2011) referenced the fact that there is limited research and information regarding specific RTI processes at the secondary level and perceptions of current programs.

Conversation about RTI at AHS prompted an investigation of current approaches in other schools and districts. Members of the district and school based RTI committees researched or visited several models, including the three ASD middle schools and Milford High School nearby in Delaware. School administrators from the New Castle County Vocational School District, Red Clay Consolidated School District, and Cape Henlopen School District were also contacted for information about their RTI programs.

The AHS RTI team began the process with limited knowledge about RTI. The team reviewed some background research on RTI and presentations from the Delaware Department of Education (2014) and determined what they hoped to learn from site visits and further research of RTI models. Questions considered when investigating RTI models are included in Figure 8. The team visited, talked with, or researched schools in the state

of Delaware and a few from across the country cited in journals, briefings and articles.

Data from the visits was summarized and the team reviewed key elements when planning for year one of implementation (see Attachment 1).

Figure 8. Questions Considered for RTI Models

**Years of Implementation**

1. How long have you been implementing RTI?

**Schedule/Structure**

2. What is your schedule or structure?
  - a. How much time do students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 receive in different instruction?
  - b. Does your schedule impact the entire school? Is there an enrichment or RTI period?
  - c. Have you tried or considered other scheduling models?

**Process/Interventions/Assessments/Resources**

3. How do you initially place students in Tier 2 and Tier 3?
4. What assessments do you use for initial screening?
5. What factors do you consider for recommendations for each cycle?
6. What assessments do you use for progress monitoring?
7. What interventions do you use for Tier 2 and Tier 3?
8. How do you decide what interventions to use for Tier 2 and Tier 3?
9. How frequently do you collect data for students for your progress monitoring?

**Progress/Perceptions**

10. How do students respond to RTI?
11. How did you communicate progress to parents?
12. What factors are considered for recommendations for the next school year?

**Staffing/Professional Development**

13. Who coordinates or takes the lead for the RTI process in your school?
  - a. How does administration demonstrate leadership?
  - b. How do teachers take leadership with RTI?
14. How was RTI “staffed?”
  - a. What is the teacher to student ratio for each Tier 2 and Tier 3?
  - b. How many teachers per grade level?
  - c. What are the teacher’s qualifications/background/experience?
  - d. What type of professional development is there for teachers?  
Administrators?
  - e. Are teachers using data as part of their decision making process?
  - f. Are teachers able to incorporate technology for their progress monitoring?
  - g. How are your teachers responding to RTI?

**Lessons Learned**

- a. What are some challenges you faced during implementation?

b. What are some successes you have achieved in your RTI program?
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### **Years of Implementation**

According to Canter, Klotz, and Cowan (2008), implementation of a school-wide RTI program can take time and is a process that should not be rushed. As a result, school teams must develop a realistic timeline when planning for implementation. The ASD RTI team was interested in how long each program visited or researched within the state had been in place. One of the questions posed when investigating different RTI models was the number of years since implementation. All schools reviewed by the RTI team were within the first five years of implementation. Bender's (2012) case study of Clark County High Schools indicated the district suggested a five-year implementation plan for the RTI process. Dr. Michael Young of Cape Henlopen High School also suggested a similar timeline when he took the lead with the RTI process at his school.

The AHS RTI team realized the enormity of the task of implementing an RTI process and determined that they would create a slow and deliberate process. In the initial discussions, the proposal was to start an RTI process for students in ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> grades for reading and mathematics. After reviewing the implementation timelines of several different schools, the team decided to narrow the focus to ninth grade reading for year one of implementation. The team then hoped to take lessons learned from year one and adapt to other grade levels and other content areas.

### **Schedule/Structure**

High quality secondary school RTI programs are designed to support all students. Thus, a successful RTI program requires systematic change to provide the necessary school-wide support (McMackin & Johns, 2011). However, systematic changes at the

secondary level can have significant impacts on the master schedule. The DDOE (2014) recognized the challenge of scheduling RTI at the secondary level and developed a presentation titled “Scheduling to Facilitate RTI” in March 2014 aimed at secondary administrators. The DDOE outlined the expectations that Tier 2 instruction is in addition to regularly scheduled general education curriculum, meeting for not less than two sessions per week. Similarly, Tier 3 instruction is in addition to regularly scheduled general education curriculum, meeting for not less than 4 sessions per week.

Milford High School and Cape Henlopen High School implemented an RTI period for all students for the entire school year in 2014. A similar schedule was followed in ASD middle schools. In these models, all teachers were available during the intervention period, thus alleviating staffing constraints. All students were scheduled into RTI or an enrichment class, and students receiving RTI support were able to move out of RTI and into an enrichment class by meeting targets for the marking period.

Secondary schools often implement Tier 2 interventions in specially designed classes. (Burns, 2008). Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School in a Metropolitan School District delivered support within current classes and scheduled students into a literacy lab elective (Bender, 2012). This model is similar to the additional support Meredith Middle School in Middletown, DE delivers to students during related arts classes. In comparison, a high school in a southwestern state placed at-risk students in collaboratively taught classes, and supports were delivered within these classes (National High School Center, 2010). Hamilton High School in Colorado had multiple ways to schedule students for support which included offering a zero period that allowed

students to get extra classes before the start of the school day (Duffy, Scala, & National High School Center, 2012). They also included a 15-minute academic enhancement period for all students, and some students received double period of instruction.

### **Screening and Progress Monitoring**

Canter et al. (2008) assert that RTI processes are often successful because of the use of evidenced based strategies and frequent progress monitoring. Major questions for the AHS RTI team included universal screening, progress monitoring, and resources. The team wanted to know how students were assessed and what resources would be available to teachers in the RTI process.

Burns (2008) indicated that the RTI decision making team should analyze a variety of data, including accountability data, to determine the level of student intervention. The schools investigated within the state of Delaware during the ASD RTI's team research used DCAS scores for their school-wide screening processes. In a case study, Duffy et al. (2012) referred to state test scores as a data point for screening. All but one school used accountability data as part of the initial recommendations for student interventions. Every school also use grades and teacher recommendations for initial screening.

Accurate and frequent evaluations of student progress are important, and Canter et al. (2008) agreed that systematic data collection is critical to an effective RTI program. Duffy et al. (2012) indicated that once students were placed in Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions, progress-monitoring tests were administered on a two-week cycle for Tier

2 students and a weekly cycle for Tier 3 students. Student goals were reviewed every six to nine weeks at all secondary schools that reported their evaluation cycles.

## **Resources**

Because improving literacy skills plays a key role in any RTI program achieving its intended goal (King et al., 2012), the AHS planning team investigated the resources other schools used to improve reading and literacy. They found that resources for RTI varied greatly. Some schools purchased programs and some used teacher-created materials. A formalized RTI process would be new to AHS, so the planning team wanted teachers to have resources available. In addition, because Feuerborn, Sarin, and Tyre, (2011) found some teachers may resist RTI because of perceived increase in workload, the AHS team did not want lack of resources to be a barrier.

Both Cape Henlopen High School and Everett Meredith Middle School used NewsELA as a resource for struggling readers. Text delivered at multiple reading levels on the same subject was a key feature for this program. Students can engage in text at their own level and answer questions about the reading. This resource can be used to review and reinforce a variety of reading skills including comprehension.

Milford High School used Achieve 3000 for reading. Achieve 3000 is a differentiated online instructional software program with anchor lessons (Carnavale, 2014). Teachers provide small group instruction once a week and students work individually with support for the other four days each week. Read180 is used by Cape Henlopen High School for Tier 3 instruction.



ASD middle schools, Cape Henlopen High School, and Milford High School tried Compass Learning with limited success. Compass Learning is a computer-based learning system that was purchased by the State of Delaware. The intention was to deliver individualized learning paths to students based on state assessment performances.

*LANGUAGE!* is an individualized software intervention program that was used in the literacy lab of one of the case study schools, Cheyenne High School. Two ASD Middle schools, Alfred G. Waters and Redding Middle School, discussed using materials from the reading curriculum, Soar to Success and Read Naturally. Both schools are the only investigated sites that mention using teacher-created materials for Tier 2 instruction. Everett Meredith Middle School uses teacher-created materials for Tier 3 instruction with the reading specialist.

### **Student Response**

The AHS RTI team was also interested in how students responded to RTI support. Several of the high schools reported the process was a shift in thinking for the students. Both Milford High School and Cape Henlopen High School indicated there was initial student resistance to the RTI or Success for All period. However, both schools reported that once students realized that the support classes were not going away and that they would be accountable for their goals, students shifted their energy into meeting their goals. In both schools, once students met their goals for the marking period, they would move into a different placement for the duration of the marking period. Both schools showed increases in state assessment scores, and administrators felt there was a direct correlation to increased student buy-in for the RTI process.

All sites examined by the AHS RTI team reported notable success for students. Students typically responded better when they saw evidence that they could move tiers or move out of RTI if they reached their intended goals. Students also responded to incentives such as time in an elective enrichment period. The goal is for students to move from the most intense level, Tier 3 to the level supported by typical instruction, Tier 1. All reviewed schools reported movement among tiers, including movement from Tier 3 to Tier 2 as well as movement from Tier 2 to Tier 1.

### **Communication to Parents**

Canter et al. (2008) assert that teachers, administrators, and parents should have easy access to records of student progress. The planning team knew that access of information to teachers and administrators would not be of concern, but wanted an established plan of communicating progress to parents. Because ASD stresses the importance of communication with parents and the planning team wanted a protocol in place, the team reviewed available parent communication plans for each model school (Appoquinimink School District, 2012).

ASD middle schools indicated that parents were aware that students were receiving extra support for reading, but parents were not familiar with RTI terminology. All ASD middle school students participate in an enrichment period for 30 minutes daily and report cards communicate progress. Cape Henlopen High School students participate in the Success for All period daily for 40 minutes and followed a similar communication pattern with parents. Students receive a grade of satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) based on their progress toward goals. Parents understood that students were receiving

additional reading support in lieu of the test preparation that other students receive during the Success for All Period.

Unfortunately, the AHS planning team discovered that parents were not necessarily familiar with the RTI language. Most schools indicated that students who were receiving extra support had parents who were not familiar with response to intervention, tiers, universal screening, or progress monitoring tools. Parents were also not necessarily familiar with student goals or targets. At the high school level, students were more familiar with targets and goals because they were used to motivate students to do well during their intervention time.

### **Coordination, Leadership and Staffing**

Feuerbor et al. (2011) argue that effective RTI models incorporate collaboration among teachers as a primary component. Collaboration leads to reflection, knowledge development, broadened approaches, and data driven decisions. The AHS team wanted to know how other models were staffing the RTI process and how was school leadership involved.

The team found that the RTI process in ASD middle schools was led by either a principal or assistant principal. All three schools employed the support of one lead teacher to work collaboratively with the school administrator and RTI teachers. The middle schools were able to use their ELA teachers, reading during enrichment period, and one during school-related arts. Similarly, Cape Henlopen and Milford High Schools both had a period of the day that was dedicated to RTI or another type of support or

enrichment class. Both high schools selected staff members who could best deliver RTI instruction to struggling students.

### **Professional Development**

The DDOE (2014) discusses parameters for professional development for RTI. Professional development for RTI may consider universal and diagnostic assessment, collection and interpretation of data, development of collaborative team problem solving, development of collaborative team problem solving, development of skills in identifying instructional needs, linking appropriate interventions to individual instructional needs, and specific Tier 1, 2 and 3 supports. The AHS RTI team reviewed the recommendations from DDOE and considered the professional development plans from each school model reviewed. School-wide professional development and professional development specific to the RTI team were both reviewed.

Six of the eight model schools reported educating the entire staff about the RTI process, purpose, and goals. These six models also discuss using existing Professional Learning Community frameworks for professional development related to the RTI process. Cape Henlopen held a staff presentation that included DDOE definitions of RTI and background research on RTI, and Everett Meredith Middle School made connections to existing tiered behavior interventions.

Feuerbor et al. (2011) assert that the teachers working directly in the RTI process will need more professional development than the general staff, including ongoing support in data driven decision making. This was evident in the schools the AHS team reviewed. Each school discussed professional development needed for the RTI team.

Schools that used specific programs for interventions, progress monitoring, and screening provided professional development specific to these programs. Milford High School provided teachers with professional development for Achieve 3000. Other programs that schools provided specific professional development for included Read180, NewsELA, Maze, STAR, and Read Naturally.

### **AHS Lessons Learned**

The AHS RTI team learned a great deal from reviewing models at other schools. The team reviewed the different structures, progress-monitoring tools, resources, staffing needs, professional development, and student response and achievement. As a result, the AHS team was able to analyze different elements of each program and determine what would likely work for year one of implementation. Below is a summary of the key lessons learned.

#### *Years of Implementation*

- **Implementation of a quality RTI process is a multi-year endeavor.** The AHS team learned from other districts that it is wise to start small to establish a strong structure and build teacher buy-in.

#### *Schedule/Structure*

- **Focus on 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading within a modified English-9 class.** The team wanted to establish a foundation for RTI with reading. A focus on reading aligned to an existing school-wide focus on literacy that the team thought would translate to success for students in other areas.

#### *Process/Interventions/Assessments/Resources*

- **AHS did not purchase any resources specifically for Tier 2 instruction.**

Through the research of other models, there was no consistent resource recommended for Tier 2 instruction. Read180 was purchased with the idea of using it for Tier 3 instruction. Resources and strategies from Read180 were used for both Tier 3 and Tier 2 interventions.

- **ASD purchased two assessments to use for the RTI process.** The NWEA MAP test was used for universal screening for all students in grades 9 and 10. The SRI test to use as a screening and diagnostic tool for students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction.

#### *Progress/Perceptions*

- **Even if students are initially resistant, they will work toward clearly established and attainable goals.** The team noticed that students receiving added support generally make gains in the area of support.
- **Parents need to be included in the process as partners.** The AHS team noticed parents were not fully aware of the RTI process in most schools. In some cases, parents understood their child was receiving added support. AHS would develop a plan to include parents as support from the start and make the RTI process explicit to parents.

#### *Staffing/Leadership/Professional Development*

- **The goal was to keep student to teacher ratios low using existing staff.** While several administrators advocated for increased staffing, it was not always feasible.

The AHS team observed student to teacher ratio for Tier 2 instruction ranged from 10:1 to 8:1 and the student to teacher ratio for Tier 3 instruction ranged from 3:1 to 5:1.

- **RTI implementation could use existing teachers and structures.** AHS reviewed established collaborative teaching pairs for possible involvement in the program. Teachers involved in the RTI process should have continued support in the areas of data driven decision-making, interventions, progress monitoring and screening during existing professional learning communities.
- **AHS RTI team will be under the direct supervision of the principal during year one of implementation.** The team learned that administration was highly involved in schools that with successful RTI processes in place. The principal will help monitor progress and support teachers through the implementation process with the help of a selected RTI coordinator.

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Attachment 1

School	<b><u>Milford High School</u></b>
School Description	Sussex County Delaware Population ~ 1100 students Year 3 of implementation at the time of visit
Schedule Structure	*Four days of a 45 minute RTI period for the entire school *Six-week progress monitoring cycle *All students scheduled into intervention, support or incentives
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	Review of DCAS scores, grades and teacher recommendation determined initial placement in RTI tiers. Goals were set for each 6-week cycle. At the end of each cycle student progress was evaluated and the team made recommendations for the next cycle.
Resources	Achieve 3000 used for reading. Achieve 3000 is a differentiated online instructional software program with anchor lessons. Compass Learning was tried with limited success.
How do students respond to RTI	Students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 were initially resistant. After cycle 1, they understand that if they meet their goals, they have the opportunity to participate in an incentive period. Students are working to meet their goals.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Coordinator created a brochure to explain the RTI process to parents. Information about the RTI period is placed on the website and RTI is reflected on student schedules. Parents can monitor progress through the school information management system, Home Access Center (HAC).
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	One RTI coordinator with support from district RTI for scheduling each 6-week cycle and some support from reading specialist.
Staffing of RTI -	Tier 2 Ratio of students to teachers 8:1 Tier 3 Ratio of students to teachers 6:1 The entire staff is used during the RTI period. This allows opportunity to assign strong teachers to Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
Professional Development for teachers	Teachers were given professional development for the Achieve 3000 program. Time has been spent during faculty meetings and PLCs to educate the entire staff about the RTI process.
Positives/Challenges	<b>Positives:</b> *Majority of teachers were on board by January *Milford was finding success with the Achieve 3000 program *There was a dedicated staff person for RTI *District Support for RTI implementation <b>Challenges:</b> * Educating the entire staff took time * Scheduling was very time consuming because the entire school was involved *Finding appropriate and effective math interventions *6 week rotation was not consistent with marking period rotations
Questions left unanswered or raised	* What support can we expect from the district? Do we have to start with a full scale RTI program? Do the state regulations indicate we have to do all grade levels in both reading and math? Are their funds allocated for RTI? How do we address accountability for students in RTI?

How I plan to use information from this visit	This was the first site visit for the RTI team. This information was used to see an RTI program in action at the high school level. This information was used to prompt more questions, it created a sense of urgency for getting a plan in place, identifying and securing resources.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	Nancy Carnvale, District RTI Coordinator

School	<b><u>Cape Henlopen High School</u></b>
School Description	Lewes, Delaware Grades 9-12 Population ~ 1200 students Year 3 of implementation at the time of visit
Schedule Structure	*Five days of a 45-minute Success period for the entire school *Nine week progress monitoring cycle *All students scheduled into intervention or test preparation
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	Review of DCAS scores, grades and teacher recommendation determined initial placement in RTI tiers. Goals were set for each 9-week cycle. Student progress evaluated and team recommendations are made for the next cycle. The STAR test is used at the end of each cycle as a data tool along with progress monitoring tests every two weeks for Tier 2 and every three weeks for Tier 3.
Resources	Using NewsELA for Tier 2 and Read180 for Tier 3 students. Students typically pick their own stories, but once a week the teachers identify a common story students can discuss as a group. Reading levels may vary for the same story.
How do students respond to RTI	Students are doing well. The school has worked to establish the Success for All period as an academic period. There is movement between tiers.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Parents understand students are receiving extra support in ELA or Math during the Success period. Students receive a grade of S or U based on their progress toward their goals. Students that reach their goals for the marking period can transition to their grade level Success for All curriculum. Parents can monitor overall progress through the school information management system, Home Access Center (HAC).
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	Assistant Principal coordinates the RTI program with help from the reading specialist.
Staffing of RTI -	Tier 2 Ratio of students to teachers 8:1 Tier 3 Ratio of students to teachers 5:1 The entire staff is used during the Success for All Period. This allows opportunity to keep the recommended ratios for tiers 2 and 3. Cape has experienced Tier 2 ratios as high as 10:1 and Tier 3 Ratios as low as 3:1
Professional Development for teachers	All staff provided PD regarding RTI Process. RTI teachers were provided with PD for Read180, Newsela and Maze. RTI staff were also provided PD around progress monitoring and data collection. All other teachers were provided PD for Kaplan test prep. Time

	has been spent during faculty meetings and PLCs to educate the entire staff about the RTI process.
Positives/Challenges	<p><b>Positives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*There was a five-year plan for full implementation. Plans were slow and deliberate</li> <li>*There was a dedicated administrator to help implement the RTI goals for the school</li> <li>*District Support for RTI implementation</li> <li>*There was success for students in RTI</li> <li>*School wide SAT scores were up 10%</li> <li>*Assigning a 1/4 credit each year</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Changing the mindset about the Success Period</li> <li>* Finding Progress Monitoring tools</li> <li>*Finding appropriate and effective math interventions</li> </ul>
Questions left unanswered or raised	* Could we maintain a daily advisory period? Would our staff buy into this considering the gains Cape Henlopen saw with SAT scores? How do we address accountability for students in RTI?
How I plan to use information from this visit	AHS has been in continuous contact with Cape Henlopen regarding their RTI process. Cape has growth data that is good evidence to use with the AHS leadership team during discussions about a possible daily RTI/test preparation period.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	Dr. Michael Young, Assistant Principal

School	<b><u>Hamilton High School</u></b>
School Description	Colorado District 189 Grades 9-12 Population ~ 1965 students Year 3 of implementation at the time of the study
Schedule Structure	*"0" period at start of day allowed some students to get extra classes *15-minute academic enhancement period for all students *Some students received double doses of instruction
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	A wide range of data including attendance, recent state test scores, assignment performance indicators, grades, homework writing samples and behavior referrals
Resources	Specific resources were not listed. Teachers were using common assessments, and at this point they were no longer adding resources or interventions, they were evaluating their current resources and reflecting on which ones were effective.
How do students respond to RTI	Found success with Tier 2 and Tier 3 students have responded well within one of the supports assigned. Indicated flexible Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction allowed students to move within the grading periods.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	School discussed the importance of bringing staff, parents, students and community on board, but did not indicate specifics.
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	School administrator, including the principal took the lead. Since there was a state and district push for RTI, the school leaders were very involved in every aspect of initial implementation. Allocation of resources and determining a creative master schedule were key.
Staffing of RTI -	Principals advocated for additional funding for staff and classroom space to accommodate the change in framework.
Professional Development for teachers	Used established professional learning communities to support implementation efforts.
Positives/Challenges	<b>Positives:</b> *Implementation continues to deepen each year *School Staff using data to examine their practices *State and district support for implementation *Good at identifying students and their areas of struggle *Tier 2 and Tier 3 students are showing growth *Assigning a 1/4 credit each year <b>Challenges:</b> * Tier 1 students are not making comparable gains * overall school not making gains *Differentiation within Tier 1 instruction.
Questions left unanswered or raised	What Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions helped them achieve success over the past three years? Could we make a 0 period work? Since our school is piloting Saturday school for behavioral RTI, could we consider Saturday for academic RTI and use it in the same regard as a zero period?
How I plan to use information from this visit	Sharing the results of this school study will allow district officials to see that scheduling support outside of the school day can yield positive results. There are alternatives

APA reference or School Communication Contact	Duffy, H., Scala, J., & National High School, C. (2012). A Systemic Approach to Implementing Response to Intervention in Three Colorado High Schools. National High School Center,
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School	<b><u>Southwestern High School</u></b>
School Description	Southwestern State Metropolitan School District Grades 9-12 Population ~2200 students Year 2 of implementation at the time of the study
Schedule Structure	*6 - period school day, students identified for Effective Behavioral and Instructional Supports (EBIS) and collaborative teaching. *Supports received within collaborative teaching courses
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	Students placed in collaboratively taught classes during the summer. Grades reviewed by administrators Students referred to EBIS for supports based on progress reviewed during 6 week cycles. Tier 1 - every four weeks, Tier 2- every 2-3 weeks, Tier 3 - every week Used weekly tests and quizzes, district benchmarks, end-of-course tests, end-of-course grades, high school graduation test, and short probes from Intervention Central
Resources	Tier 1 - teachers were encouraged to use best practices and develop their own interventions.
How do students respond to RTI	Goals was to reduce the number of 9th grade students struggling academically and referrals to special education. Specific progress toward the goals were not reported.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Specific communication with parents was not reported although the study indicates the EBIS team meets with student and stakeholders when they are referred to Tier 2.
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	School Administration was making decisions regarding students that would be placed in the collaborative classes. A problem solving team reviewed data every six weeks
Staffing of RTI -	A designated EBIS coordinator. Collaborative teaching model was used.
Professional Development for teachers	Professional development plans were not reported.
Positives/Challenges	Positives: *EBIS team meet with student and stakeholders when referred to Tier 2 *Data reviewed on consistent cycle *State and district support for implementation *District Benchmarks *Good Data system Challenges: * After school support * Pull out method of seeing students *Teachers creating their own Tier 1 interventions
Questions left unanswered or raised	How can we strengthen the IST and RTI process? What are some steps we can take to improve teacher understanding of Tier 1 interventions to help students before they are referred for Tier 2 support.

How I plan to use information from this visit	Possibly have meetings before school starts for incoming 9th grade students that have been identified for Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports and subsequently, have similar meetings when as student is referred during the school year. Explain the RTI process to parents and how progress monitoring will work.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	National High School, C. (2010). Tiered Interventions in High Schools: Using Preliminary "Lessons Learned" to Guide Ongoing Discussion. National High School Center,

School	<b><u>Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School</u></b>
School Description	Cheyenne Mountain Junior High Metropolitan School District Grades 7-8 Population ~2200 students Suggested 5 year implementation
Schedule Structure	*Used Multi-tiered behavior support plan as a framework for academic RTI. *Supports delivered within current classes and some in literacy lab electives
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	*No universal screening to start. Students identified through referrals from teachers and parents, use of curriculum based measures and state assessments. After year one there was a universal screen implemented three times a year.
Resources	Elective courses were redesigned for RTI. A Literacy Lab was created for struggling readers. LANGUAGE! curriculum was used in literacy lab. Faculty decided to build a bank of academic interventions to address needs in reading. Specific resources are mentioned. It is discussed that the faculty was reallocating current resources or practices for academic RTI.
How do students respond to RTI	Fifty percent of students with Tier 2 instruction made gains in reading comprehension and improved grades in other courses. The number of students referred to special education services has declined. Faculty noted an increase in assignment completion when students were provided choice for product format.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Specific communication with parents was not reported.
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	Schoolwide effort through PLCs. All teachers were involved so there was a shift in thinking. All teachers focused on differentiation to help struggling students.
Staffing of RTI -	All teachers were involved. The reading specialist ran the literacy lab for Tier 2 instruction.
Professional Development for teachers	Built on knowledge staff was familiar with tiered interventions with behavior. Used existing structure of professional learning communities to dedicate itself to RTI implementation.
Positives/Challenges	Positives: *Shift in school culture *All teachers were differentiating

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A bank of interventions was developed</li> <li>*Data showed growth for 50% of Tier 2 students</li> <li>*Targeted small group instruction</li> </ul> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What to do for the 50% that did not show significant gains</li> <li>* All Tier 3 synonymous with Special Education</li> <li>*Teachers creating their own Tier 1 interventions</li> </ul>
Questions left unanswered or raised	*Should we focus on reading like Cheyenne Mountain Junior High? The school had limited resources and decided to focus first on reading and then eventually work in writing and mathematics. Is this a good approach for year one of implementation
How I plan to use information from this visit	The school focused on building a bank of interventions for struggling students. This is a good approach to help get all teachers involved in supporting struggling students. The school also used existing PLCs to advance ideas for their RTI process.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	Bender, W. N. (2012). RTI in middle and high schools. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

School	<b><u>Everett Meredith Middle School</u></b>
School Description	<p>Middletown, Delaware  Appoquinimink School District  Grades 6-8  Feeder School for AHS  Population ~ 800 students  Year 3 of implementation at the time of visit</p>
Schedule Structure	<p>Daily 30 minute enrichment period for the entire school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Nine week progress monitoring cycle to correlate with the grading and reporting period</li> <li>*All students scheduled into RTI or Enrichment *Students that need reading and math may be scheduled into a RTI support class during a related arts period.</li> </ul>
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	<p>Recommendation for initial placement from previous grade. RTI is implemented at all three grade levels and the sending elementary schools. Target goals are set for the year and recommendations for placement are made at the end of each cycle.</p>
Resources	Using NewsELA, Study Island and continuing to search for resources. Reading specialist has teacher created resources for Tier 3 students.
How do students respond to RTI	Students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 get RTI support as their assigned Enrichment classes. Students understand they are getting extra help in reading, but the class is not called RTI. There is movement among Tiers and some students are making progress out of RTI and gain access to other Enrichment classes that are viewed more favorably by students. Students that need support in both Reading and Math may have an RTI period as a related arts class. Students work to meet goals in order to attend other related arts such as art or world language.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Parents are aware there is a daily enrichment period and information about enrichment is reflected on student schedules. Parents understand this is an opportunity for some students to



	receive extra support and others to receive extension activities for classes. Parents can monitor progress through the school information management system, Home Access Center (HAC). Student progress is discussed with parents formally during team meetings twice a year.
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	A school RTI coordinator takes the lead with support from an assistant principal. The school coordinator is provided time to review data and has also been provided a stipend to help with continued improvements and research for the RTI process at Meredith.
Staffing of RTI -	Tier 2 Ratio of students to teachers 10:1. Tier 3 Ratio of students to teachers 5:1 The entire staff is used during the Enrichment period. This allows opportunity to assign ELA and Math teachers to high need students and to keep ratios small at each grade level for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
Professional Development for teachers	A team of teachers attended an RTI conference. There was school wide PD on the RTI process. Teachers have worked in PLCs on review of data to make recommendations at the end of each cycle.
Positives/Challenges	Positives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Teacher coordinator has taken ownership and is leading progress monitoring discussions</li> <li>*Created alternate scheduling opportunities with related arts</li> <li>*Use of data in the decision making process continues to improve</li> </ul> Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Tools for data collecting and monitoring</li> <li>* Teachers need more resources</li> <li>*Need for more PD</li> </ul>
Questions left unanswered or raised	* How can we continue services for students that have received RTI in our district? Could our team benefit from attending an RTI conference similar to the one Meredith attended? What resources will be available at the high school level if our middle schools were struggling to find resources?
How I plan to use information from this visit	Meredith is the second largest feeder school for AHS. It is important to see what students are experiencing from middle school, understand their areas of strength and where they find challenges. We want to determine how we can provide continuity of services for our students.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	Mr. Mark Delcio, RTI Coordinator, Mr. Nick Hoover Assistant Principal

School	<b><u>Louis L. Redding Middle School</u></b>
School Description	Middletown, Delaware Appoquinimink School District Grades 6-8 Feeder School for AHS Population ~ 800 students Year 3 of implementation at the time of visit
Schedule Structure	Daily 30-minute enrichment period for the entire school *Nine week progress monitoring cycle to correlate with the grading and reporting period *All students scheduled into RTI or Enrichment
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	Recommendation for initial placement from previous grade. RTI is implemented at all three grade levels and the sending elementary schools. Target goals are set for the year and recommendations for placement are made at the end of each cycle.
Resources	There is use of IRI each marking period as a diagnostic tool. Teachers use a variety of resources including resources from the current curriculum, teacher created materials, a Reading Intervention Kit, materials that focus on phonic and fluency for 6th grade, ReadWorks, Boost and Blitz.
How do students respond to RTI	Students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 get RTI support as their assigned Enrichment classes. Students understand they are getting extra help in reading, but the class is not called RTI. There is movement among Tiers and some students are making progress out of RTI and gain access to other Enrichment classes that are viewed more favorably by students.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Parents are aware there is a daily enrichment period and information about enrichment is reflected on student schedules. Parents understand this is an opportunity for some students to receive extra support and others to receive extension activities for classes. Parents can monitor progress through the school information management system, Home Access Center (HAC). Student progress is discussed with parents formally during team meetings twice a year.
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	An assistant principal coordinates the RTI process with help from leads in the Reading and Math departments.
Staffing of RTI -	Tier 2 Ratio of students to teachers 10:1 Tier 3 Ratio of students to teachers 5:1 The entire staff is used during the Enrichment period. This allows opportunity to assign ELA and Math teachers to high need students and to keep ratios small at each grade level for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
Professional Development for teachers	Teachers learned about the RTI process and a few teachers were trained on Blitz and Boost. Teachers are requesting more PD on reviewing data to make instructional decisions and using evidenced based strategies.
Positives/Challenges	Positives: *End of cycle meetings have become very productive * Teachers can use progress monitoring data collection tool (itracker) effectively

	<p>*Students move between tiers</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Resources for RTI period</li> <li>* Need for more PD around reading interventions for middle school students</li> </ul>
Questions left unanswered or raised	How can we communicate progress to parents so that we can use them as partners in the RTI process? How do we use time in RTI reading to support other academic areas?
How I plan to use information from this visit	Redding is the smallest feeder school for AHS but have generally sent the most Tier 2 students. It is important to see what students are experiencing from middle school, understand their areas of strength and where they find challenges. We want to determine how we can provide continuity of services for our students.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	Mrs. Kristine Colozo, Assistant Principal

School	<b><u>Alfred G. Waters Middle School</u></b>
School Description	Middletown, Delaware Appoquinimink School District Feeder School for AHS Population ~ 900 students Year 3 of implementation at the time of visit
Schedule Structure	Daily 30-minute enrichment period for the entire school *Nine week progress monitoring cycle to correlate with the grading and reporting period *All students scheduled into RTI or Enrichment
RTI Placement/Universal Screening and progress monitoring	Recommendation for initial placement from previous grade. RTI is implemented at all three grade levels and the sending elementary schools. Target goals are set for the year and recommendations for placement are made at the end of each cycle.
Resources	Using remediation resources from curriculum texts, Soar to Success, Read Naturally, Teacher Intervention Reading Kit and teacher created materials.
How do students respond to RTI	Students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 get RTI support as their assigned Enrichment classes. Students understand they are getting extra help in reading, but the class is not called RTI. There is movement among Tiers and some students are making progress out of RTI and gain access to other Enrichment classes that are viewed more favorably by students.
How do you communicate progress to parents?	Parents are aware there is a daily enrichment period and information about enrichment is reflected on student schedules. Parents understand this is an opportunity for some students to receive extra support and others to receive extension activities for classes. Parents can monitor progress through the school information management system, Home Access Center (HAC). Student progress is discussed with parents formally during team meetings twice a year.
Coordination or leadership of the school RTI process.	A school RTI coordinator with support from the principal. The school coordinator is provided with time to review data and meet with teachers.
Staffing of RTI -	Tier 2 Ratio of students to teachers 10:1 Tier 3 Ratio of students to teachers 5:1 The entire staff is used during the Enrichment period. This allows opportunity to assign ELA and Math teachers to high need students and to keep ratios small at each grade level for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
Professional Development for teachers	Teachers learned about the RTI process and teachers have met with the district reading specialist. The specialist worked with teachers on Read Naturally and a Teacher Intervention Reading Kit. Teachers are requesting more PD and more resources.
Positives/Challenges	Positives: *Teachers understand the RTI process *Students are making progress and moving up Tiers *Use of data in the decision making process continues to improve Challenges:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Tools for data collecting and monitoring, working to get a systematic progress monitoring protocol in place</li> <li>* Teachers need more resources</li> <li>*Need for more PD</li> </ul>
Questions left unanswered or raised	* How can we continue services for students that have received RTI in our district? Do we need to consider an intervention period across the building for year one implementation? Can we successfully implement a school wide intervention period? How can we schedule transitions meetings with the 8th and 9th grade RTI teachers - do more than send data files and written recommendations.
How I plan to use information from this visit	AGW is the largest feeder school for AHS. It is important to see what students are experiencing from middle school, understand their areas of strength and where they find challenges. We want to determine how we can provide continuity of services for our students.
APA reference or School Communication Contact	Mr. Thomas Poehlmann, Principal and Mrs. Wendy Shetzler ELA lead teacher and RTI coordinator

## **Appendix D**

### **STAFFING THE RTI AT AHS**

#### **Introduction**

The Appoquinimink School District (ASD) superintendent directed Appoquinimink High School (AHS) administrators to create a Response to Intervention (RTI) process during the 2014-2015 school year. The goal was to build a replicable infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for ninth grade students. Successful strategies would be adapted for use with 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders receiving reading support and all levels of mathematics. Research surrounding RTI has discussed the difficulty of scheduling at the high school level, specifically considering the allocation of staffing resources (Burns, 2008; Canter, Klotz, & Cowan, 2008; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2010; King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012; Martinez, & Young, 2011; National High School Center, 2010). The Delaware Department of Education (2014) outlined some of the staffing constraints high schools face including shared or part-time teachers, team teaching, teacher contracts, room limitations, and specific course placements. Thus, determining how to staff RTI roles effectively to promote student success was a primary challenge for the AHS RTI team.

This artifact will address how the AHS RTI team addressed staffing the RTI process. During year-one of implementation, the team made several decisions related to staffing. The team reviewed existing student and teacher schedules, teacher roles, and expectations for collaboration and professional development. Determining teacher roles and responsibilities was an important part of establishing an RTI process at AHS.

## **Student schedules**

The AHS school year consists of two semesters. Students enroll in four classes each semester, arranged as a 4X4 90-minute schedule. A typical schedule includes two core academic classes such as English, math, science, or social studies each semester. Each student also takes two additional courses per semester, such as a world language, a career pathway course, or physical education. Exceptions to the common schedule are a few yearlong courses such as Advanced Placement math and science classes or special education courses for ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English and math classes. Students who take a year-long class still have four classes each semester, but only seven total courses for the year.

## **Teacher schedules**

During the 2014-2015 school year, the instructional staff at AHS included 98 teachers, one librarian and eight support staff. Administrators assigned three 90-minute courses, one 45-minute planning period and one 45-minute duty daily. Twice a week, the 45-minute duty for teachers was to work within their professional learning communities. Teachers performed duties related to instruction or school management which were assigned the other three days of the week. Members of the AHS RTI team considered staffing as they developed the plan for Year One implementation. They also reviewed the qualifications of the teachers involved.

To help with the first year of implementation of the RTI program, the district approved an additional single teacher unit that could be used in any capacity to support RTI. The RTI district planning team determined that this additional unit would provide

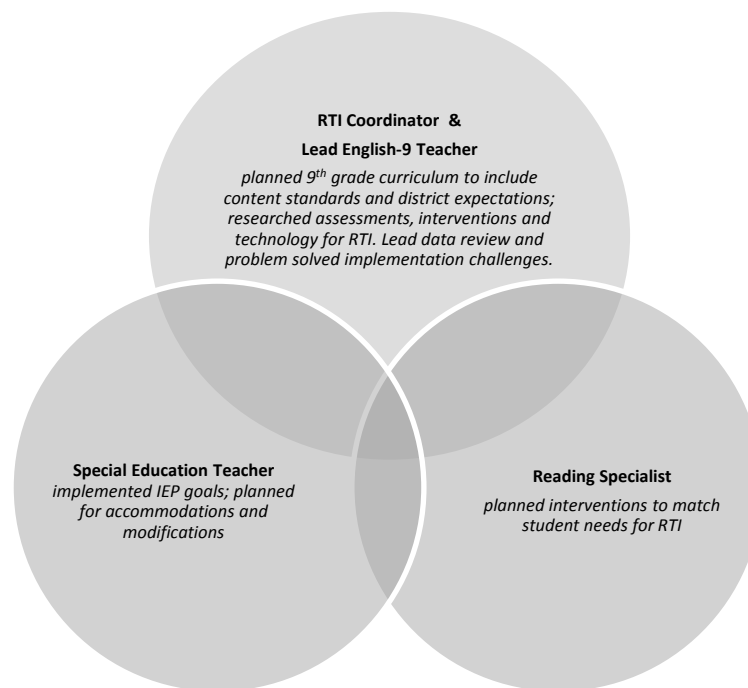
support to struggling readers. A job posting was created to seek qualified candidates (see Attachment 1). The search criteria called for an English Teacher with an RTI focus and a strong background in reading or literacy. The job description indicated that the successful candidate would provide intensive instruction to struggling readers. It further stated that the teacher would support, supplement, and extend classroom teaching, work collaboratively to implement a quality RTI-reading program.

### **Teacher roles**

Barton and Stepanek (2009) stated that one of the seven core elements of an RTI model is strong and informed instructional leaders. McMackin and Johns (2011) further assert that each member of an RTI team must have clearly defined roles and expectations for the team to work toward success. During the first year of implementation, the AHS RTI team determined that three teachers would collaborate for each of the two sections of RTI English-9. The collaborative team included a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and a reading specialist. Each member of the team provided small group instruction and made lesson accommodations or modifications for students with IEPs. Wilcox, Murakami-Ramvalho, and Urick (2013) suggest that there will be a merging of professional roles and responsibilities of general and special education teachers. Role merging occurred at times with the RTI teaching team, but there was a framework with clearly defined roles for each teacher (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. Teacher roles in RTI program. Diagram shows the roles of three teachers, their areas of responsibility, and where their work overlapped.



### RTI coordinator

The RTI coordinator role included researching assessments, interventions, and technology; leading the data review; and addressing problem-solving implementation challenges. The RTI coordinator was also the lead teacher in the two RTI sections of English-9. He made sure the team was meeting the district standards for the English-9 curriculum; he took the lead with curriculum pacing, unit development, lesson planning, and meeting schoolwide expectations for instruction. The RTI coordinator is the English Department Chair with 10 years of experience teaching English-9, including at least one class of collaborative teaching each year at AHS. He also is certified as a special education teacher. He has been on planning and implementation teams for assessment test

intervention for students. He collaborated for one semester of an inclusion class during the 2013-2014 school year that used the Read180 program.

### **Reading Specialist**

The reading specialist's role with the RTI team included planning appropriate reading interventions to match student needs. She reviewed data and led the grouping of students for small group instruction, and facilitated the instruction with Tier 3 students. At times, she led one-on-one instruction when students were having extreme difficulties. Her experiences included teaching adolescents with difficulties in reading for seven years at the middle school level. She is also certified as a special education teacher. She primarily taught seventh and eighth grade students that were identified to receive special education services and targeted reading instruction. Her knowledge and background with reading interventions, meeting the needs of struggling learners, and modifying and accommodating needs according to RTI goals and IEP plans were important for the RTI process.

### **Special Education Teacher**

The role of the special education teacher was to ensure the team followed the individualized education plan goals of identified students. The special education teacher planned with the teaching team to monitor IEP goals, modifications or accommodations necessary for students with disabilities. She took the lead with parent conferences, IEP progress meetings and tri-annual reviews. She looked at testing results and worked with the school psychologist, the IEP team and the RTI team to make recommendations for classification and diagnosing strengths and weaknesses for IEP goals and RTI targets.

The special education teacher was the designated inclusion teacher for the two RTI sections of English-9. She has 13 years of teaching experience. During this time she taught all levels of English, including grades 9-12, honors, college preparatory, inclusion and self-contained special education. This teacher had one year of experience using the Read180 program with a self-contained special education section and one semester with an inclusion section. She was able to lead the team with the Read180 program and flexible grouping within the classroom based on student needs.

### **Expectations for collaboration**

In successful RTI programs, teachers work together as professionals, holding all members accountable for the success of all students (McMackin & Johns, 2011). The RTI teaching team at AHS worked collaboratively, planning together almost daily, but had dedicated RTI PLC time twice weekly. Because the AHS RTI teaching team understood that this would be a learning experience for everyone involved, collaboration time was built into the weekly schedule.

All AHS English, math, science, and social studies teachers attended PLCs twice weekly for 45 minutes. During the other three days, they were assigned duties that support school goals and school management. Teachers in the RTI program had responsibilities associated with RTI implementation. They met twice a week as part of the English-9 PLC to discuss ninth grade curriculum. RTI teachers also met twice a week for RTI planning. On the fifth day of the week, the RTI planning team discussed students, interventions, and the progress in the RTI program. Administrators, the educational

diagnostician, a school psychologist, guidance counselors, and a district ELA specialist occasionally joined the weekly meetings.

### **Expectation for professional development**

Guskey (2000) asserted that plans for school improvement such as RTI require high-quality professional development. As teachers assume new roles and responsibilities, professional development will help them learn what they need for success. Because RTI involves continuous learning, capacity for RTI needs to be developed within the staff, and teachers must be provided time to problem solve, collaborate with colleagues, and participate in structured training (National Center on RTI, 2010).

The professional development at AHS was designed to help all teachers understand the RTI framework as suggested by the National Center on RTI (2010) (see Attachment 2) The AHS RTI team set an expectation for ongoing professional development which included training specific to the RTI teaching team. The team participated in professional development related to collaborative teaching, Read180 implementation, instructional reading strategies, technology, progress monitoring, and data driven decision-making.

### **RTI Structure Related to Staffing**

The RTI team considered several different approaches before settling on current specific structure for year one implementation. When considering structure at the high school level, there are some minimum requirements that have to be satisfied. Students must complete their English 9 classes to satisfy the graduation requirement. Tier 2

students needed at least 90 minutes of reading instruction a week delivered in at least two different sessions. Tier 3 students required at least 120 minutes of reading instruction a week in at least four different sessions.

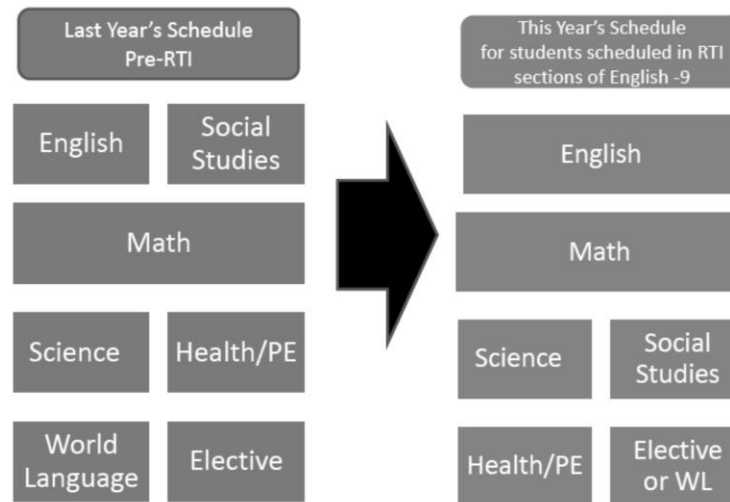
Burns (2008) asserted that small group instruction is the hallmark of Tier 2 instruction. Burns also stated that teacher to student ratios should be between 6-10 students for each instructor. Bender and Crane (2014) agreed, indicating that some states provide a guideline of a 6:1 pupil-to-teacher ratio for RTI in general, with some of the secondary ratios increasing to 10:1 or 12:1. The DDOE (2014) does not specify a teacher to student ratio, only indicating that Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction should be delivered in small groups.

Literature about RTI repeatedly illustrated three major structures for implementation at the secondary level. Tier 2 interventions at the high school level were often implemented in specially designed courses (Burns 2008; Delaware Department of Education, 2014; King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012; Martinez & Young, 2011). Another option was for students to receive support in classes that run concurrent with content classes, which some call “doubling up” (Bender and Crane, 2014). A third structure allows the school to run a skinny period where all students are engaged in an academic enrichment or support class. This option was seen at several site visits during our RTI team planning phase.

As might be expected, there are multiple variations and adaptations of these three models. The structure for Year One implementation at AHS was a specially designed course. The typical ninth grade student takes one semester of English-9. During the first

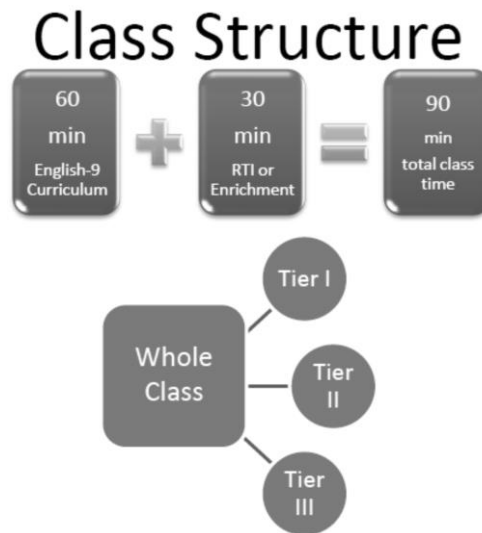
year of implementation, identified Tiers 2 and 3 students took two semesters of English-9 (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Typical Student Schedules Pre- and Post-RTI. Figure shows a typical ninth grade schedule prior to RTI and a typical schedule of a student scheduled for RTI.



In these RTI sections of English-9, students received the typical English-9 curriculum for 60 minutes and 30 minutes for RTI instruction or reading enrichment activities. Students worked in Tier 1, 2, or 3 groups depending on progress monitoring (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. RTI Classroom Time Allotment and Structure. Figure shows class time is allocated for the English 9 curriculum, RTI timeframe and how the class breaks into groups during the RTI/Enrichment time



In this structure, two teachers were required for 60 minutes of English-9 curriculum. These RTI sections were also inclusion sections as determined by students with IEP accommodations. The AHS inclusion model uses two teachers to meet the needs of the class. During the 30 minutes where RTI was addressed, a third teacher was present to help maintain the small group ratios expected for RTI instruction.

The RTI structure during Year One allowed AHS to meet the requirements for student time as outlined by the DDOE and maintain teacher to student ratios as outlined by ASD. The team considered four additional structures for Year Two of RTI at AHS (see Attachment 3). Each proposed schedule considered the existing block schedule at AHS and the available staff. The team reviewed possible structures that did not require

students to enroll in a specific section of English-9 for the entire school year and options that may include more flexibility for moving students in and out of tiers.

After considering these options, the team decided to continue with the same structure as Year One for Year Two because the team did not want to change too many variables for Year Two. The teaching team was able to successfully meet the time requirements within the current structure and have flexibility to try different interventions. The teaching team also wanted to improve other RTI practices within the current structure, so second year changes focused on improving progress monitoring tools and data analysis.

### **Looking Ahead**

The overarching goal for Year One of RTI was to establish an infrastructure that could be replicated or adapted to other levels and content areas at AHS. The RTI team understood additional staffing provided in Year One were not guaranteed for Year Two. Teachers had three teaching units that were primarily focused on ninth grade reading RTI, and this may not be the case beyond the 2014-2015 school year. As a result, teachers tried to implement systems, such as station teaching, that could be replicated given the staffing constraints moving forward.



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## Attachment 1

### Job Description

Position:	English Teacher w/ RTI Focus– Strong Reading/Literacy Background
Location:	Appoquinimink High School
Posting Start Date:	07/07/2014
Posting End Date:	Until filled
Overview:	<p>This English Teacher will provide intensive instruction to struggling readers. Such instruction may be provided either within or outside the students' classroom. This teacher supports, supplements and extends classroom teaching, and works collaboratively to implement a quality RTI-Reading program.</p> <p>The Teacher is to design, implement, and assess lessons which will increase student achievement. The Teacher must also maintain a positive classroom environment. The Teacher shall enforce the State rules and regulations and district policies to ensure the operation of the educational program.</p> <p>The Teacher is to design, implement, and assess lessons which meet the student's RTI/IEP requirements and will increase student achievement. The Teacher shall enforce the State rules and regulations and district policies to ensure the operation of the educational program.</p> <p>The Teacher will assist with meeting the reading needs of all students.</p> <p><b>Responsibilities and Duties:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When appropriate, provides the appropriate educational opportunities and instruction for each student, according to his/her IEP/504 plans.</li> <li>• Screens students to establish proper RTI placement.</li> <li>• Assists administration and classroom teacher in selection of students needing tier 2 and tier 3 instruction.</li> <li>• Provides diagnostic, prescriptive and evaluative services for students receiving RTI services.</li> <li>• Provides individual and small group instruction for identified students.</li> <li>• Assists with the administration of reading tests.</li> <li>• Acts as a resource teacher in reading to regular classroom teachers.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares in advance appropriate lesson plans, which match district curriculum.</li> <li>• Keeps accurate records, tests, reports, etc. as required by Delaware Statutes and policies, Federal Regulations, School Board Policy and IEP/504/RTI requirements to document growth.</li> <li>• Establishes and maintains good rapport and communication with students, school personnel and parents.</li> <li>• Works with fellow teachers in planning instruction, as necessary.</li> <li>• Establishes and maintains a classroom atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Plans and uses classroom time effectively.</li> <li>• Implements School Board and school based policies and procedures in order to uphold school regulations.</li> <li>• Works closely with regular education teachers, student services staff and outside resources to assist students with special needs.</li> <li>• Integrates technology in instruction.</li> <li>• Works continuously toward self-improvement through the active pursuit of professional development activities.</li> <li>• Participates in district and school level committees designed to foster continuing improvement and growth.</li> <li>• Communicates curriculum and student related information effectively in oral and written form.</li> <li>• Attends all eligibility and IEP/504 meetings as designated.</li> <li>• Confers with building administration on the needs of the RTI program</li> </ul> <p>Performs other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the building administration</p>
Qualification:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility for State of Delaware Certification as a Special Education Teacher and/or Reading Specialist preferred.</li> <li>• Highly Qualified in English</li> <li>• Knowledge of Delaware State Content Standards, Assessment &amp; Accountability.</li> <li>• Excellent communication, organizational, and computer skills.</li> <li>• Knowledge of best practices in reading.</li> <li>• Knowledge of best practices in special education.</li> <li>• Thorough knowledge of IDEA, IEP implementation and RTI reading interventions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal background check, Tuberculin testing, and health verification.</li> </ul>
Required Certificate(s): (One or more are required to qualify for this position.)	Continuing License Non-Delaware Permanent/Standard Certificate Initial License Pending License Emergency License Advanced License ARTC Approved Candidate - Attach letter
Required Endorsement(s): (One or more are required to qualify for this position.)	Exceptional Children (LD, SED, MH K-12) Exceptional Children (LD, SED, MH 7-12) Teacher of Secondary English

## Attachment 2

AHS RTI Professional Development Plan 2014-2015				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
July 2014	Determine AHS structure	Process Development	RTI Team	Review RTI models to determine structure for RTI at AHS
July 2014	AHS RTI Teaching team assembled	Process Development	RTI Team	Determine teachers and roles for English-9 sections of RTI
August 2014	Delaware RTI Law and District expectations	Training	RTI Team	Secondary Curriculum director and ELA specialist wanted to review the law, basic requirements for RTI and the proposed structure for high school RTI.
August 2014	Determine students for RTI	Process Development	RTI Team	Review students from ASD middle schools; including grades in English, state reading assessment scores, and RTI recommendations
August 2014	Scholastics Reading Inventory Assessment (SRI)	Training	RTI Team	Review SRI testing administration and interpreting score reports
August 2014	White Paper: RTI @ AHS	Training	Staff	Educate staff regarding RTI and
August 2014	RTI Overview	Training	Staff RTI Team	Present RTI Plan for the year, review white paper, discuss literacy across content areas
August 2014	Instructional Focus	Training	Staff	Review of AHS Instructional Focus for 2014-2015 school year, including RTI
Weekly	Program Review	Process Development	RTI Team	Review progress, concerns, students, interventions, supports and needs
Bi-weekly	Progress Monitoring	Process development	RTI Team	Review student data and discuss student progress
Monthly	Update on RTI	Training	Staff	Monthly staff update about the RTI process
Quarterly – 9 week cycles	Progress Monitoring	Process development	RTI Team	Review student progress and make recommendations for movement between Tiers.
September 11, 2014	Read 180 Initial Training Day	Training	RTI Team	Teachers new to Appo will participate in Day 1 of Read 180 Training. They will key features of the program and how to navigate the system.

September 16,17, 2014	AHS Building Admin Coaching Day	Observation/Assessment	RTI Team	Building Admin will visit RTI classrooms and meet with teachers to provide feedback and support
	Progress Monitoring/Data Entry	Process Development	RTI Team	Review how to use iTracker to enter student progress data with both high schools
October 2014	Visit Middle School Program	Observation/Assessment Process Development	RTI Team	Observe middle school RTI program in progress and observe their cycle one data review meetings.
October	High School Teams Meeting	Process Development	RTI Team	Review progress monitoring tools, status update of both schools, discuss concerns and needs.
October 28, 2014	Collaborative Teaching Training Day 1	Training Observation/Assessment	Six inclusion teaching teams, including RTI teachers	Understand the power of collaborative teaching as one delivery system within a framework of inclusive education, Evaluate the current status of collaborative teaching component design, and Gain tools and insights to improve the quality and impact of collaborative teaching.
November 2014	Schoology Introduction	Training	RTI Team	RTI teachers introduced to Schoology platform as a forum to share CBM and for progress monitoring for students
December 2, 2014	Collaborative Teaching Day 2	Training	Six inclusion teaching teams, including RTI teachers	Reflection on six teaching models and planning time for collaborative pairs.
December 2014	High School Cross School Visits	Observation/Assessment Process Development	RTI Team	RTI teachers and admin visit program at the other high school and a debriefing to following December 9 visit.
January	Instructional Support Team Process	Training	Staff	Re-introduce the IST process to staff and how RTI will support the process
January 30, 2015	Collaborative Teaching Day 3	Training	Six inclusion teaching teams, including RTI teachers	Understand the power of collaborative teaching as one delivery system within a framework of inclusive education, Evaluate the current status of collaborative teaching practices using a 6-component design, focus on planning for interventions within the unit and within lessons.

### Attachment 3

#### Year Two Considerations

Option	RTI Status	Schedule	Staffing	Benefits and Limitations
Typical 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Schedule	No Formal RTI	90 minutes daily for one semester of ELA	One ELA Teacher Per section Two ELA Teachers Per Section for Inclusion	<b>Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪No additional staffing needed</li> <li>▪No additional resources needed</li> </ul> <b>Limitations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Does not meet required time for Tier 2 and 3 instruction</li> <li>▪Remediation occurring outside of school day</li> </ul>
Year 1 RTI Implementation	RTI instruction provided within a modified class	90 minutes daily for two semesters ELA with RTI  60 minutes daily for ELA curriculum instruction  30 minutes daily of RTI instruction or reading enrichment/extension	Two ELA Teachers during 60 minutes of ELA instruction  Three ELA teachers during 30 minutes of RTI/Extension period.	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Meets required time for Tier 2 and 3 instruction</li> <li>▪Students receiving support within their ELA course</li> <li>▪Class time similar to 9<sup>th</sup> grade math so students do not feel different about being scheduled in the course</li> </ul> <b>Limitations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Students in a year-long section of English-9</li> <li>▪Students loose elective credit opportunity.</li> </ul>
RTI Option 2	RTI Instruction provided daily	Modified block.  80 minutes daily for ELA  35 minutes daily of RTI instruction for identified students 35 minutes daily for all other students to receive enrichment or test prep instruction	All Teachers in the school are involved  ELA Teachers are assigned to RTI instruction	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Not constrained to yearlong schedule</li> <li>▪able to flex all students in and out of RTI</li> <li>▪Meets required time for Tier 2 and 3 instruction</li> <li>▪Able to address all grade levels</li> </ul> <b>Limitations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Need to schedule 1600 students for RTI period</li> <li>▪Need to schedule all teachers</li> <li>▪Professional development for all teachers</li> <li>▪Need curriculum for non-RTI students</li> <li>▪Resources needed for all grade levels immediately</li> </ul>



Option	RTI Status	Schedule	Staffing	Benefits and Limitations
RTI Option 3	RTI Support Class or Doubling Period	90 minutes daily for one semester of ELA  90 minutes daily for support to include RTI and other academic support for courses	ELA Teachers are assigned to support classes during duty	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Not constrained to yearlong schedule</li> <li>▪ Meets required time for Tier 2 and 3 instruction</li> <li>▪Able to address all grade levels</li> <li>▪Opportunity to support several classes</li> </ul> <b>Limitations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Supporting multiple levels within one class</li> <li>▪Only one staff to support multiple subjects for multiple students</li> <li>▪Multiple levels within one support class</li> <li>▪RTI foundations not established</li> <li>▪Resources limited</li> </ul>
RTI Option 4	RTI Support Class with elective credit option	90 minutes daily for one semester of ELA  90 minutes daily for support to include RTI and other academic support for courses  As students meet RTI goals each quarter, they have the option of earning an elective credit through an online course.	ELA and/or other teachers are assigned to support classes during duty	<b>Benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Not constrained to yearlong schedule</li> <li>▪ Meets required time for Tier 2 and 3 instruction</li> <li>▪Opportunity to support several classes</li> <li>▪Opportunity to recoup credits to earn elective credits</li> <li>▪Motivation for students wanting to earn additional credit</li> </ul> <b>Limitations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Supporting multiple levels within one class</li> <li>▪Only one staff to support this class</li> <li>▪RTI foundations not established</li> <li>▪Resources</li> </ul>

## **Appendix E**

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR RTI**

This artifact highlights the professional development (PD) provided to teachers for the Response to Intervention (RTI) process at Appoquinimink High School (AHS). During the 2014-2015 school year, the AHS RTI team established a formal RTI process for ninth grade reading. The goal was to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for ninth grade students that could be replicated and adapted for students in 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics. PD was instrumental as administrators and teachers established the RTI process. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) (2014) suggests that PD should take into account several factors such as instructional practices and data driven decision making. The AHS RTI team considered its student population, teaching staff, and existing professional support plan for teachers and determined a PD plan to support RTI implementation. The plan focused on keeping the general staff informed of the process and instructional planning for teachers implementing the process.

#### **Teachers**

The staff of AHS during the 2014-2015 school year included 99 teachers, one librarian, and 10 support staff. The racial makeup of the staff is 87% white and 11% African American. The AHS staff was relatively young: one quarter of the staff had four or fewer years of experience, and 38% of the staff had between five and nine years of experience. Although the staff was young, more than 50% of the teaching staff had a

master's degree and above. Hiring highly-qualified teachers is a priority in the ASD and at AHS.

### **Professional Support System for Teachers**

The AHS PD program aligns to the district's professional development plans and goals. At the start of the 2014-2015 school year, ASD was in its fourth year of Learning Focused Strategy (LFS) implementation. The district invested in LFS professional development to support a system-wide change in instruction. Follow-up and monitoring is provided by individuals from the district's curriculum office and school administrators. There are monthly walkthrough teams and ongoing support for implementation.

The district worked to increase student engagement and higher order thinking. AHS provided teachers with Kagan Structures PD. Kagan Structures are simple, effective instructional strategies such as Timed-Pair-Shared and Quiz-Quiz-Trade that engage every student in the lesson and provide teachers with the necessary tools to check for understanding. This school-based PD supports the district's LFS vision that teachers check for understanding and summarize throughout each lesson. AHS teachers shared in their evaluations of Kagan Structures PD that the training was valuable because they could immediately apply what they learned to their lesson plans. Teachers indicated that Kagan Structures were easy to implement and they experienced full participation and engagement from every student.

During the 2014-2015 school year, AHS was shifting from Bloom's Taxonomy to using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to describe higher order thinking activities. Considering higher order thinking through the lens of DOK is aligned with Common

Core State Standards. AHS infused ongoing DOK learning for teachers for the 2014-2015 PD plan with the support of district content specialists.

### **Planning PD for RTI**

Guskey (2000) states that “at the core of each and every successful educational improvement effort is a thoughtfully conceived, well-designed, and well supported professional development component” (p. 32). All members of the district-based and school-based RTI teams agreed that a PD plan was integral for the success of the RTI process. Feuerbor et al. (2011) asserted that school administrators need to plan PD that informs staff of the conceptual framework of RTI and the specifics of the RTI process in their schools. Guskey (2000) and Feuerbor, Sarin, and Tyre (2011) both agree that teachers’ knowledge and skills increase through their participation in ongoing high quality professional development. The AHS RTI team created a PD plan that would include common time between the two high school staffs as well as PD specific to AHS.

Professional development at AHS included a two-fold plan: (a) educating the general teaching staff of the RTI process and its progress at AHS. Whole-group trainings for the entire staff occurred during monthly faculty meetings with follow-up during department meetings, and (b) equipping the teachers in the RTI program with the tools to teach, assess, monitor, and evaluate students in the program.

### **Awareness of RTI for General Staff**

During the 2014-2015 school year, RTI was introduced as a school-wide instructional focus. While most of the work happened within the RTI sections of English-9, it was important to educate the entire staff. A white paper titled “RTI @ AHS”

included a description of RTI and what it would look like at AHS during the 2014-2015 school-year was shared with staff. Administration met with teachers in PLCs for small group discussions on the information shared in the white paper about the RTI process. Staff was informed that some PLC topics and faculty meeting trainings would be connected to RTI throughout the year. Both the paper and the initial PD included discussion of quality Tier 1 instruction across all content areas. This meant instruction in reading, literacy strategies across content areas, and assessing progress of students (King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012). The AHS RTI team informed the general staff that they could support RTI efforts by using consistent and pervasive strategies of LFS and the school based literacy committee.

The school-based literacy committee provided staff with multiple approaches to support reading comprehension and writing. Strategies for providing background knowledge and introducing vocabulary were reviewed and resources were provided for all staff during PLCs and available online through the school's shared drive and video segments. The literacy committee trained teachers to use a consistent framework for writing at AHS. Teachers had follow-up sessions in PLCs as well as online support for lesson ideas and implementation. Teachers also delivered common lessons on writing through advisory using a prompt from the summer reading text.

### **PD for RTI Teachers**

Teachers on the RTI team participated in ongoing professional development through department meetings, PLCs, and other times designated by the school administration. The focus of PD for teachers in the RTI program was multifaceted (see

Table 3) including: trainings and observation/feedback as the team worked to learn about and develop the RTI process (Guskey, 2000). The National Center on Response to Intervention (2010) indicates that teachers must be provided with time to problem solve, collaborate with colleagues, and participate in structured training. Thus, an intentional PD plan is necessary for teachers to learn and succeed in their new roles (Guskey, 2000; Feuerbor et al., 2011).

### **Trainings**

RTI teachers were involved in trainings throughout the year related to various components of implementation. Initial trainings included information regarding Delaware law and ASD expectations for RTI. The team met with the district secondary curriculum director and ELA specialist during the summer of 2014. RTI teachers scheduled trainings on assessment composition, administration, and interpreting student data.

Table 3

<b>AHS RTI Professional Development Plan 2014-2015</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
July 2014	Determine AHS structure	Process Development	IP	RTI Team	Review RTI models to determine structure for RTI at AHS
July 2014	AHS RTI Teaching team assembled	Process Development	IP	RTI Team	Determine teachers and roles for English-9 sections of RTI
August 2014	Delaware RTI Law and District expectations	Training	IP, DDD	RTI Team	Secondary Curriculum director and ELA specialist wanted to review the law, basic requirements for RTI and the proposed structure for high school RTI.
August 2014	Determine students for RTI	Process Development	DDD	RTI Team	Review students from ASD middle schools; including grades in English, state reading assessment scores, and RTI recommendations

August 2014	Scholastics Reading Inventory Assessment (SRI)	Training	DDD	RTI Team	Review SRI testing administration and interpreting score reports
August 2014	White Paper: RTI @ AHS	Training	IP	Staff	Educate staff regarding RTI and
August 2014	RTI Overview	Training	IP	Staff RTI Team	Present RTI Plan for the year, review white paper, discuss literacy across content areas
August 2014	Instructional Focus	Training	IP	Staff	Review of AHS Instructional Focus for 2014-2015 school year, including RTI
Weekly	Professional Learning Community	Process Development	DDD, IP	ELA Teachers	Review ELA curriculum, common assessments, instructional strategies
Weekly	Program Review	Process Development	DDD, IP	RTI Team	Review progress, concerns, students, interventions, supports and needs
Bi-weekly	Progress Monitoring	Process development	DDD	RTI Team	Review student data and discuss student progress
Monthly	Update on RTI	Training	IP	Staff	Monthly staff update about the RTI process
Quarterly – 9 week cycles	Progress Monitoring	Process development	DDD	RTI Team	Review student progress and make recommendations for movement between Tiers.
September 11, 2014	Read 180 Initial Training Day	Training	IP, DDD	RTI Team	Teachers new to Appo will participate in Day 1 of Read 180 Training. They will key features o the program and how to navigate the system.
September 16,17, 2014	AHS Building Admin Coaching Day	Observation/A sssessment	IP	RTI Team	Building Admin will visit RTI classrooms and meet with teachers to provide feedback and support
	Progress Monitoring/Data Entry	Process Development	DDD	RTI Team	Review how to use iTracker to enter student progress data with both high schools
October 2014	Visit Middle School Program	Observation/ Assessment Process Development	IP	RTI Team	Observe middle school RTI program in progress and observe their cycle one data review meetings.
October 2014	Read 180 Coaching Day	Observation/A sssessment/Trai ning	IP, DDD	RTI Team	Scholastic Coaches will observeRTI classrooms and meet with teachers to provide feedback and support with classroom

					instruction, software and reports
October 2014	High School Teams Meeting	Process Development	IP	RTI Team	Review progress monitoring tools, status update of both schools, discuss concerns and needs.
October 28, 2014	Collaborative Teaching Training – Day 1	Training Observation/ Assessment	IP	Six inclusion teaching teams, including RTI teachers	Understand power of collaborative teaching as one delivery system within a framework of inclusive education, Evaluate the current status of collaborative teaching practices using a 6-component design, and Gain tools and insights to improve quality and impact of collaborative teaching.
November 2014	Schoology Introduction	Training	IP, DDD	RTI Team	RTI teachers introduced to Schoology platform as a forum to share CBM and for progress monitoring for students
December 2, 2014	Collaborative Teaching Day 2	Training	IP	Six inclusion teaching teams, including RTI teachers	Reflection on six teaching models and planning time for collaborative pairs.
December 2014	High School Cross School Visits	Observation/ Assessment Process Development	IP	RTI Team	RTI teachers and admin visit program at the other high school and a debriefing to following December 9 visit.
January 2015	Instructional Support Team Process	Training	IP	Staff	Re-introduce the IST process to staff and how RTI will support the process
January 30, 2015	Collaborative Teaching Day 3	Training	IP	Six inclusion teaching teams, including RTI teachers	Understand the power of collaborative teaching as one delivery system within a framework of inclusive education, Evaluate the current status of collaborative teaching practices using a 6-component design, focus on planning for interventions within the unit and within lessons.
*IP – Instructional Planning , **DDD – Data Driven Decision Making					



School administration and Read180 trainers provided instruction on administering and analyzing the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessment. Read180 trainers also provided training for key components of the Read180 program and discussed implications for RTI.

The training sessions aimed to review research and data to help make decisions about the year one implementation process. The RTI team met weekly during the fall semester and held bi-weekly meetings during the spring semester to discuss successes and challenges and make adjustments to the process. A bi-weekly review of student data drove the decision-making process about instruction and student placements in Tier 1, 2, or 3. The team used a student data system as part of the decision-making process, and teachers discussed the efficacy of interventions based on student data.

Training for data driven decision-making included universal and diagnostic assessment, collection and interpretation of data, development of skills in identifying instructional needs, linking appropriate interventions to individual instructional needs, and specific Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports (DDOE, 2014). The AHS team participated in training for universal screening and diagnostic assessments, NWEA MAP, SRI, and Read180 instructional software. The ASD research specialist also assisted the team by providing training to interpret NWEA MAP scores and target goals for students. Reports from NWEA identified target instructional areas for individuals and for small groups for reading instruction. The team used these reports to help determine groupings for students and target areas of instruction for RTI/enrichment time.

The team also participated in training from Scholastic Inc. to understand how to interpret reports from the SRI assessment and the instructional software. The Read180 software allows teachers to group students according to their weekly or bi-weekly progress, or by their SRI reports. Reports showing student progress for the instructional software became another data point for determining small group instruction.

Other trainings included integrating technology into the RTI process in several different ways. The team used computer-based screening and diagnostic tools, and also previewed computer-based progress monitoring assessments on the Schoology platform. One section of the English-9 RTI class used Read180 instructional software. Read180 trainers provided necessary support for the associated software. AHS administrators and teachers on the RTI team were familiar with the school-wide screening tool, and Scholastic provided further support for Read180 instructional software used for progress monitoring tools and the SRI used as a diagnostic tool.

The RTI team used Scholastic coaches to provide training and support in using the various instructional reports once the school year began. The initial training used hypothetical students and data. During follow up training, the teachers were able to ask questions with their true classes as a frame of reference. Teachers reported the coaching yielded better student groupings for instruction based on several reports they could generate from weekly data.

The Stetson Collaborated Teaching Consultants provided further training for instructional models. The consultants presented six co-teaching/support facilitation approaches for inclusion classrooms, the phases of co-teaching, and planning

considerations. Through collaboration with the district director of special education and support team, the RTI team decided to focus on the Station Teaching and Team Teaching forms because they were similar to the foundation of the Read180 instructional model.

### **Observation/Feedback**

Building administrators, the district ELA specialist, Read180 coaches, Stetson Collaborative Teaching Consultants and the MHS RTI team all played a role in the cycle of support for the AHS RTI teachers. Each observer had a specific area of focus when they visited the RTI classrooms (see Table 4). The visits provided different perspectives of the teaching and learning that occurred within each section of English-9 RTI.

Feedback typically occurred in reflection meetings on the same day or within a day of the classroom visit. AHS administrators worked with the RTI teachers to develop a cycle of observation, feedback and reflection.

Table 4

#### *Structure for RTI Classroom Visits*

<b>Observer</b>	<b>Major Focus</b>	<b>Frequency of Visits</b>
AHS Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of English-9 curriculum</li> <li>• Tier 1 strategies</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	Weekly
District ELA Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content knowledge</li> <li>• Common Core Standards for ELA</li> <li>• Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions</li> <li>• Tier 2 and Tier 3 progress monitoring</li> </ul>	Monthly
Read 180 Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fidelity of Read 180 implementation</li> <li>• RTI resources with the Read 180 program</li> </ul>	Two visits per year
Stetson Collaborative Teaching Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative teaching models</li> <li>• Planning interventions within units and lessons</li> </ul>	Three visits per year
Middletown High School RTI Teaching Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional strategies in action</li> <li>• Student engagement and responsiveness</li> </ul>	Four visits between schools

It was common practice for AHS Administrators and the district ELA specialist to visit classrooms on a periodic basis. The schedule created for year one of RTI included weekly visits from an administrator and at least a once a month visit from the district ELA specialist. The AHS administrator met the teaching team weekly to discuss feedback and the specialist joined the meeting once a month. Discussions included the English-9 curriculum, student progress, resources for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. As a result of these meetings, teachers were able to set weekly goals, problem solve around instruction and learning, review data, and adjust or request resources.

Scholastic coaches observed RTI classrooms and met with teachers to provide feedback and support with classroom instruction, software and reports. The observation and feedback occurred at the end of the first and third marking periods. Scholastic coaches were able to help teachers adjust teaching routines, student groupings and modify some of the tired supports. The coach was able to provide teachers with variations to the Read180 model presented at the initial training that did not compromise the fidelity of the program.

Similarly, contracted assistance Stetson Services, observed teachers prior to training and provided follow up classroom observation and feedback sessions three times during school year. The classroom visits focused on collaborative teaching models in action to provide teachers with immediate suggestions on how to strengthen practices. This case of contracted services gave teachers assistance with planning for differentiated

support and then observed the plans in action, and provide immediate recommendations for implementation.

Finally, there was opportunity for teachers to observe and be observed by teachers from the second high school in the district. The goal was to see each other implement instructional strategies, observe student engagement and responsiveness and provide/gain ideas, suggestions, and recommendations for improving practices at each site.

Delaware Department of Education (2014) outlined successful evaluation of students in a RTI model dictates districts to consider data from assessments related to universal screening and progress monitoring. The use of several data points by the AHS team, determined the placement and movement between tiers. The RTI team tracked student progress or response to interventions during each grading period. The AHS RTI team established a regular cycle of progress monitoring for students in the English-9 RTI sections. Progress monitoring assessments included: Scholastic Reading Inventory results, NWEA MAP subscores, Instructional Software, Curriculum Based Measures and marking period grades. The SRI, NWEA Map, Instructional Software, CBMs, and grades were primary in screening and monitoring student performance during each progress monitoring cycle. The multiple data points allowed the team to determine how to group students for differentiated instruction and apply interventions. At the end of each cycle, groups were re-evaluated based on student progress during the nine-week cycle.

### **Summary**

As the RTI team established a framework at AHS, professional development was critical. The teachers on the team benefited from the professional learning for

instructional planning, the integration of technology, and the data based decision-making throughout the year. School administrators and the district ELA specialist provided feedback on the teacher instruction with the use of walkthrough tools. The entire RTI team discussed progress monitoring during monthly meetings to reflect on the successes, the challenges, and the areas for growth. The team also discussed other training or support teachers might need for ongoing implementation.

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## **Appendix F**

### **WHITE PAPER**

# **RTI at AHS**

Many of you have heard mention of Response to Intervention or RTI during faculty meetings, department meetings or in professional conversations over the last school year. RTI will be implemented at AHS this coming year and there are several questions to be answered: What does it mean for AHS? How will it impact teachers and students? The following will provide you with a general overview of how AHS will meet this exciting new challenge!

### **What is RTI?**

Appoquinimink High School will borrow the definition of RTI used by the Delaware Department of Education:

RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to the student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data. (NASDE, 2006)

Additionally, successful RTI programs involve research-based interventions in a multi-tiered approach. "Teachers provided high quality instruction starting in the general curriculum (Tier 1) and continue with more intensive interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3). Tier 2 and Tier 3 often differ based on time spent on the intervention (Martinez & Young, 2011).

Martinez and Young (2011) also assert there are many approaches to RTI but they all involve a process that: 1) define a student's problem; 2) plan an intervention for the students; 3) implement the intervention, and 4) evaluation the student's progress. Delaware outlined the core principals of RTI to include:

- use of effective instructional practices to teach all children,
- use of research based core instruction with fidelity,
- use of assessment data to inform instruction,
- use of problem solving methods to inform decisions in a multi-tier model,

- use of research based interventions to match student needs with continuous progress monitoring, using interventions early and
- use of data as part of the evaluation process.

## **Why RTI?**

Matt Burrows, superintendent of ASD schools, has charged high school administrators with developing a systematic approach for supporting struggling learners through implementing a process for RTI at the high school level. State regulations surrounding RTI are directly related to the urgency of the superintendent's charge. The DE Admin Code outlines an RTI process for all districts to follow and in order to be in compliance, ASD must establish these procedures at both high schools this year.

Appoquinimink High School has always looked for ways to support struggling learners. Teachers offer support within the classroom and after school. We offer extended time programs after school, during lunch and we have a peer-tutoring program. A group of English and math teachers were assigned to work with students on academic interventions during third and fourth period over the past three years. While we have done all of these things in the past with varying degrees of success, we have not had a formal procedure that was aligned to student needs. We have not had diagnostic tools nor have we always used researched based interventions. During the 2014-2015 school year we will establish a formal response to intervention process at Appoquinimink High School for ninth grade reading. We will build a high school infrastructure that can be replicated or adapted to other grade levels and content areas.

## **RTI Foundation at AHS**

"High quality secondary school RTI programs support all students" (McMackin & Johns, 2011). Appoquinimink High School has stressed a high quality curriculum for all students by implementing CCSS and using best practices through researched based frameworks such as Learning Focused Strategies, and using Kagan Structures and other strategies outlined by the AHS Literacy Alliance and learned in professional development and methods courses.

Quality Tier 1 instruction across all content areas is a key component to a good RTI model. This means instruction in reading, literacy strategies across content areas and assessing progress of students (King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012). All of our efforts and specifically the efforts of the AHS Literacy Alliance will contribute to a good RTI program at AHS. The AHS Literacy Alliance began planning during the summer of 2013. The team of teachers wanted to support the school wide

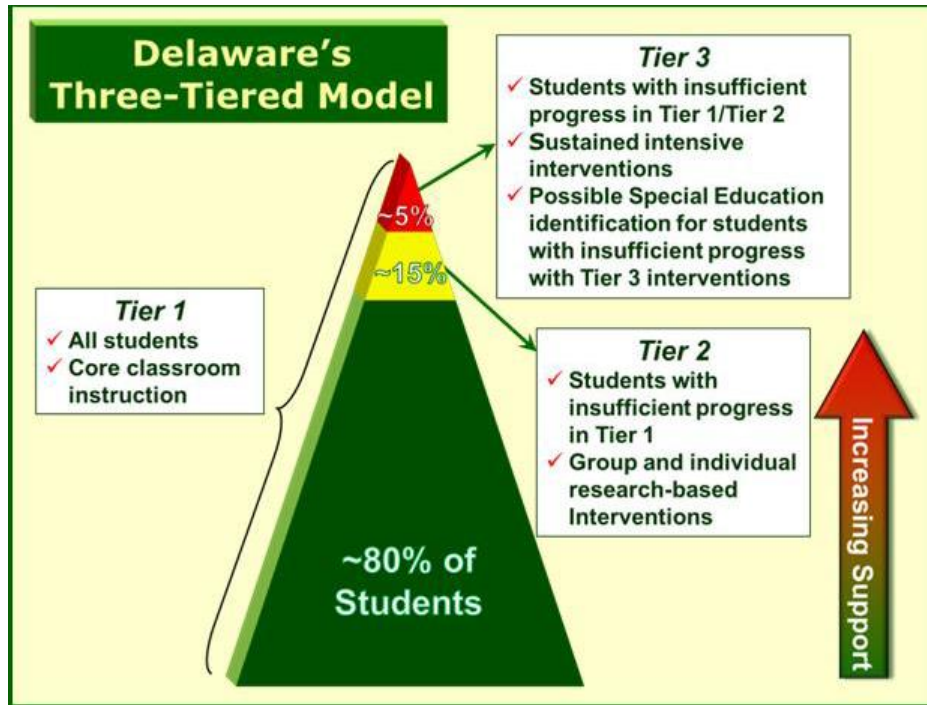
implementation of CCSS. The Mission of the AHS Literacy Alliance is to develop a common understanding of literacy for AHS staff and students by: promoting rigorous literacy expectations across all content areas, equipping students to comprehend, synthesize, and create meaning in all content areas, and advocating for student engagement with a variety of texts for multiple purposes. The AHS Literacy Alliance work is in agreement with the findings of King et al. (2012) in that core content teachers need to provide instruction in vocabulary and comprehension that is direct, systematic and explicit.

We have been a Learning Focused (LFS) school for four years. LFS is a model that provides a planning framework that focuses on student learning. The framework integrates standards, researched based strategies and exemplary practices (LFS, 2013). Throughout lessons teachers hold high expectations that all students are engaged at a high level knowledge and teachers are checking for student understanding. LFS has created a model that accelerates learning for all students, integrating previewing and scaffolding for students that struggle. These practices are aligned with the message from Delaware Department Education that states. RTI emphasizes the importance of differentiating the curriculum so student needs are addressed during the core curriculum.”

## Year One of RTI

This year our focus will begin with 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading. There will be two sections of year-long 9<sup>th</sup> grade English. The current plan is to deliver daily instruction for approximately 60 of the 90 minutes. The last 30 minutes of class will be dedicated to differentiated instruction. Students will be grouped according to Tier 1, 2, and 3. Students will receive instruction in those groups based on their needs.

- **RTI Students:** We used DCAS, grades and recommendations from the middle school RTI programs to identify students for our program at AHS.
- **Assessment:** A teacher will be dedicated to reviewing assessment data on a continuous basis and making recommendations for movement among tiers at the end of each 9-week cycle. The goal is to move all students to Tier 1 instruction.
- **Professional Development:** Professional development will be provided for teachers in the RTI program. This will include professional development for researched based interventions, interpreting data and making data based decisions.
- **Student Improvement:** Throughout our school year both teachers and students participating in the RTI process at AHS will participate in evaluations of the program as we work to make it an effective process.



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## **Appendix G**

### **ASSESSMENTS AND DATA USED FOR RTI SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING**

Appoquinimink High School (AHS) is one of two high schools in the Appoquinimink School District (ASD). The ASD superintendent charged high school administrators with developing and implementing a Response to Intervention (RTI) process during the 2014-2015 school year. District and high school administrators wanted a systematic approach for intervention to address the needs of struggling learners at the high school level. The AHS RTI team worked to establish a formal RTI process for ninth grade reading during the 2014-2015 school year. The goal was to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for ninth grade students that could be replicated and adapted for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics.

Effective evaluation of students under the RTI model requires the district to consider data from assessments related to universal screening and progress monitoring (DDOE, 2014). The AHS RTI team used a series of data points to determine placement and movement between tiers. This artifact will focus on the data and assessments the AHS RTI team used for RTI universal screening and progress monitoring.

*RTI Universal screening* is the process of identifying students who have reading difficulties and could benefit from evidenced based interventions. Universal Screening may use data from national, state or district assessments, end of course exams, common unit assessments, grade level bench marking, or report card grades to name a few. Universal screening typically occurs three times each school year to monitor the entire student population.

*Progress monitoring* is specific to students receiving RTI interventions. Data collected allows educators to review student response to interventions, differentiate instruction for small groups, and determine if RTI students are making progress toward their RTI goals. RTI progress monitoring is frequent and should use scientifically based assessments to measure student academic performance. Data is formally reviewed every nine weeks to coincide with the marking the student grading periods.

The AHS RTI team considered two sets of data points or assessments for the decision making process. There was a set of data used for universal screening and a set of data used for progress monitoring (see Table 5). Two assessments produce data that can be used for universal screening and sub-scores that may be used for progress monitoring.

Table 5

Assessments and Data Points for RTI Decision Making Process	
<b>Universal Screening</b>	<b>Progress Monitoring</b>
*2014 DCAS Reading Score	Scholastic Reading Inventory
**English-8 Final Grade	NWEA MAP Reading Score
NWEA MAP Reading Score	Instructional Software
	Curriculum Based Measures
	English-9 Marking Period Grade
*DCAS was replaced by NWEA MAP as a universal screener in ASD for the 2014 to the 2015 school year	
**English-8 Final grade was only used as an initial screener.	

### **Universal Screening - DCAS and Final Grades**

The 2014 Delaware Comprehensive Testing System (DCAS) and English-8 grades were used to identify students that struggle with reading. The reading DCAS was part of the state standardized assessment series that measured progress in prioritized content standards (DDOE, July, 2014). Reported scores ranged from 200 to 1300 in four performance levels (see Table 6). This all multiple-choice adaptive assessment had an

online platform. The AHS RTI used a z-score analysis of DCAS plus final grades as part of a universal screening process for incoming ninth grade students.

Table 6

DCAS Reading Performance Standards – Cut Scores

Grade	Well Below standard	Below standard	Meets standard	Advanced
8	763 or less	764-799	800-843	844 or more

**Universal Screening - Measures of Academic Progress**

The ASD decided to use the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to gain instructional information and measure student progress in the areas of Reading and Mathematics for all students in grades two through ten during the 2014-2015 school year. DDOE replaced DCAS with Smarter Balanced assessment during the 2014-2015 school year. Data from Smarter Balanced assessment would not be available for decision making at the end of the school year. NWEA MAP data provided schools with data similar to what a school typically gains from the DCAS assessment.

**Universal Screening - Assessments for Progress Monitoring**

The RTI team monitored student progress or response to intervention during each marking period. The assessments used for progress monitoring included: results from Scholastic Reading Inventory, sub-scores from NWEA MAP, Instructional Software, Curriculum Based Measures and marking period grades.

**Universal Screening - Scholastic Reading Inventory**

Scholastic Reading Inventory or SRI is an adaptive computer test that measures reading comprehension and reports reading comprehension through a score called the



Lexile Framework for Reading (Northwest Evaluation Association, 2013). SRI is appropriate for students from grades K through 12, with the ability to assess students multiple times throughout the school year. SRI uses an embedded text completion item format to assess a student's ability to make inferences and logical connections between ideas in the text. SRI software monitors student responses to each question and adapts the subsequent question according to student ability. SRI uses authentic text passages from fiction and nonfiction children books, young adult books, and classic literature. It is part of the Read180 program, but can also be used independently. The SRI can be used frequently and the AHS RTI team decided to use it during each progress monitoring cycle as one of several data points to establish the appropriate instructional tier for students. Students complete the SRI at the end of each marking period.

SRI assessments measure students' understanding of literacy and expository texts with different degrees of difficulty. Using written materials from a variety of content areas, the SRI focuses on the skills students use as they read these texts. The SRI measures comprehension skills such as: paraphrasing information from a text, identifying details from a text, making inferences, identifying supporting details and making generalizations. (Scholastic: Read180, 2012).

The Lexile Framework for Reading matches a reader's ability to text difficulty. The SRI uses Lexile scores that range from 100L for beginners to 1500L for advanced readers. Lexile is a criterion-referenced assessment on a continuous scale. Ability within a grade can span a range of Lexile scores. There is no single value that characterizes all of the written materials in a specific grade. There are a range of readers and a range of

reading materials. Table 7 shows the typical reader measures by grade, outlining the middle 50% of reader measures and text measures for each grade. There are several different ways to consider growth within the Lexile Framework and consideration is given to the initial reading level and grade level of the student.

Table 7

Typical Reader Measures by Grade

Grade	Reader Measures, Mid-Year 25th percentile to 75th percentile (Inner Quartile Range)
1	Up to 300L
2	140L to 500L
3	330L to 700L
4	445L to 810L
5	565L to 910L
6	665L to 1000L
7	735L to 1065L
8	805L to 1100L
9	855L to 1165L
10	905L to 1195L
11 and 12	940L to 1210L

The AHS RTI team reviewed growth goals for each student. Each student had an expected growth in Lexile measure based on their initial Lexile score and grade level. Teachers were able to set yearly Lexile growth goals for individual students, small groups and the class. The students and Lexile levels were reported during each progress monitoring.

## Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring - Measures of Academic Progress

NWEA MAP may be used as a universal screener, but also generates reports to help with progress monitoring. After students take the MAP assessment, NWEA suggests that teachers identify the strengths and areas of concern by using overall RIT scores and goal score information. Class Report by Goal allows teachers to differentiate instruction and create groups based on skills. For example, a student can be listed in the 181-190 range for information text but has an overall score of 201. This allows the teacher to see that the student information text is an area of concern and group the student with other students identified in this group for differentiated instruction. It allows the teacher to see what progress students are making in specific areas. For each goal area, goal descriptors report as “Lo” for low scores, “Av” for average scores, or “Hi” for high scores for each student (See Table 8). This information helps determine how to differentiate instruction for individual and small groups of students for specific goals for the upcoming cycle.

Table 8

NWEA Goal

Descriptors

Goal Descriptor	Scores	Percentile
Lo	Top Third	Score $\leq 33$
Av	Middle Third	Score $33 <$ but $< 66$
Hi	Bottom Third	Score $\geq 66$

## Progress Monitoring -Instructional Software

Read180 provides an instructional software zone (ISZ) as part of the instructional model of the program. Instructional software provides students with individual adaptive

instruction, targeted practice and assessment of progress. The AHS RTI team used assessment reports from ISZ to establish small group instruction and set individual RTI goals.

RTI teachers generate individual student details and cumulative performance in each of the five areas. Cumulative performance scores range from 0-100% with a comprehension score, vocabulary score, word-zone assessment score, spelling-zone assessment score and a context passage score. RTI teachers are able to view scores daily, weekly and bi-weekly to monitor student progress as well as advancement toward goals. They also help teachers create instructional groups based on student needs and guide instruction.

### **Progress Monitoring -Curriculum Based Assessments**

According to Deno (2003), a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is a method for assessing student growth in basic skills and content areas to gather student performance data to make educational decisions. Decisions made from CBM data may include evaluating interventions and eligibility for RTI tier placement. Deno (2013) further states that CBMs can predict success on high stakes standardized testing. The AHS RTI team determined that a CBM progress-monitoring tool would be in the form of a short bi-weekly assessment for students receiving Tier 2 support and weekly assessments for students receiving Tier 3 support. Progress monitoring assessment should be short since they are given frequently. They should also be consistent in what skills or concepts they measure to show progress or growth (see Table 9).

Table 9

CBM Progress Monitoring  
Assessments

4 Multiple Choice Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 Literal Questions</li><li>• 2 Inferential Questions</li></ul>
1 Student Response Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literal or Inferential Question</li><li>• Require students to write a short response</li></ul>

The AHS team tried a few different formats and number of questions during the months of September and October of 2014. They collaborated with the team from Middletown High School. Together, the two teams determined that each assessment would include five questions. The assessment format would remain consistent and would include bi-weekly assessments based on cold reads or connected to a text that students were familiar with for the week. This was chosen because part of the standardized test that students take at the end of the school year includes cold reads.

### **Year One Findings**

Burns (2008) advised that the RTI decision-making team should analyze a variety of data, including accountability data, to determine the level of student intervention. The AHS RTI team established a regular cycle of progress monitoring for students in the English-9 RTI sections. The SRI, NWEA Map, Instructional Software, CBMs, and grades were integral in screening and monitoring student performance during each progress monitoring cycle. The various data points allowed the team to determine how to group students for differentiated instruction and what interventions they might receive. At the

end of each cycle, groups were re-evaluated based on student progress during the nine-week cycle.

During RTI meetings, the AHS RTI teachers indicated that they used data from the ISZ and the SRI most frequently because they found these data were most useful to monitor and inform student instruction related to student goals. ISZ data was reviewed almost daily to confirm student groupings, to plan small group instruction, and to advise and motivate students of their progress toward their goals. The grouping of students for tiered support varied throughout year one of RTI implementation. The continuous monitoring of the ISZ data allowed teachers to be proactive in their approach to students and their interventions. Teachers also shared that the SRI was administered to students at the end of each progress monitoring cycle and was consistent with the results of ISZ data.

During PLCs, the AHS RTI teachers indicated that creation of the CBMs proved to be the most challenging part of the progress monitoring process. The team attempted to code CBM questions to Common Core State Standards; this was their first experience with this work. The group continued creating CBMs and using them as ancillary data, but did not see them as primary data. The RTI teachers added this as an item for continued support and improvement during year two.

ISZ and SRI data was specific to students in the RTI sections of English-9. All ninth grade students in the district were required to take the NWEA MAP test three times during the school year. During RTI meetings, teachers compared all data points and the overwhelming majority of Lexile results within the NWEA MAP (98%) were consistent with the Lexile scores reported by the SRI. When SRI and MAP data were not consistent,

teachers placed their confidence in the SRI because students took the SRI only once every nine weeks using a system that they worked in daily. The SRI also used text that was authentic but not necessarily familiar to students. Teachers said students were more comfortable with the SRI and were almost resistant to the MAP test. This allowed teachers to determine student's skills and progress independent of current texts covered in the classroom setting.

### **Year Two Recommendations**

During an end of year reflection meeting about universal screening and progress monitoring, the teachers shared that they thought testing during this initial year was excessive for students. The team agreed that some of the testing was redundant and hoped to streamline testing during year two. The team made a recommendation to administration to not use NWEA MAP. The team made the recommendation to continue using the SRI as the universal screener. The team felt that giving the both NWEA MAP and the SRI was unnecessary. The tests provided similar data and the students found the SRI more user friendly.

The team also recommended alignment between English-9 formative assessments and the CBMs. There was a request for support from the district content specialist to facilitate the work to align the two assessments into one. During year one there were instances when the team was giving traditional English-9 assessments in addition to CBMs they were creating. The assessments were covering the similar content and standards. The goal of the team was to create a consistent format for the English-9

formative assessments so that the data could be used as part of the progress monitoring cycle and reduce the number of assessments administered to students.

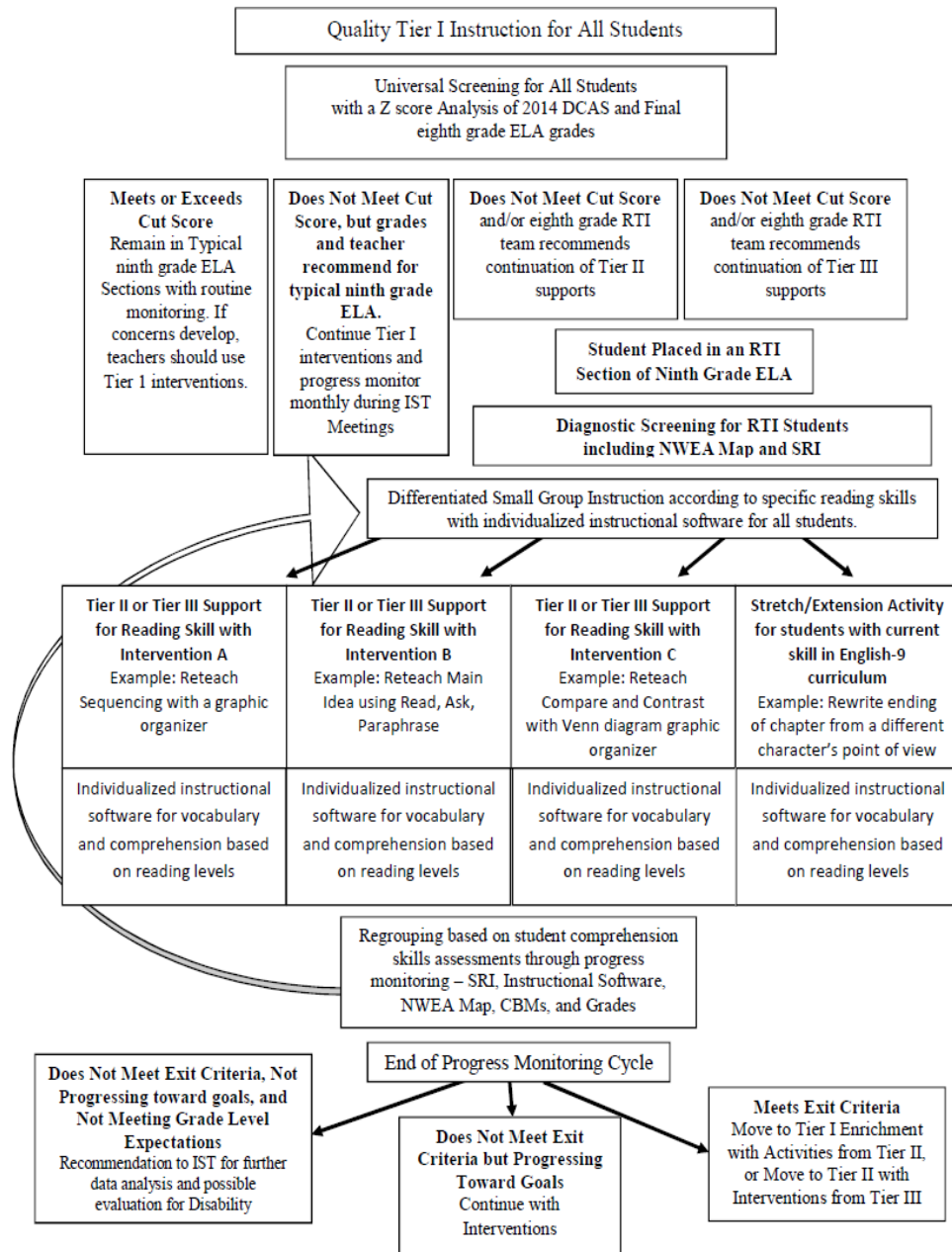
The teachers advocated for the nine-week progress monitoring cycle. During RTI team meetings, the teachers indicated that alignment with the marking periods was a good time to review progress-monitoring data and make recommendations for movement between tiers or changes with intervention strategies. The team also wanted to continue the use of the ISZ. They found this to be a great way to gather progress-monitoring data for students. The goal of the team during year two was to streamline the universal and progress monitoring cycle by building on what worked and eliminating unnecessary testing.



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## Attachment 1



## **Appendix H**

### **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR STAKEHOLDERS**

Appoquinimink High School (AHS) implemented a formal Response to Intervention (RTI) process for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year. The AHS RTI team established an RTI process for ninth grade reading. The goal was to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for ninth grade students that can be replicated and adapted for tenth through twelfth grade students in reading, and all levels of mathematics.

Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, AHS attempted implementing a number of different intervention structures, including pull-out during the school day, extended time after school, and individual modules delivered via computer software. The AHS administration tried scheduling at-risk students in the same course sections to address academic deficiencies. In the attempts to seek effective intervention strategies independently, administrators and teachers continued to work under district leadership to provide an effective general education program for all students.

The superintendent and high school principals agreed that a systemic approach to intervention was necessary to address the needs of struggling learners. As a result, the superintendent charged high school administrators with developing and implementing a process for RTI at the high school level. O'Connor and Freeman (2012) asserted the importance of recognizing RTI as a systematic process and not a specialized program or initiative. The high school RTI approach needed to align with the philosophies and

current practices of Appoquinimink School District (ASD) elementary and middle schools.

This artifact will focus on the stakeholder communication plan of the RTI process. The AHS RTI team reviewed several examples of RTI processes and developed a recommended communication plan for any school establishing their own process. The team considered three primary groups of stakeholders: teachers, parents and the board of education. Each group has a different perspective for consideration, but each committed in the success of all students. The RTI team determined that all teachers in a school new to the RTI process need to have an understanding of RTI to support each other and the students involved. The parents of the targeted students need an understanding of the expectations to provide support. Finally, the board of education needs to know what efforts teachers are making to ensure success for all students and have an understanding of how resources are allocated for the process.

### **Informing Teachers**

Internal communication of program expectations and goals is just as important as external communication. Feuerbor, Sarin, and Tyre (2011) suggests that school administrators need to plan PD that informs staff of the conceptual framework of RTI and the specifics of the RTI process in their school. As a result, one of the first steps in planning for implementation should be to inform all staff about RTI and the importance of meeting the needs of struggling students.

The AHS RTI team used literature and staff professional development to inform all teachers about the RTI process. A white paper (see Attachment 1) provided the staff

with details about RTI and the process at AHS during the 2014-2015 school year. Back-to-school professional development allowed RTI instructors to share details about the planning and preparation they were involved during the spring and summer of 2014. RTI teachers reviewed the key components of quality instruction that is important for all teachers. This time was also used to review vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies for all teachers. Staff was able to access and reference the white paper. Staff was also provided the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback as a whole group about the process. Both of these strategies are effective communication plans for the staff. The team recommends a similar approach as an initial communication and reference point.

The AHS team also recommends continuous communication from teachers involved in the RTI process. A successful RTI program needs staff buy-in and staff support. Staff needs to be involved during all phases of implementation. Helping staff understand the need for RTI will help gain buy in (Feuerborn et al., 2011). The AHS RTI team and teachers communicated progress to teachers throughout the year during faculty meetings and in staff newsletters. The RTI teachers gave student achievement updates at the end of each progress monitoring cycle. The teachers shared celebrations and challenges along the way. They discussed their professional development and invited teachers to visit their classroom to observe the two sections of English-9 RTI.

The AHS RTI instructors provided updates to the other staff members in multiple formats. Instructional Support Team (IST) meetings were another forum to share about year one of implementation and communicate with RTI instructors. The IST team looked

at school wide academic and behavioral challenges. The RTI instructors were currently focused on a specific group of ninth grade students, but were thinking of how the practices they employed could be used on a school wide basis in the near future. These two groups supported each other. The AHS RTI team recommends that school leaders look at existing student support groups within the school and work with them to not only communicate progress, but to also help with the process.

Department-wide professional learning community (PLC) meetings provided another ideal forum for communicating the RTI process to teachers. This is a space for teachers to learn, collaborate and grow. Within the ELA department, the teachers discussed the integration of intervention strategies, the individualized instructional software, and student achievement data. The ELA instructors were eager to support the teachers in the RTI process, understanding that the goal was to advance the ideas to all levels in the school and to also learn about practices they could apply to their classrooms to help struggling learners. School administration scheduled common planning time and facilitated PLCs, both of which provided opportunities for teachers to discuss, plan, and develop lesson plans and instructional materials for RTI.

### **Keeping Parents Informed**

Another critical component for implementation of new processes in a school and district is support and buy-in from parents. Meyer, Delagardell, and Middleton (1996) stress the importance of parental support in implementing curriculum reform. They assert that while parental support may not insure success, their lack of support can sabotage or impede success. The authors advocate for a proactive approach, suggesting that districts

use knowledge of its parents and community, anticipate concerns, and address them directly.

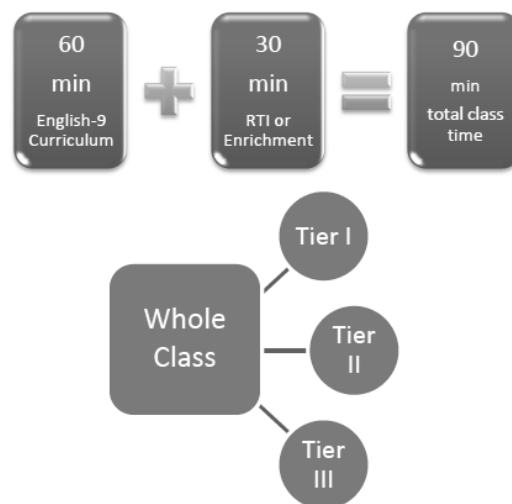
Canter, Klotz, and Cowan (2008) found that successful RTI programs rely on several core principles including collaboration with families. A partnership between parents and the school is important to support student achievement. O'Connor and Freeman (2012) agree, stating that frequent and explicit communication regarding RTI practices needs to occur. Meyer et al. (1996) suggest using parent meetings, presentations, open houses, and literature to educate parents and the community about new processes as common sense strategies. Parents that are concerned about what their children are learning need to be treated as equal partners to gain their trust and support. Canter et al. (2008) further emphasize the importance of parent support and involvement in each stage of the RTI program because home and school collaboration is critical. The intent is to communicate the purpose of the RTI process and to keep parents informed of their child's progress in a variety of formats.

The RTI planning team recommends a communication to parents regarding the RTI process, the expectations and goals for their student. The AHS planning team familiarized parents with RTI language at the start of the school year. Discussions with ASD middle and elementary RTI teams revealed that parents were not necessarily familiar with RTI language. Parents were aware that their children received extra support in reading or math, and were also aware that extra support was monitored and adjusted according to growth targets or goals. However, parents were not necessarily familiar with the term "Response to Intervention" or "RTI". The AHS team mailed a parent letter that

included a version of a white paper explaining RTI and a small summary about a major intervention, the Read180 program (see Attachment 2).

During the fall open house with parents, the RTI teaching team reviewed the goals and expectations for the class. Teachers shared the structure of the class, emphasizing students would receive their English-9 curriculum as well as support for their challenges with reading (see Figure 12). Parents of students who transitioned from an ASD middle school were familiar with some variation of an enrichment period designed to support students that struggle. Teachers introduced parents to the technology used in class. Teachers also directed parents to important tools used to monitor their child's progress with assignments and grades such as the school homework site.

Figure 12. Time allocation for RTI within 90 min class and whole group to small group breakout structure



Lujan, Collins, and Love (2008) outline core components of RTI Tier 2 and Tier 3 implementation steps that include sharing progress information with parents. During the fall open house, parents learned about the constant cycle of evaluation required by RTI.



Students need bi-weekly progress monitoring assessments and other standardized assessments including NWEA Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). Teachers reviewed sample reports with parents and advised when to expect initial scores. Teachers also requested parents sign up for fall conferences to review student progress after the first month of school. Parents were also informed about the cycle of communication for the course.

Kashima, Schleich, and Spradlin (2009) suggested that families be included as part of the collaborative team for struggling learners. Thus, at the end of the first semester, the RTI teachers prepared for a second round of parent conferences. The goal was to include parents as part of the team. For these conferences, teachers included many data points to share with parents including MAP and SRI scores, grades from marking periods one and two with student midterm grades. Teachers also discussed student engagement and participation in classroom activities. Teachers shared successes and challenges with parents, including goals and progress toward goals, and worked with parents to develop plans for students that could be implemented at school and supported at home. The goal was for parents to leave the meeting with an understanding of progress toward end of year targets and how they could support student goals at home. The team recommends a school determine a plan of communication with parents that includes multiple forms of communication on a regular basis.

### **Keeping the Board of Education Informed**

Presentations at monthly board of education meetings are great avenues for public engagement. The AHS RTI team recommends using a forum such as board of education

meetings to keep the public apprised of a newly established RTI process. Board presentations afford school and district leaders the opportunity to present progress of programs and allow the board members to ask questions about the process on behalf of the community. The purpose of the proposed presentation at the end of year one was to review the high school RTI process. This included an evaluation of the first year, student progress, implementation challenges and successes (see Attachment 3). Several highly debated issues overwhelmed the board meeting agenda for several months and did not allow for a formal presentation.

The AHS RTI team's presentation presents an example of how to relate the goals of RTI to the district strategic goals. In the ASD example, Strategic Goals 1, 5, and 6 connect directly to RTI. Strategic Goal 1 focused on increasing student achievement with the implementation of Common Core States Standards and the use of identified, research-based strategies. Strategic Goal 5 aimed to provide programs and services that encourage at-risk students to stay in school and earn a high school diploma. Strategic Goal 6 aimed to close achievement gaps to guarantee that every student who graduates is positioned for success in high school and beyond. The team makes a connection that a formal RTI process would help the district achieve these goals.

If there are changes in schedules due to RTI, the board of education should be informed. The AHS RTI team agreed that the change in scheduling for students in RTI sections of English-9 was an important context for the community to understand. This meant information about the 90-min block of English-9 for the year, including the 60-min of typical English-9 curriculum and 30-min of differentiated instruction, were explained

within the presentation. Explanation of the time requirements for Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction explain the differences between a section of RTI English-9 and a typical English-9 class.

It is important to share with the community the staffing implications for the RTI process at the high school level. The school board may have to support additional resources or staffing to support an effective RTI process. The AHS presentation included a message of appreciation for the approval of additional units for the 2014-2015 school year that allowed the English-9 sections of RTI to have class sizes of 24 versus the usual 31 in a typical English-9 class.

The AHS Team also recommends sharing anecdotal stories from the initial start of the process, including barriers to the process and success. The presentation included several challenges faced during the first year of implementation, including the progress monitoring cycle data, scheduling time for professional development and technology. The presentation also celebrated success, including student achievement, student attitudes, and teacher buy-in. Although the full presentation was not shared at a board meeting, parts of the presentation was shared in other formats, including fall open house at AHS for parents, the district annual highlights, and meetings with district and school administrators.

ASD fully supports the RTI process at the high school level. The challenge of meeting the needs of struggling learners and satisfying graduation requirements is different from what stakeholders experience at the elementary and middle school levels.

As a result, the RTI team will continuously communicate the rationale, goals, expectations, and success of the RTI process.

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## Attachment 1

### White Paper on RTI

Many of you have heard mention of Response to Intervention or RTI over the last school year. RTI will be implemented at AHS this coming year and there are several questions to be answered: What does it mean for AHS? How will it impact teachers and students? The following will provide you with a general overview of how AHS will meet this exciting new challenge!

### What is RTI?

Apoquinimink High School will borrow the definition of RTI used by the Delaware Department of Education:

RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to the student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data. (NASDE, 2006)

Additionally, successful RTI programs involve research-based interventions in a multi-tiered approach. "Teachers provided high quality instruction starting in the general curriculum (Tier 1) and continue with more intensive interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3). Tier 2 and Tier 3 often differ based on time spent on the intervention (Martinez and Young, 2011).

Martinez and Young (2011) also assert there are many approaches to RTI but they all involve a process that: 1) define a student's problem; 2) plan an intervention for the students; 3) implement the intervention; and 4) evaluate the student's progress. Delaware outlined the core principals of RTI to include:

- use of effective instructional practices to teach all children,
- use of research based core instruction with fidelity,
- use of assessment data to inform instruction,
- use of problem solving methods to inform decisions in a multi-tier model,
- use of research based interventions to match student needs with continuous progress monitoring, using interventions early and
- use of data as part of the evaluation process.

### Why RTI?

Matt Burrows, superintendent of ASD schools, has charged high school administrators with developing a systematic approach for supporting struggling learners through implementing a process for RTI at the high school level. State regulations surrounding RTI are directly related to the urgency of the superintendent's charge. The DE Admin Code outlines an RTI process for all districts to follow and in order to be in compliance, ASD must establish these procedures at both high schools this year.

Appoquinimink High School has always looked for ways to support struggling learners. Teachers offer support within the classroom and after school. We offer extended time programs after school, during lunch and we have a peer-tutoring program. A group of English and math teachers were assigned to work with students on academic interventions during third and fourth period over the past three years. While we have done all of these things in the past with varying degrees of success, we have not had a formal procedure that was aligned to student needs. During the 2014-2015 school year we will establish a formal response to intervention process at Appoquinimink High School for ninth grade reading. We will build a high school infrastructure that can be replicated or adapted to other grade levels and content areas.

## **RTI Foundation at AHS**

“High quality secondary school RTI programs support all students” (McMackin & Johns, 2011). Appoquinimink High School has stressed a high quality curriculum for all students by implementing CCSS and using best practices through researched based frameworks such as Learning Focused Strategies, and using Kagan Structures and other strategies outlined by the AHS Literacy Alliance and learned in professional development and methods courses.

Quality Tier 1 instruction across all content areas is a key component to a good RTI model. This means instruction in reading, literacy strategies across content areas and assessing progress of students (King et al., 2012). All of our efforts and specifically the efforts of the AHS Literacy Alliance will contribute to a good RTI program at AHS. The AHS Literacy Alliance began planning during the summer of 2013. The team of teachers wanted to support the school wide implementation of CCSS. The Mission of the AHS Literacy Alliance is to develop a common understanding of literacy for AHS staff and students by: promoting rigorous literacy expectations across all content areas, equipping students to comprehend, synthesize, and create meaning in all content areas, and advocating for student engagement with a variety of texts for multiple purposes. The AHS Literacy Alliance work is in agreement with the findings of King et al. (2012) in that core content teachers need to provide instruction in vocabulary and comprehension that is direct, systematic and explicit.

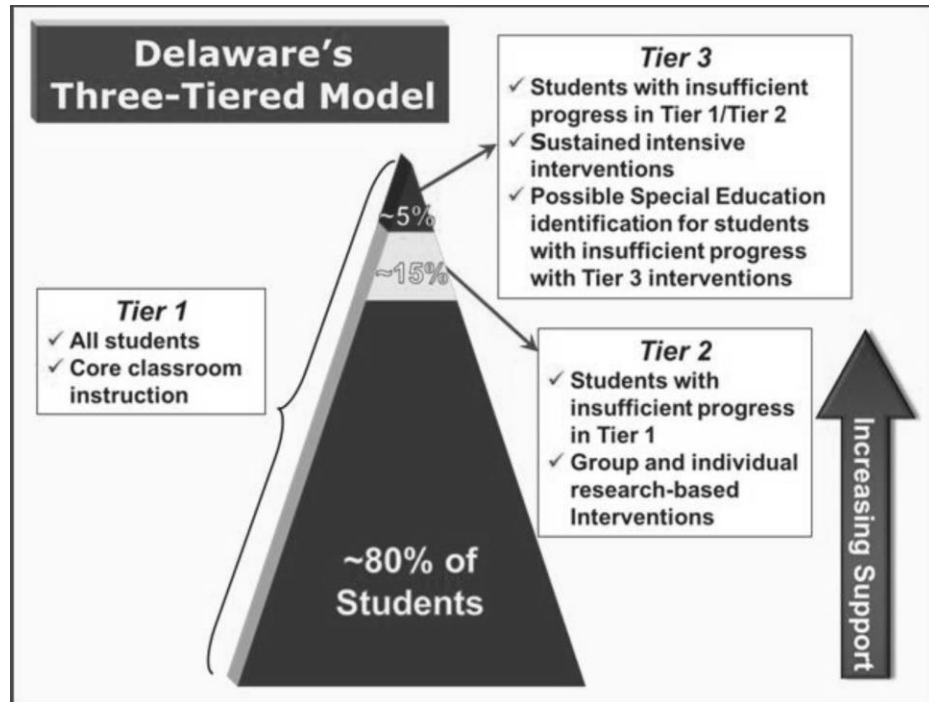
We have been a Learning Focused (LFS) school for four years. LFS is a model that provides a planning framework that focuses on student learning. The framework integrates standards, researched based strategies and exemplary practices (LFS, 2013). Throughout lessons teachers hold high expectations that all students are engaged at a high level knowledge and teachers are checking for student understanding. LFS has created a model that accelerates learning for all students, integrating previewing and scaffolding for students that struggle. These practices are aligned with the message from Delaware Department Education that states: RTI emphasizes the importance of differentiating the curriculum so student needs are addressed during the core curriculum.”

## **Year One of RTI**

**This year our focus will begin with 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading.** There will be two sections of year-long 9<sup>th</sup> grade English. The current plan is to deliver daily instruction for approximately 60 of the 90 minutes. The last 30

minutes of class will be dedicated to differentiated instruction. Students will be grouped according to Tier 1, 2, and 3. Students will receive instruction in those groups based on their needs.

- **RTI Students:** We used DCAS, grades and recommendations from the middle school RTI programs to identify students for our program at AHS.
- **Assessment:** A teacher will be dedicated to reviewing assessment data on a continuous basis and making recommendations for movement among tiers at the end of each 9-week cycle. The goal is to move all students to Tier 1 instruction.
- **Professional Development:** Professional development will be provided for teachers in the RTI program. This will include professional development for researched based interventions, interpreting data and making data based decisions.
- **Student Improvement:** Throughout our school year both teachers and students participating in the RTI process at AHS will participate in evaluations of the program as we work to make it an effective process.





## Attachment 2

### Letter to Parents Regarding RTI Program

August 27, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to an exciting year at AHS! Your teacher's names are Tina Harvie and Aaron Rush your student will be part of a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA/READ180 classroom! Please see the included document explaining RTI. A course syllabus was also sent home with your student.

#### ***What is READ180?***

*READ 180* is an intensive reading intervention program that helps educators confront the problem of adolescent illiteracy and special needs reading on multiple fronts, using technology, print, and professional development. *READ 180* is proven to meet the needs of struggling readers whose reading achievement is below proficient level. The program directly addresses individual needs through differentiated instruction, adaptive and instructional software, high-interest literature, and direct instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary skills<sup>3</sup>.

*To put it simply, READ180 is a reading program that adapts to your child's individual needs using computers, small group instruction, and independent reading books that are at your child's reading level.*

***Most supplies will be provided for your child. However, please make sure that they come to class with the following:***

- ❖ 2 inch binder
- ❖ dividers
- ❖ Colored folder w/ metal prongs
- ❖ Lined paper

We thank you in advance for your support in your child's education; together we can impact the future by investing in them. Please feel free to email either of us with any questions or concerns: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Attached you will find a course explanation and an information sheet.

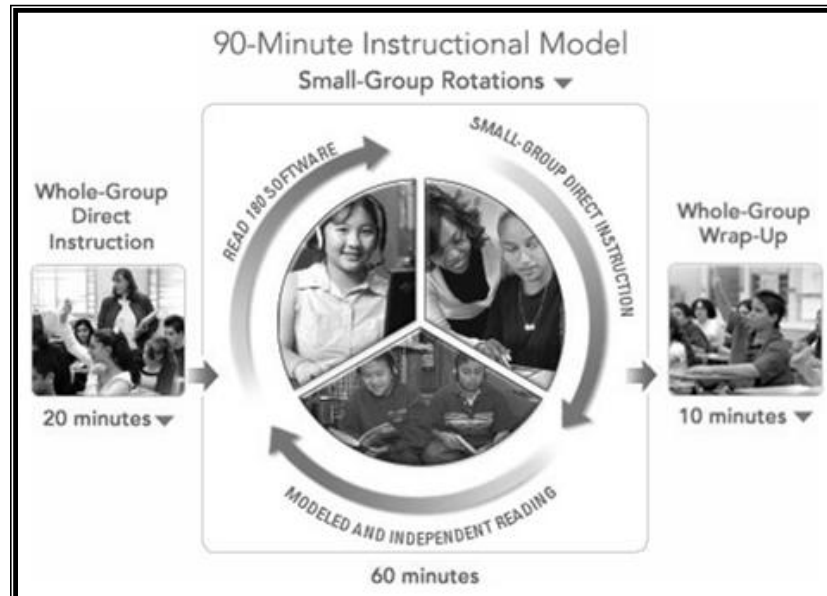
Sincerely,

ELA Teacher      ELA Teacher

<sup>3</sup> *Scholastic.com*. 2 Sep 2010. <<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/read180/overview/>>.



## COURSE EXPLANATION



### GRADING:

The students will be graded on the following:

- ❖ **Whole Group Instruction**  
*participation, reflections, group discussions, etc.*
- ❖ **READ180 Software**  
*reports generated by the computer showing student progress*
- ❖ **Small Group Instruction**  
*rBook, participation, worksheets, etc.*
- ❖ **Independent Reading**  
*reading logs, QuickWrites, graphic organizers, worksheets, projects, etc.*
- ❖ **Writer's Notebook and Discussion Questions**  
*assigned for homework, small group work, whole group work, etc.*
- ❖ **Participation**  
*whole group and small group settings*
- ❖ **Essay Grades**  
*end of workshop writing pieces, supplemental writing assignments, etc.*

**Many of you have heard mention of Response to Intervention or RTI over the last school year. RTI will be implemented at AHS this coming year and there are several questions to be answered: What does it mean for AHS? How will it impact teachers and students? The following will provide you with a general overview of how AHS will meet this exciting new challenge!**

### **What is RTI?**

Apoquinimink High School will borrow the definition of RTI used by the Delaware Department of Education:

RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to the student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data. (NASDE, 2006)

Additionally, successful RTI programs involve research-based interventions in a multi-tiered approach. "Teachers provided high quality instruction starting in the general curriculum (Tier 1) and continue with more intensive interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3). Tier 2 and Tier 3 often differ based on time spent on the intervention (Martinez & Young, 2011).

Martinez and Young (2011) also assert there are many approaches to RTI but they all involve a process that: 1) define a student's problem; 2) plan an intervention for the students; 3) implement the intervention; and 4) evaluate the student's progress. Delaware outlined the core principals of RTI to include:

- use of effective instructional practices to teach all children,
- use of research based core instruction with fidelity,
- use of assessment data to inform instruction,
- use of problem solving methods to inform decisions in a multi-tier model,
- use of research based interventions to match student needs with continuous progress monitoring, using interventions early and
- use of data as part of the evaluation process.

## **Why RTI?**

Matt Burrows, superintendent of ASD schools, has charged high school administrators with developing a systematic approach for supporting struggling learners through implementing a process for RTI at the high school level. State regulations surrounding RTI are directly related to the urgency of the superintendent's charge. The DE Admin Code outlines an RTI process for all districts to follow and in order to be in compliance, ASD must establish these procedures at both high schools this year.

Appoquinimink High School has always looked for ways to support struggling learners. Teachers offer support within the classroom and after school. We offer extended time programs after school, during lunch and we have a peer-tutoring program. A group of English and math teachers were assigned to work with students on academic interventions during third and fourth period over the past three years. While we have done all of these things in the past with varying degrees of success, we have not had a formal procedure that was aligned to student needs. During the 2014-2015 school year we will establish a formal response to intervention process at Appoquinimink High School for ninth grade reading. We will build a high school infrastructure that can be replicated or adapted to other grade levels and content areas.

## **RTI Foundation at AHS**

"High quality secondary school RTI programs support all students" (McMackin & Johns, 2011). Appoquinimink High School has stressed a high quality curriculum for all students by implementing CCSS and using best practices through researched based frameworks such as Learning Focused Strategies, and using Kagan Structures and other strategies outlined by the AHS Literacy Alliance and learned in professional development and methods courses.

Quality Tier 1 instruction across all content areas is a key component to a good RTI model. This means instruction in reading, literacy strategies across content areas and assessing progress of students (King et al., 2012). All of our efforts and specifically the efforts of the AHS Literacy Alliance will contribute to a good RTI program at AHS. The AHS Literacy Alliance began planning during the summer of 2013. The team of teachers wanted to support the school wide implementation of CCSS. The Mission of the AHS Literacy Alliance is to develop a common understanding of literacy for AHS staff and students by: promoting rigorous literacy expectations across all content areas, equipping students to comprehend, synthesize, and create meaning in all content areas, and advocating for student engagement with a variety of texts for multiple purposes. The AHS Literacy Alliance work is in agreement with the findings of King et al. (2012) in that core content teachers need to provide instruction in vocabulary and comprehension that is direct, systematic and explicit.

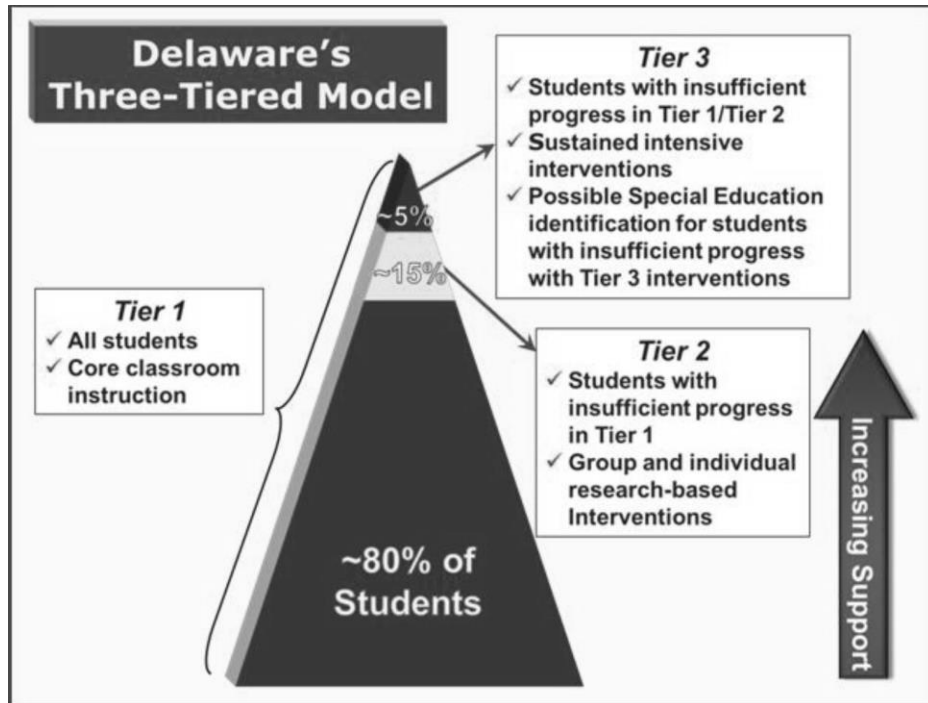
We have been a Learning Focused (LFS) school for four years. LFS is a model that provides a planning framework that focuses on student learning. The framework integrates standards, researched based strategies and exemplary practices (LFS, 2013). Throughout lessons teachers hold high expectations that all students are engaged at a high level knowledge and teachers are checking for student understanding. LFS has created a model that accelerates learning for all students, integrating previewing and scaffolding for students that struggle. These practices are

aligned with the message from Delaware Department Education that states: RTI emphasizes the importance of differentiating the curriculum so student needs are addressed during the core curriculum.”

## Year One of RTI

**This year our focus will begin with 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading.** There will be two sections of year-long 9<sup>th</sup> grade English. The current plan is to deliver daily instruction for approximately 60 of the 90 minutes. The last 30 minutes of class will be dedicated to differentiated instruction. Students will be grouped according to Tier 1, 2, and 3. Students will receive instruction in those groups based on their needs.

- **RTI Students:** We used DCAS, grades and recommendations from the middle school RTI programs to identify students for our program at AHS.
- **Assessment:** A teacher will be dedicated to reviewing assessment data on a continuous basis and making recommendations for movement among tiers at the end of each 9-week cycle. The goal is to move all students to Tier 1 instruction.
- **Professional Development:** Professional development will be provided for teachers in the RTI program. This will include professional development for researched based interventions, interpreting data and making data based decisions.
- **Student Improvement:** Throughout our school year both teachers and students participating in the RTI process at AHS will participate in evaluations of the program as we work to make it an effective process.

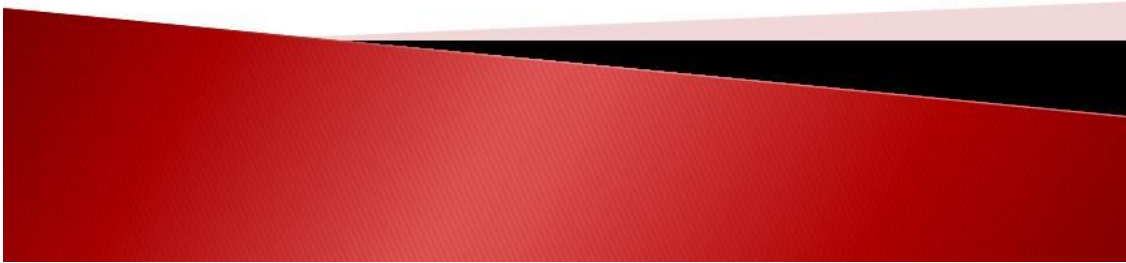


Attachment 3

Presentation RTI Process at Appoquinimink High School

# RTI Process for ASD High Schools focus on AHS

Keisha Brinkley



“Greatness is not a function  
of circumstance. Greatness,  
it turns out, is largely a  
matter of conscious choice.”

— James C. Collins





## #AppoPride Year 1 –RTI @ AHS



## Challenge ~

- ▶ Too often struggling learners are failing or only meeting minimum expectations in Appoquinimink School District high school courses in spite of numerous strategies implemented by the high schools.



# Goal

- ▶ During the 2014–2015 school year we established a formal **Response to Intervention** Process in ASD high schools for ninth grade reading. We hoped to build an infrastructure that could be replicated or adapted to other grade levels and content areas



## Delaware definition for RTI

- ▶ “RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data.” (NASDSE, 2006).



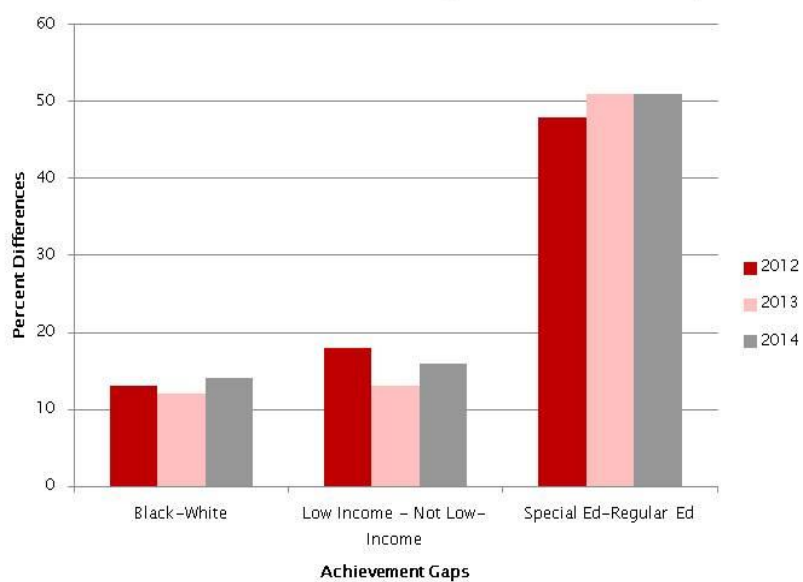
## Related to District Goals

- ▶ **Strategic Goal 1:** Increase student achievement with the implementation of Common Core states standards and the use of identified, research-based strategies
  - *Measure:* The percentage of students able to meet or exceed state standards (DCAS) in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies will increase annually.
- ▶ **Strategic Goal 5:** Provide programs and services that encourage at-risk students to stay in school and earn a high school diploma
  - *Measure:* Increased high school graduation rates
  - *Measure:* Decreased high school drop out rates
- ▶ **Strategic Goal 6:** Close achievement gaps to guarantee that every student who graduates is positioned for success in high school and beyond.
  - *Measure:* Annual decrease in achievement gap between identified target groups: black/white, low income/non-low income, special education/non-special education



# DCAS Data

2012 to 2014 ASD Reading Achievement Gaps



## Summer 2014

- Built a knowledge base
- **established** an RTI process structure for both high schools,
- **addressed** scheduling implications,
- **identified** students,
- **addressed** staffing implications,
- *developing* a pd plan
- *Identifying* research based interventions, and
- *developing* a communication plan.



# Knowledge Base

- ▶ Literature Review
  - Case Studies
- ▶ Department of Education
  - Presentations & Resources
- ▶ Our Middle Schools
  - Alfred G Waters
  - Redding Middle School
  - Meredith
- ▶ Other High Schools
  - Milford High School
  - Cape Henlopen High School





# Structure & Scheduling

- ▶ 90 minute English–9 block all year
- ▶ Quality Tier I Instruction
  - CCSS, LFS, Literacy Strategies
- ▶ Tier II and III Researched Based
  - Above Tier I, Read 180, Other Strategies
- ▶ 60 minutes of instruction
- ▶ 30 minute for differentiated instruction
  - Tier I – Literature Circles or other enrichment
  - Tier II – 3 days a week
  - Tier III – 4/5 days a week



# Students

- ▶ Start with 3 middle schools
  - 31 Tier II/III
  - Special Education – Small Group
- ▶ DCAS scores
- ▶ MAP Testing
- ▶ SRI Testing



# Staffing Implications

- Each school was granted a Unit for RTI
- A post was created for English-RTI
  - Interview questions had an RTI theme
- Both Principals Staff from within
- Hired Other English with future RTI possibilities



# Professional Development

- Support from Director of Curriculum
- District ELA Specialist
- Professional Learning Communities
- Site Visits to Middle Schools
- School Success Plan
- Read 180 Support
- Support with Data
- Info for general staff



# District Team

- Director of Secondary Curriculum
- Two High School Principals
- Two High School APs
- District ELA Specialist
- District Research Data Specialist
  - Supported by Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent



# AHS Team

- Principal
- AP
- ELA Department Chair
- 3 ELA Teachers
- Math Department Chair



# Teacher Perceptions

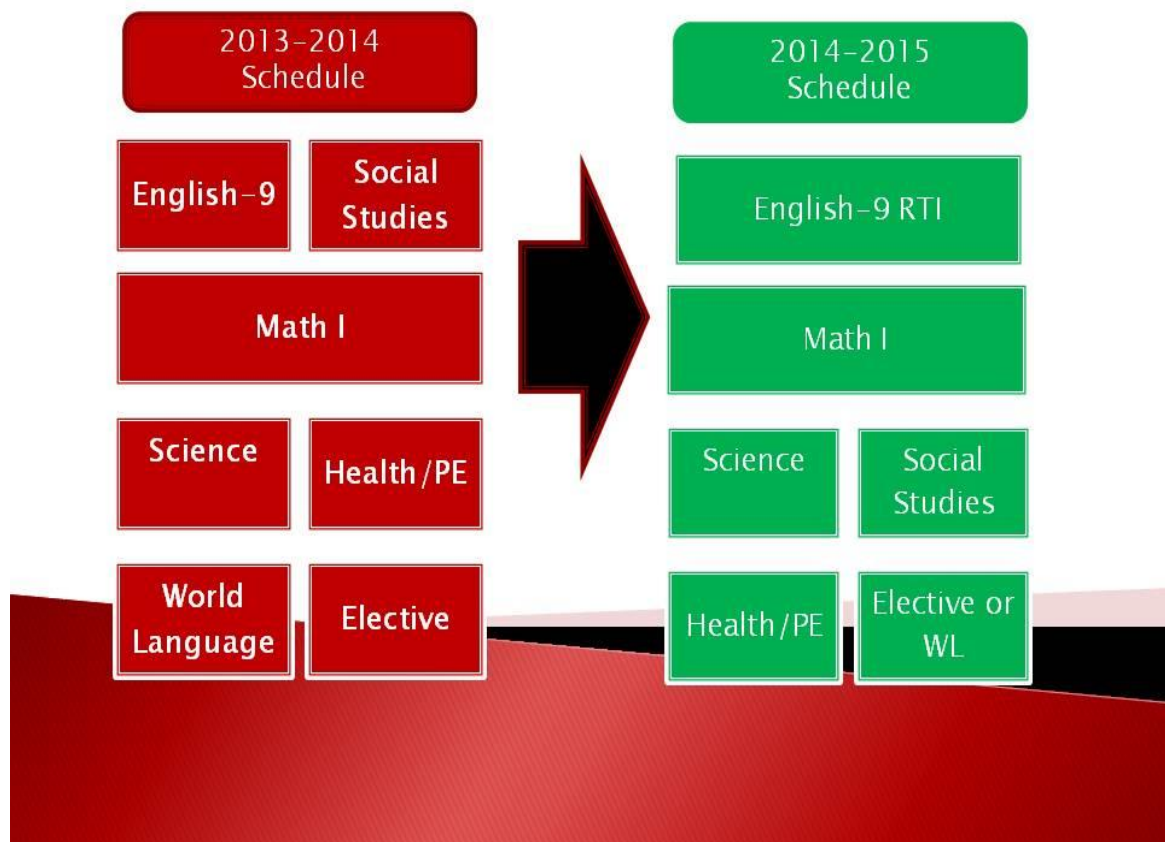
- ▶ 55 Question Survey – Teachers in the program
  - I. roles and responsibilities in the RTI program
  - II. purpose and value of the RTI program,
  - III. expectations for students in the program,
  - IV. effectiveness of school leadership support,
  - V. professional development for RTI teachers, and
  - VI. availability of resources, intervention strategies and assessments for the RTI program.



## Changes at the Student Level







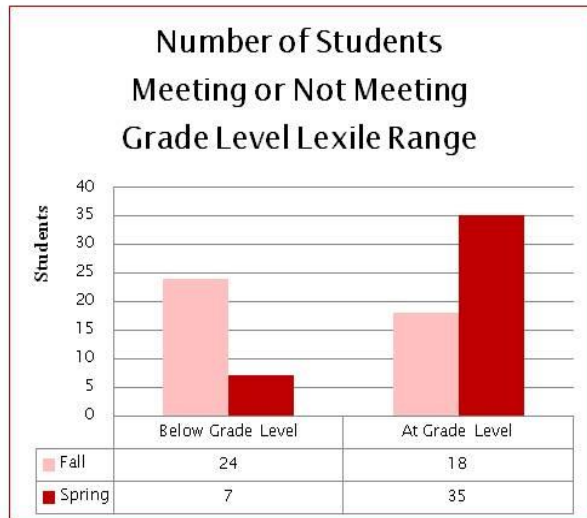
# Class Structure

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline 60 \\ \hline \text{minutes} \end{array} + \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 30 \\ \hline \text{minutes} \end{array} = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 90 \\ \hline \text{minutes} \end{array}$$

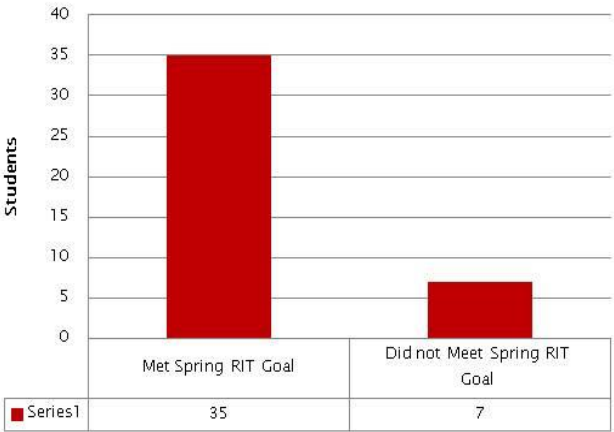


# Lexile Reading Levels

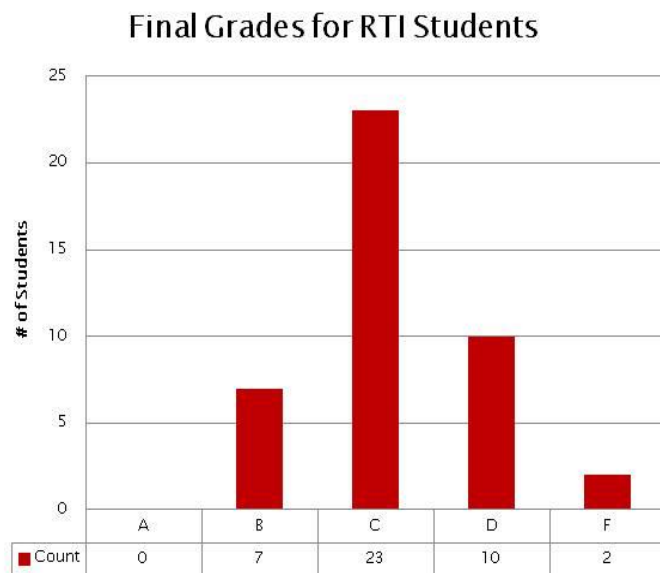
Grade	Reader Measures, Mid-Year 25th percentile to 75th percentile (Inner Quartile Range)
1	Up to 300L
2	140L to 500L
3	330L to 700L
4	445L to 810L
5	565L to 910L
6	665L to 1000L
7	735L to 1065L
8	805L to 1100L
<b>9</b>	<b>855L to 1165L</b>
10	905L to 1195L
11&12	940L to 1210L



Students Meeting RIT Goal



# Student Grades



- ▶ A student with the RTI profile would have a 50% pass rate based on prior years data
- ▶ Only 2 Students did not successfully complete the course

# Student Perceptions

- ▶ Students completed a 27 question online survey
- ▶ perceptions associated with evaluate
  - Teacher care,
  - Clarity,
  - Challenge,
  - Confer,
  - Consolidation
  - and Overall Perceived Benefits



# Year One Challenges

- Curriculum based assessments
- Technology
- Developing decision making tools



## Some Year One Celebrations

- ▶ The majority of students showed growth and most students met their target goals.
- ▶ Students found value in the RTI section of English-9.
- ▶ Teachers found value in the RTI process at Appoquinimink High School
- ▶ Fidelity with reflection cycle
- ▶ The teaching team believed that administrative support was important to the process





## Year Two Recommendations

- Continue with 2 sections of English-9 RTI
- Create 1 section of English-10 RTI
- Keep teaching team together
- Summer work on curriculum based assessments
- Work with district data specialist to define decision making matrices using progress monitoring data



# Questions?



## **Appendix I**

### **INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR RTI**

Appoquinimink School District (ASD) superintendent charged high school administrators with developing and implementing a Response to Intervention (RTI) process. The high school RTI approach should align with the philosophies and current practices of ASD elementary and middle schools. Results in ASD primary grades have been positive; all five elementary schools demonstrate increased reading achievement or successfully identifying students for individualized education programs.

District and high school administrators also want a systematic approach for intervention to address the needs of struggling learners at the high school level. The Appoquinimink High School (AHS) RTI team worked to establish a formal RTI process for 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading during the 2014-2015 school year. The goal was to build an infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students that could be replicated and adapted for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading and all levels of mathematics.

One of the core principles of an effective RTI process outlined by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) (2014) is the use of research-based interventions to match student needs with continuous progress monitoring. As the AHS RTI team began work on the RTI process, the team cited further research which indicates that high quality secondary RTI programs support success for all students and find ways to address academic difficulties (Canter, Klotz, & Cowan, 2008; Burns, 2008; Feuerborn, Sarin, & Tyre, 2011; McMackin & Johns, 2011).

Martinez and Young (2011) assert that there are many approaches to RTI but they all involve a process that includes the following steps: a) define a student's problem, b) plan an intervention for the students, c) implement the intervention, and d) evaluate the student's progress. Brown-Chidsey and Steege (2010) assert that using interventions with a proven record of accomplishment increases that probability of success for students. This artifact will address one goal of the AHS RTI team, creating a bank of evidenced based strategies and programs that could improve student performance.

### **Multi-Tiered Approach**

The DDOE identified RTI as effective educational practices for all students (May, 2014). According to NASDE (2006) Delaware adopted the following definition of RTI:

RTI is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about change in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. RTI should be applied to decisions in general, remedial and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction/intervention guided by child outcome data (p. 46).

McMackin and Johns (2011) state that "high quality secondary school RTI programs support all students" and successful RTI programs require systematic change to provide that support. Martinez and Young (2011) further assert that successful RTI programs involve research-based interventions in a multi-tiered approach. Teachers provide high quality instruction starting in the general curriculum (Tier1) and continue with more intensive interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3). The AHS team intended to develop

a high quality model that focused on quality Tier 1 instruction and provide the teachers with quality evidence based strategies and interventions for Tiers 2 and 3.

### **Operational Definition of Evidenced Based Strategies for AHS**

The AHS RTI team defined evidenced based strategies as supplemental small group instruction (Tier 2) or targeted individual (Tier 3) instruction that focuses on student deficiencies. Based on student needs, Tier 2 interventions occur in small groups with a standardized approach. Based on student needs, Tier 3 interventions occur in small groups with a standardized approach or in individual settings. Teachers shall use prescribed programs or research based strategies that are intense, focused on specific skills and efficient for students to catch up to their grade level peers.

District leadership advised the AHS team not to rely too heavily on prescribed programs. It was felt that such programs often required serious financial and professional development commitments. The district and school based teams also understood that a major program such as Read180 may be the appropriate intervention for some groups of students.

### **Evidence Based Strategies**

English-9 is a course that aims to expand reading skills and strategies, reinforce critical reading skills as students tackle increasingly more complex text and materials independently. The four major units include narrative, argument, author's purpose, and author's craft and theme (ASD Course Catalog, 2014). Students write several short papers increasing from two to five pages. Students read short stories, narratives and

typically read *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Romeo and Juliet*. This typical ninth grade course meets for 90-minutes daily for one semester.

The team sought to identify target areas for students that struggle in English-9. Through analysis of course grades, review of standardized test scores and during teacher discussions, the AHS RTI team identified critical reading as a major area of challenge. The team wanted evidenced based strategies and interventions that would improve overall critical reading skills.

The team's approach to supporting struggling learners was to assemble a portfolio of strategies for the English-9 course that would eventually become a resource for all content areas. The school also invested in program that supports increased achievement in reading called Read180 for a targeted group of students. An investment was also made in Jamestown Education, a leveled text series that supports several evidenced based strategies. The RTI team understood the school may not be able to sustain Read180 implementation beyond 10<sup>th</sup> grade and all teachers will need evidenced based strategies to support a school wide systematic change across all content areas.

### **Read180 Intervention**

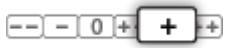
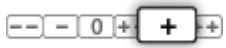
Read180 is a comprehensive reading program that combines teacher-directed instruction, technology based instruction and modeled independent reading (Read180: Scholastic, 2012). The instructional model provides opportunity for whole group instruction, small group differentiated instruction, independent individualized software practice and modeled independent reading that focuses on vocabulary and comprehension. Scholastic publishes and supports Read180. The company provides the

comprehensive bank of resources for each component of the instructional model along with professional development and coaching models for support.

During the 2013-2014 school year, AHS piloted the Read180 program with two small classes comprised of students that were struggling with reading and not meeting proficient on the Delaware standardized assessment in reading. The students in both AHS groups during the 2013-2014 made gains on the SRI. Ninth and tenth grade students in this group also met or exceeded their expected growth on the state assessment. The AHS RTI team determined that Read180 could be a viable option for reading interventions for students in English-9 and English-10.

In the spring of 2014, the AHS RTI team consulted the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) for summaries and comparisons on adolescent literacy intervention programs in the areas of reading achievement and reading comprehension. Eleven interventions were identified the area of adolescent literacy (focus on grades 8-12), with only seven receiving a positive or potentially positive rating. Read180 was the only one of the seven interventions that received a promising rating for both reading achievement and reading comprehension (See Table 10). The WWC Intervention Report for Read180 (October, 2009) indicates the improvement index for reading achievement was 12, with potentially positive effectiveness rating and an extent of evidence rating of medium to large. The reading comprehension index was a 4 with a potentially positive effectiveness rating and an extent of evidence rating of medium to large. WWC reviewed 101 studies of Read180. Seven studies met the WWC standards with reservations. The seven studies included over 10,000 students in grades 4 to 9 from seven different states.

Table 10

<b>What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Effectiveness Rating</b>			
Student Outcome	Improvement Index (percentile gain for average student)	Effectiveness Rating	Extent Of Evidence
Reading achievement	<b>12</b>		Medium to Large
Reading comprehension	<b>4</b>		Medium to Large
+ <b>Potentially Positive Effectiveness Rating:</b> evidence that intervention had a positive effect on outcomes with no overriding contrary evidence.			

Scholastic's research includes study profiles of the success of the programs in school districts across country, including the state of Delaware. One study profile showed the two-year gains in Indian River School District in the state of Delaware (Scholastic, 2013). Students were assessed with the same state standardized tests as ASD students. Scholastic representatives also brought reports and data specific to school districts in the state of Delaware and nearby Maryland (P. Kuklinski, personal communication, March 24, 2013). The AHS team looked at the increased achievement data from neighboring districts using Read180 and spoke to teachers and administrators about the effectiveness of teacher led interventions and strategies. Read180 provided opportunities for students to focus on increasing vocabulary and reading comprehension skills.

### **Jamestown Education Intervention**

Jamestown Education provides instructional materials to benefit students that struggle in multiple area of reading, including reading comprehension and vocabulary. Dennis (2009) asserts that teachers should provide struggling readers with opportunities to read selections at their independent reading level. Parent company McGraw Hill



Education in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) produced a report on results with Jamestown Education. In this report, Charlotte Frank (2004) examined eight secondary settings from across the country that used a Jamestown Education series as a major component in their reading programs. All eight case studies showed positive gains on state reading assessments as compared to previous trends. Frank included testimonials from educators that indicated that the Jamestown materials engaged students and that their critical reading skills have improved.

*Jamestown Literature* is a series from Jamestown Education. Publishers of the series indicate the program aims to help struggling readers and to help them catch up to grade level (Frank, 2014). The AHS team chose *Jamestown Literature* because it supports reading comprehension with leveled reading within the current instructional series in use for all students. Teachers use *Jamestown Literature* during RTI instruction and at appropriate times during the typical English-9 instructional time. This allows struggling students access to the same content and stories throughout the 90 minutes of instructional time. The AHS RTI team also saw the potential to purchase the materials for all four levels of English and possible social studies texts.

## **Other Effective Adolescent Reading Strategies**

In 2008, the Center on Instruction and the United States Department of Education released a practical brief on effective instruction for adolescent struggling readers (Boardman, Vaughn, Wexler, Murray, & Kosanovich, 2008). Authors of the brief acknowledged that reading difficulties in primary grades received the most attention and little attention had been paid to older students. Adolescent students' instructional needs differ slightly from those of younger students. The five key areas of focus for adolescent readers include word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) recommended that literacy instruction for adolescents include explicit instruction in vocabulary, direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction, providing opportunities for discussion of text, increasing motivation and engagement in learning, and making intensive and individualized interventions available by trained specialist.

In collaboration with the district ELA specialist and recommendations from the school-based reading specialist, the team discussed strategies to best support struggling adolescent readers. The team started with interventions that the teachers had some level of familiarity with and that teachers perceived as simple to implement at the start of this process. The team developed a portfolio of intervention strategies (see Attachment 1) based on these discussions with research to support the team decisions. During year one of implementation, the team focused on the seven strategies included in the attachment, with the intention of growing the portfolio over the next few years. Research evidence is cited within the portfolio to support the endorsements for interventions.

Table 11

AHS Intervention Strategies

<b>Evidenced Based Strategy</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Comprehension</b>
<b>Intervention Strategy 1:</b> Activate Prior/Background Knowledge	X	X
<b>Intervention Strategy 2:</b> Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Direct Instruction in Word Meaning	X	
<b>Intervention Strategy 3:</b> Graphic Organizers	X	X
<b>Intervention Strategy 4:</b> Explicit Comprehension Strategy – Summarize Main Ideas		X
<b>Intervention Strategy 5:</b> Explicit Comprehension Strategy – paraphrasing what they read		X
<b>Intervention Strategy 6:</b> Explicit Comprehension Strategy – Question Answer Relationships		X
<b>Intervention Strategy 7:</b> Peer Assisted Reading		X

The selected strategies fell under two of the key areas recommended by IES: *vocabulary* and *comprehension*. These two areas were rated as having strong levels of researched based evidence that demonstrate increasing student reading abilities. The team did not exclude practice in the areas of word study and fluency, but determined that increasing skills in vocabulary and comprehension would have the greatest yield. The team also determined that if students saw incremental success, motivation for continued success would increase.

### Vocabulary Skills

Knowledge of vocabulary directly correlates to student reading comprehension. Proficient readers will typically have large vocabularies (Boardman et al., 2008, Marzano, 2004; and Jitendra, Edwards, Sacks, & Jacobson, 2004). Struggling adolescent readers often have the following challenges when it comes to vocabulary:

- limited exposure to new words,
- lack word consciousness,

- unable to learn new words from reading,
- lack variety of experiences necessary to gain deep understanding of new words, and
- inadequate content area knowledge that is insufficient to support vocabulary development.

Students that struggle with reading typically do not engage in the volume of reading that improves the exposure to and development of new vocabulary (Jitendra et al., 2004; Marzano, 2004). Jitendra et al. state that struggling readers will find it difficult to learn vocabulary during independent reading time so vocabulary and strategies for learning new words must be taught explicitly to students.

A call for direct and explicit vocabulary instruction was a repeated recommendation by numerous researchers (Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003; Baker, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1998; Boardman et al., 2012). Fisher and Frey (2014) argue that effective vocabulary instruction needs to be intentional. They suggest students need to see teachers model words in context, engage in vocabulary activities with peers and have repeated opportunities to see words in different texts.

### **Comprehension Skills**

Boardman et al. (2008) assert that the core of all reading instruction at the secondary level should be comprehension. The authors point to research that indicates that as students progress through school, the need to gain meaning from texts increases and students must know how to apply comprehension strategies. Struggling readers often exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- failure to employ metacognitive strategies as they read,
- lack of awareness when understanding of text breaks down,
- failure to question or interact with the text during or after reading,
- lack prior knowledge,
- failure to make connections between what they are learning and what they know,
- limited knowledge and skills to gain information from the text,
- failure to read with purpose or goals, and
- lack of enjoyment for reading and lack understanding of the utility of reading.

Adolescent struggling readers often exhibit more than one of these characteristics.

Boardman et al (date) indicate that struggling readers fail to monitor their understanding of text by connecting new information with prior knowledge. When comprehension breaks down, students fail to employ strategies such as adjusting their reading rate or deliberately rereading passages. The authors suggest interventions that improve comprehension results. Some of the strategies for improving reading comprehension include activating prior knowledge, paraphrasing and peer assisted learning systems. Table 2 and Attachment 1 describe several reading comprehension strategies that the AHS teachers implemented.

The AHS RTI team researched and selected several explicit vocabulary and reading comprehension interventions and strategies. The team focused on high leverage strategies determined by the team that came up repeatedly in research and studies about

struggling adolescent readers. As mentioned earlier, the team knew that it may not be able to support the Read180 intervention beyond tenth grade for ELA and it was important to build a framework and system of support for all content areas.

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## Attachment 1

### **Intervention Strategy 1:** Activate Prior/Background Knowledge

**Area of Focus:** Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary

**Rationale:** Activating prior knowledge about a topic, skill or idea helps students connect what they already know to what they are learning. Struggling readers do not necessarily access prior knowledge or they may access unrelated knowledge that can interfere with learning.

#### **Main Components:**

- Teachers can preview text headings and key concepts.
- Teachers can introduce new vocabulary.
- Ask students to make predictions.
- Read related texts or preview videos connected to the texts.
- Keep previewing short, no longer than five minutes.

**Research Evidence:** Both Marzano (2004) and Elbro and Buch-Iversen (2013)

summarize research and studies on reading comprehension that indicate the ability to make inferences on a text by activating prior knowledge, increases reading comprehension. Marzano also draws on research that shows a correlation between vocabulary development and background knowledge. He discusses studies that show vocabulary knowledge increases achievement. Ogle (1986) asserted that students benefit from using background knowledge to help make inferences about the text. When a reader applies prior knowledge or makes inferences, the text becomes more coherent and has a positive effect on reader comprehension.

**Intervention Strategy 2:** Explicit Vocabulary Instruction – Direct Instruction in Word Meaning

**Area of Focus:** Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension,

**Rationale:** Providing explicit vocabulary instruction offers students the opportunity to learn new meanings of words and prepare them to construct meaning of the text. Multiple exposures to vocabulary words within the context of content can produce measurable gains within one school year (Reidl, 2011). As students progress through grades, their text increasingly contains words that are not a part of their oral vocabulary.

**Main Components:**

- Make sure students are familiar with vocabulary they will encounter in a new text.
- Dedicate a portion of a lesson involving a new text to explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Look up definitions in dictionaries or glossaries.
- Read words and their definitions.
- Provide graphic organizers to display relationships between words and concepts.
- Provide computer instruction on vocabulary.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to encounter new words.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to use new vocabulary in activities such as discussion, writing and more reading.

**Research Evidence:** Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, and Stuebing (2007) reported in a meta-analysis of 31 studies on reading interventions, vocabulary interventions had the largest overall effect size of 1.62. The findings in the report support explicit vocabulary instruction. Students in the studies made gains when they were directly tested on words they were taught. Saint Xavier University researchers Austermuehle, Kautz, and Sprenzel (2007) cite literature regarding explicit vocabulary instruction. The literature indicates explicit instruction and repeated exposure to words are the requisite for vocabulary growth. Their research in explicit vocabulary strategies showed positive results in improved vocabulary knowledge.

**Intervention Strategy 3:** Explicit Comprehension Strategy – Graphic Organizers

**Area of Focus:** Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary

**Rationale:** Graphic organizers are tools to help students construct meaning of the texts. They are visual demonstrations of the main ideas students observed in their reading.

**Main Components:**

- Active participation of the student with the text
- Apply strategy to different texts.
- Make sure the goal for reading the text is clear.
- May be used before reading to introduce important information, solicit background knowledge, and make predications.
- Used during reading to record important information.
- Used during reading to maintain purpose/focus for reading.
- Used after reading to review information, write summaries, make connections.

**Research Evidence:** Alverman (1981) reported study findings that indicate students of all reading abilities show increased performance when exposed to graphic organizers. Graphic organizers help students identify, organize, and remember important ideas from the text using visual representation. Graphic organizers may be used during all phases of reading (Tompkins, 1991; Kim, Vaughn, Wanzek, & Wei, 2004; Manoli and Papadopoulou, 2012). Prior to reading, graphic organizers can be used to elicit background knowledge, make predictions and introduce key ideas. During reading graphic organizers can help students make connections, check predictions, and record information. After reading, graphic organizers can be used to make connections, review key ideas, and create summaries (Gajria & Jitendra, 2011, Boardman et al., 2008).

**Intervention Strategy 4:** Explicit Comprehension Strategy – Summarize Main Ideas

**Area of Focus:** Reading Comprehension

**Rationale:** As students read they need to be able to determine the main ideas of the text and write a summary of what they read. Learning to summarize ideas helps students select the most important information from the text and key supporting details.

**Main Components:**

- Active participation of the student with the text
- Explain and model the strategy, use for guided practice, use for independent practice
- Select text carefully: type of text and reading level.
- Apply strategy to different texts.
- Make sure the goal for reading the text is clear.



### Use Summarizing Rules – MAIN R

1. **Make** the topic known – look for common terms that might indicate what the topic might be
2. **Accent** at least two details – students annotate, highlight or underline details directly connected to the topic.
3. **Ink** out the clarifying details –clarifying details are not explicitly connected to the topic.
4. **Notice** how the essential details are related – how are essential details related and what do they say about the topic
5. **Infer** the main idea - think about what the text is focused on and write your main idea based on your essential topic, essential details and use the annotated passage to write a summary. Try to connect the main ideas using your own words.

**Research Evidence:** Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, and Baker (2001) review research in the areas of reading comprehension strategies for students that struggle with reading.

Research emphasizes techniques that provide structures that encourage students to be persistent in their reading. The ability to extract the main idea from text is crucial to reading comprehension. Instruction on main idea lead to improved outcomes on narrative and expository texts comprehension (Gersten et al., 2001; Baumann, 1984; Boudah, 2013; Jitendra & Garijria, 2011). In a study by Malone and Mastropieri (1992) students taught summarizing strategies out performed students without training in summarizing. When teachers model, provide guided practice and provide students with corrective

feedback, gains are made in main idea identification and summarizing. Hedin, Mason, and Gaffney (2006) discuss research that supports teaching struggling readers strategies such as finding main ideas to summarize to improve reading comprehension. Collins (2012) also argues that written summaries of a text help develop student comprehension of the text.

**Intervention Strategy 5:** Explicit Comprehension Strategy – Paraphrasing the Text

**Area of Focus:** Reading Comprehension

**Rationale:** Paraphrasing allows students to extract the main idea and put it into their own words. Strategies that involve simple steps may assist students in processing information easier. Paraphrasing may be viewed as a precursor skill to summarizing. Paraphrasing allows students to put context into their own words without necessarily reducing the length of the passage, distinguishing major or minor details, nor requiring the use of the author's words.

**Main Components:**

- Active participation of the student with the text
- Explain and model the strategy, use for guided practice, use for independent practice
- Select text carefully: type of text and reading level.
- Apply strategy to different texts.
- Make sure the goal for reading the text is clear.

Use RAP acronym to help students paraphrase.

1. **Read** a portion of the text

2. **Ask** what is the main idea of the text and a few key details to support the main idea

3. **Paraphrase** the main idea and two supporting details into their own words.

**Research Evidence:** Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler (1984) authors of *The Paraphrasing Strategy*, indicate students reading comprehension increased on average 35% for students that mastered the strategy. Katims and Harris (1997) investigation of this reading strategy indicated this cognitive based strategy increased reading comprehension for all students. More than 30 years from the original research, further research and studies state that the use of paraphrasing can increase reading comprehension across all grade levels and content areas for struggling readers. Students are encouraged to make connections to prior knowledge and paraphrasing makes it clear that understanding is the goal of reading. (Kleitzien, 2011; Hagaman, Casey, & Reid, 2008; Wigent, 2011).

**Intervention Strategy 6:** Explicit Comprehension Strategy – Question Answer Relationships (QAR)

**Area of Focus:** Reading Comprehension

**Rationale:** Providing direct instruction on comprehension strategies provides students with tools to help them make sense of the text. If they are able to make better sense of the text, reading comprehension improves. Explicit comprehension strategies require students to be actively involved in the text. Students need to be able to make logical assumptions about characters or events in the text.

**Main Components:**

- Active participation of the student with the text
- Provides a framework for answering frequently encountered comprehension questions
- Apply strategy to different texts.
- Students apply two general strategic for responding to questions about the text

### **Question Answer Relationships**

Students Read a text. Students review a set of questions and determine the type of question-answer relationships. Questions and answers have four types of relationships.

- In the Text
  1. *Right There* - a literal question, uses key words or passages.
  2. *Think and Search* - Inferential and uses information from different parts of the text
- In My Head
  - 3 *Author and me* – combines prior knowledge and information from the text
  4. *On my own* – use known information

**Research Evidence:** Raphael’s (1982) Question Answer Relationship (QAR) approach to reading comprehension provides students with direct instruction to aide in making sense of the text. Strategies such as QAR provide students with the structure necessary to guide their processing of comprehension questions (Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, & Fisher, 2012; Kinniburgh & Shaw, 2008; Whalon & Hart, 2011). Students are taught how to look for information, provided steps to determine if the answers are literal or inferential.

Raphael and Au (2005) further state that the vocabulary of QAR such as “in the book, in

my head, right there” provides students and teachers a common language to discuss invisible reading processes and improves students’ ability to recognize how to locate answers to questions (Simmonds, 1992; Raphael & Au, 2005).

**Intervention Strategy 7:** Peer Assisted Reading or Peer-Assisted Learning System (PALS)

**Area of Focus:** Reading Comprehension, Motivation

**Rationale:** Students can collaborate to increase engagement and motivation. Marchand-Martella (2010) cites empirical evidence that supports the use of peers as instructional agents in teaching academic skills at the secondary level. What Works Clearinghouse (2012) reports that “students in *PALS* classrooms work in pairs on reading activities intended to improve reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Students in the pairs—who alternately take on the role of tutor and tutee—read aloud, listen to their partner read, and provide feedback during various structured activities.”

**Main Components:**

- Students work in assigned pairs based on student strengths and weakness.
- **Partner Reading** provides students the opportunity to read aloud and receive immediate corrective feedback from their partner. Students switch roles after five minutes
- **Paragraph Shrinking** allows the reader to state the main ideas of a passage in a ten-word summary and provides a sequential retelling of events in the passage.
- **Prediction Relay** allows the reader to make predictions about what is likely to happen on the next page, reads aloud and summarizes the just read text. The

partner determines the accuracy of the prediction. Students switch roles after five minutes.

**Research Evidence:** Fuchs and Fuchs (1999), creators of the PALS program, shared results of a study that indicated the program enhances reading comprehension for high school students. WWC (2012) further states that peer assisted learning strategies showed improvement gains for reading comprehension and the effectiveness rating was potentially positive. Two studies fell within WWC standards without reservations and a third study met WWC evidence standards with some reservations. The scope of the research meeting WWC standards applied to students in grades 2-6. Marchand-Martella et al (2000) conduct a study that examined a peer tutoring model for adolescents. Their findings indicated improved performance in the area of reading comprehension after 80 school days of instruction. The average increase in reading grade level was 1.5 grade levels in comprehension verses the typical 1 grade level. Harris, Marchand-Martella, and Martella (2000) also conducted study that involved peer assisted learning as a key component. Similar results reported student reading levels increasing on average 2 grade levels in reading comprehension.

## **Appendix J**

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION: YEAR ONE RTI IMPLEMENTATION AT AHS**

#### **Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the first year of implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) Program at Appoquinimink High School (AHS). The findings will be used to determine if teachers and students are seeing improved student achievement with the current RTI model at AHS. If the findings show that teachers and students are not finding value in the RTI program at AHS, the results will be used to support recommendations for the second year of implementation.

#### **First Year of RTI**

The Appoquinimink School District (ASD) superintendent charged Appoquinimink High School (AHS) administration with creating a process for RTI during the 2014-2015 school year. The goal was to build a replicable infrastructure to address and support academic deficiencies for ninth grade students in reading. Successful strategies would be adapted for use with 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders receiving reading support and all levels of mathematics.

The program focused on providing students with reading interventions through two English-9 sections with extended instructional time. Students would receive their typical English-9 curriculum for 60 minutes daily and differentiated instruction based on RTI goals and targets for 30 minutes. The classes were taught by a collaborative team of teachers and a third teacher helped with intervention instruction during the 30 minutes designated for RTI.

## **Evaluation Questions**

As part of the evaluation of the AHS RTI Program, the following questions will be answered.

1. Process Question: Do teachers understand their role and responsibilities in the RTI program?
2. Process Question: Are teachers receiving the professional development necessary to support instruction in the RTI classroom?
3. Process Question: Do students feel like the assistance in the RTI program is beneficial?
4. Outcome Question: Did students meet their target goals?

The first two process questions gathered information regarding the teachers' perceptions of year one of RTI implementation. Attachment 1 includes a summary of the process and outcome questions along with a logic model. The process questions were measured by a survey (see Attachment 2) about teacher roles and responsibilities as well as the provision of professional development and instructional resources. A second survey was used to gather information from students in the RTI program (see Attachment 3). The outcome question investigated if students met their goals. The outcome question was evaluated using assessment data and teacher feedback. See a summary of the evaluation questions in Attachments 4 and 5. Since the evaluation involved teacher, student volunteers, the surveys were submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board for consideration. The project was exempt (see Attachment 6).

## **Design and Methodology**

### *Sample*



The sample for this evaluation was comprised of all four teachers in the AHS RTI program. The survey was voluntary, but all teachers elected to participate. Three teachers are certified to teach high school English and Special Education and one teacher is certified in English and serves as a reading specialist. All four teachers participated in some level of professional development and professional learning communities regarding RTI, collaborative teaching, data driven decision-making or best instructional practices.

There were two sections of English-9 RTI classes with 42 total students enrolled at the end of the school year. Three major variables determined placement in the course, including recommendations from middle school RTI program, grades, and standardized assessments scores. Most students participated in the survey and understood participation was voluntary.

### *Instruments*

An evaluator created survey (provided in Attachment 2) measured process questions one and two. At the end of year one, teachers were administered a 55-item Likert survey that asked teachers to reflect on the following aspects of the program:

- (1) roles and responsibilities in the RTI program
- (2) purpose and value of the RTI program,
- (3) expectations for students in the program,
- (4) effectiveness of school leadership support,
- (5) professional development for RTI teachers, and
- (6) availability of resources, intervention strategies and assessments for the RTI program.

The survey also includes two opened-ended questions that allowed teachers to comment on the overall benefits and challenges of implementation.

A 27 Likert item student survey was developed to assess process question three (provided in Attachment 3). The goal of the student survey was to determine how students felt about their English-9 RTI class and if they thought the class was helpful to them. Students completed similar surveys in the class for their teachers so they were familiar with the expectations and purpose of surveys for program improvement.

The outcome question was measured through analysis of assessment data. SRI and NWEA-MAP scores were examined to determine if students reached their target goals for RTI; student grades in English-9 were also monitored to make sure students were on track to pass the course.

### **Data Collection**

The teachers accessed the survey online through Survey Monkey during a PLC at the end of May and provided anonymous submissions. Survey Monkey is a tool that teachers typically use to provide feedback for various reasons at AHS. All teachers were present for the survey. Teachers were aware that the principal would be reviewing survey results and so they may have been more inclined to answer favorably about their expectations and support. Teachers in the program also understood that AHS would likely face challenges during year one implementation and their honest and candid feedback would help address any challenges.

The process question was measured by a survey given to the students at the conclusion of the third marking period. The students accessed their surveys online

through a website called Socratic and submitted responses anonymously. Students used Socratic for progress monitoring assessments regularly during their classes so they were familiar with the platform. Students were aware that their teachers would read the survey and so they may have answered more favorably. The teachers and students established a classroom environment of high trust and risk taking. Teachers noted that they felt students would be candid in their responses.

The RTI team reviewed various data points with a focus on SRI and NWEA MAP at the end of year one.

### *Data Analysis*

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for both the teacher and student survey responses to determine the perceived benefits of the RTI program to the teachers and the students. To evaluate the outcome question, the evaluator analyzed the assessment and reviewed grade data to see if students met their target RTI goals and passed English-9.

### **Teacher Survey Findings**

Four teachers at AHS completed the online survey about their perceptions of the RTI process. Three of the teachers were directly involved in the class. A fourth teacher participated in some of the professional development and used some of the instructional strategies in her small group/high intensity special education class. Her participation was for consideration for future steps with the RTI program.

According to the survey results, the teachers in the program have positive perceptions about the RTI process at AHS. Question sets one, two and three contribute to

answering the first process question. According to responses from question set one, teachers understand their role and responsibilities in the RTI program. All four teachers surveyed strongly agree that they are to provide small group instruction for identified students. Question set two focused on the purpose and value of the RTI program at AHS. This set of responses received the highest average ratings. All of the teachers strongly agree that they felt a high degree of personal responsibility for the work they do with the RTI program. Question set three asks teachers to rate their perception of standards and expectations for students in the RTI program. While all items were rated, agree or strongly agree, half of the teachers agree that students can meet grade level expectations and half strongly agree. Similarly, half of the teachers think that all students can meet state reading standards and half strongly agree.

Question sets four through six from the survey address the process question regarding effectiveness of school leadership and support for instruction in the RTI classroom. Question set four demonstrated that all four teachers believe school leadership supported the RTI program. This includes agreeing that the principal has a student-learning focus and a commitment to quality education for all students. All teachers strongly agree that the principal listens to their ideas and concerns about RTI. Teachers shared in the open-ended question that weekly meetings with the principal allow time for immediate reflection and problem shooting during the first year of the process.

Question set five asked the teachers about professional development. Overall three of the four teachers find the professional development helpful. They identify a need for more training in the areas of data analysis. One of the teachers rated this set of

questions negatively. She did not participate in the all of the RTI professional development, nor did she collaborate as extensively as the rest of the team. In the open feedback section of the survey, comments related to this set of questions included a teacher sharing that they liked the time afforded to try to match interventions with student needs.

Question set six discusses the availability of resources, intervention strategies and assessments. All four teachers strongly agree that they have tried different intervention strategies in the RTI program. They all agree to some degree that they investigate different interventions strategies, match interventions with student needs, investigate different instructional strategies and use assessments to inform instruction.

Teachers were asked to share what components of the RTI program they felt were going really well and what challenges they faced during year one of implementation. Three of the four teachers cited the flexibility and reflection as key components in year one. One teacher discussed the cycle of RTI programming at AHS, “we plan, we develop, we implement, we reflect.” Another teacher shared similarly, “Meeting with admin every week to discuss progress, working with a team teacher to plan and analyze data, extra planning to discuss and plan strategies best to implement RTI has been great.”

When discussing challenges three of the four teachers felt that the most challenging component was not having an established model that would meet AHS needs. While teachers’ appreciated the flexibility, they sometimes liked the idea of having a preexisting program that they could use and adapt to their needs. Another challenge is the lack of CBMs that are readily available. Teachers wanted to focus on

instruction and remediation. They said that the process of creating standards based CBMs was an important but arduous task.

### **Student Survey Findings**

Twenty-nine of the 42 (69%) students enrolled in the RTI English-9 at Appoquinimink High School completed an online survey about their perceptions of the class. Attachment 5 summarizes their ratings. Students in the RTI program, on average, hold positive perceptions about the English-9 RTI class. Means of 3.3 to 3.4 indicated that students tend to agree or strongly agree with perceptions associated with teacher care, challenge of the class, and clarity of their teachers. For 17 of the 27 (63%) questions, students report high levels of agreement.

Within the survey, series of questions related to different areas of perception. Six questions on the survey asked students to rate their perceptions on the challenge of their English class. Ninety-three percent of students indicate that they learned to correct their mistakes. The majority of the students agree that teachers accept nothing less than their full effort and that that they learn in class daily. Another highly rated group of questions dealt with confer. Students typically agree that they are encouraged and given opportunities to explain their thinking and share ideas. Ninety percent of students agree they get to learn things in more than one way. Eighty-six percent of the students agreed that teachers want them to share their thoughts. In addition to high ratings of agreement about confer, there was also less variability in the student ratings. Students positively rated four questions about consolidation. Ninety-three percent of students said teachers

*“check to make sure we understand what they are teaching”* and 90 percent of students indicate that teachers *“take the time to summarize what they learn daily”*.

Notable exceptions to the mostly positive ratings on the survey came from two questions in particular. Fifty-five percent of students had concerns about some aspect of their teachers’ clarity. These students felt that teachers sometime *“think we understand when we don’t.”* Student ratings conflicted in this area. Thirty-eight percent of students disagree that they liked being in the yearlong English class (21% strongly disagree and 17% disagree).

The final set of questions asked students to rate their perceived benefits of the English class. While students generally agree (82%) that they like the support they are receiving from their teachers and they are learning strategies in their classes that help them better understand, only 62% of students like being in the yearlong English class and only 69% indicate they are using ideas or strategies from English class in other courses.

### **Student Achievement Findings**

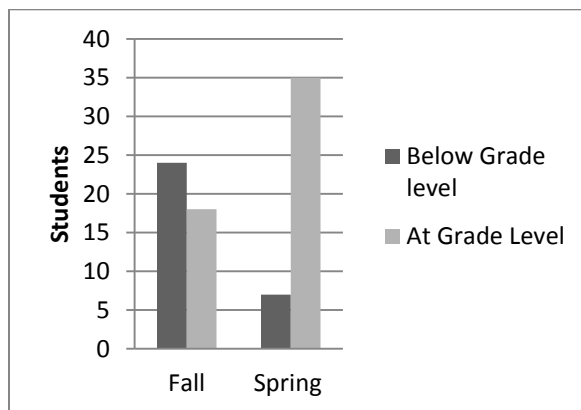
Student data was examined on two primary measures to answer the question: *Did students make progress toward their target goals?* Data collected on SRI Lexile and NWEA MAP RIT scores allowed the RTI team to determine if students met individual target growth. Teachers also set goals for all students to measure success in year one of RTI implementation. A review of Lexile growth and NWEA MAP RIT scores also determined if students were on grade level for reading. As a final point, the team reviewed grades to make sure students were on target to pass the course at the end of the

school year, but focused primarily on the assessment data for RTI purposes. Targets were established using fall assessment results.

### Grade Level Lexile Scores

According to Meta Metrics (2015), Lexile scores ranging from 855L to 1165L are typical of students in ninth grade. A review of DCAS, MAP and SRI Lexile data revealed 24 students in the program reading at least one grade level below their target Lexile range at the start of the 2014-2015 school year. A few students reported Lexile scores as low as third grade range. Final Lexile scores showed that 80% of students showed growth with a mean increase of 175L. Figure 13 shows the initial count of 24 students reading at least one grade below grade level according to Lexile score ranges. The year ended with 17 (71%) of those students reading in the grade level range.

Figure 13. Number of Students Meeting or Not Meeting Grade Level Lexile Range



### *Analysis of Lexile Growth Goals*

Students took their final administration of the SRI and NWEA MAP in May of 2015. Both assessments produce a Lexile score as part of the assessment reporting. There was a strong correlation between Lexile scores between the two assessments. The AHS



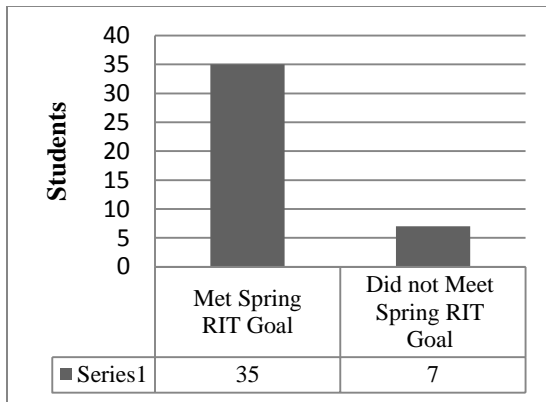
RTI team focused on Lexile scores from the SRI. According to Scholastic (2012), expected Lexile growth can vary for individual students, but the average increase for a high school student is 50L per year. Table 12 shows the number of students that met their individual Lexile growth goals in the spring of 2015.

Table 12		
AHS RTI Lexile Growth		
	Count	Percent
Total Students Who Met/Exceeded Goal	35	80%
Total Students Who Have Not Met Goal	7	20%
Average Class Growth in Lexile:80		

### **Analysis of NWEA MAP RIT scores**

In addition to a Lexile score, MAP also produces an individual RIT score for students. Similar to Lexile growth, individual student growth in RIT scores can vary. The typical increase for RIT scores is 2 points for students in ninth grade (NWEA, 2014). Students with an initial score below the grade level average typically have higher growth. Expected growth was between 3 to 10 points based on individual target growth set in the fall. Despite low initial data, many students reached their goals. Figure 14 shows the number of students that met their RIT goal in the spring of 2015. Eighty percent of students in the RTI sections of English-9 met their spring RIT goal. Teachers on the RTI team just met their team goals established at the start of the school year with 80% of the students reaching their goal.

Figure 14. Students Meeting Spring RIT Goal



*Note.* Two students were in an alternative setting at the end of the year and did not test.

### Attainment of Program Success Goals

During the 2014-2015 school year, the NWEA MAP assessment measured all ASD ninth and tenth grade student reading growth. Teachers used this assessment to set goals for success in the RTI program. The team established a goal of 80% of students reaching their individual RIT growth goal and 80% of students reading in the grade level Lexile range for year one of RTI implementation. RTI teachers reached a goal that was set higher than the typical goal for English-9 teachers (see Table 13).

Table 13

#### AHS Teacher Target Goals for NWEA MAP

Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Exceeds
Less than 50 percent of students will reach their individual RIT growth goal for the NWEA MAP.	50 - 64 percent of students will reach their individual RIT growth goal for the NWEA MAP.	65 percent or more students will reach their individual RIT growth goal for the NWEA MAP.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the analysis of the survey results and student assessment data revealed positive teacher and student perceptions of year one of the RTI process. Teachers had a clear understanding of their role to support students in the RTI program. They found value in the work that they were doing and held high expectations for their students. Teachers were confident that the work they were doing with students would lead to success on state assessments. Support of school leadership and the provided professional development were also positive during year one of implementation.

Similarly, the student survey indicated that students perceived their teachers as caring. Students indicated teachers had clear expectations and challenged them to work hard. While students did not necessarily like the year-long class, they saw the benefits of the class.

Student data also indicated positive results for students in the program. The majority of students showed growth and most students met their target goals. Eighty percent of students showed growth from fall to spring on the MAP assessment. Eighty percent of students showed growth from fall to spring on the SRI.

Based on the conclusions of this evaluation, the team made the following recommendations:

- 1) **Set program goals with the teaching staff.** Develop goals for year two of the RTI process that adds a grade level. Clearly define roles and responsibilities for each member of the team.

- 2) **Set target goals for students.** Developing target goals for students at the beginning of the year provides students and teachers with a framework for the year. Use progress monitoring data throughout the year to determine whether students are making progress toward goals.
- 3) **Schedule RTI reflection meetings with administration and RTI teachers.** Consistent meetings with administration help with appropriate support and allocation of resources.
- 4) **Plan and implement a professional development schedule.** The integration of professional development provided teachers with needed support throughout implementation. Continued professional development is needed in some key areas.
- 5) **Provide time for teachers to create CBMs.** CBM development was a challenge during year one. Allocate time and resources for teachers to develop CBMs during the summer and fall of 2015.

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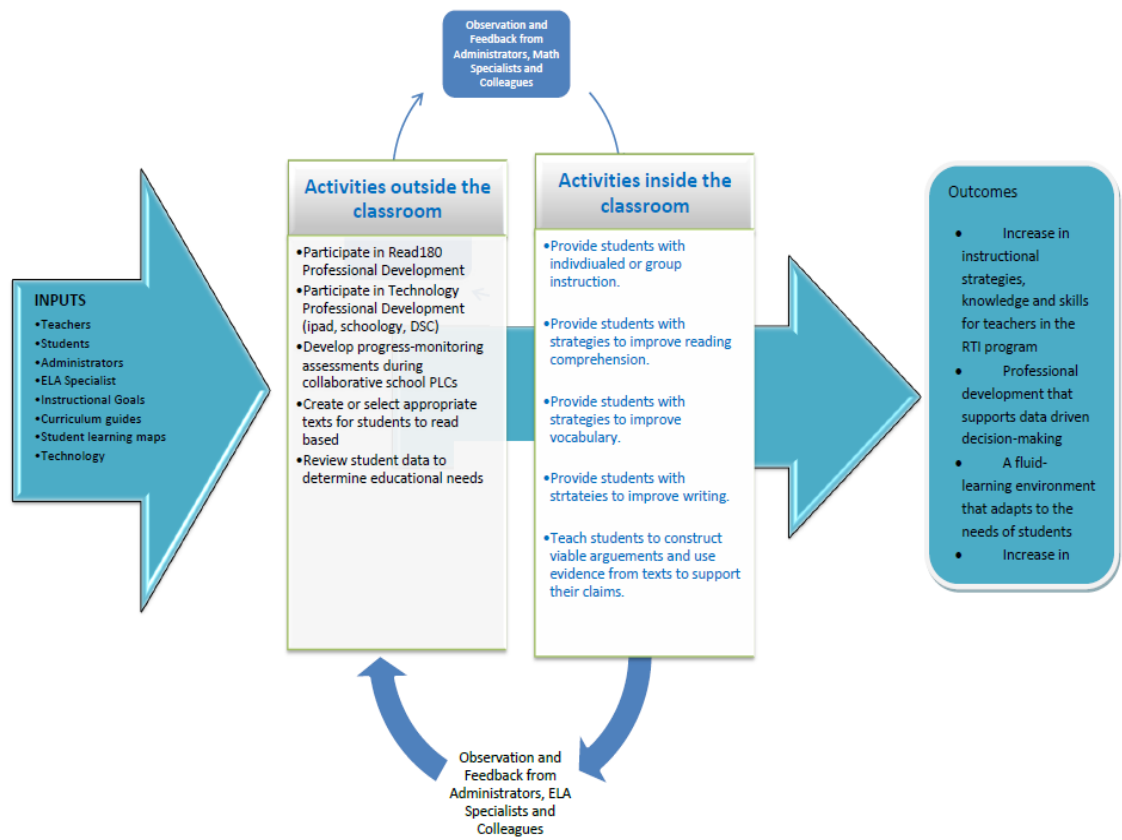
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## Attachment 1

### Summary of Outcome and Process Questions

Evaluation Question		Sample	Variables/ Instruments	Data Collection Procedures	Data Analysis Procedures
<b>Process</b>	<p>Does the teacher understand their role and responsibilities in the RTI program?</p> <p>Is the teacher receiving the professional development necessary to support instruction in the RTI classroom?</p> <p>Do students find value in the RTI program?</p>	<p>Teacher Survey: Four teachers currently teach ninth grade courses at Appoquinimink High School. This includes three teachers that are working directly with the RTI sections that include Tier 1-3 students and one teacher that has a small group classroom with Tier 3 students.</p> <p>Student Survey: Forty-seven students are enrolled in two sections of 9<sup>th</sup> grade English with RTI support.</p>	<p>Teacher will complete a survey about data driven decision-making and professional development. Questions on the survey ask teachers how they are using data and what professional develop supports implementation of RTI.</p> <p>Students will complete a survey about perceived benefits of the RTI class. Students will answer questions on a Likert scale to determine perceptions.</p>	<p>Teacher surveys will be distributed and collected during a weekly RTI progress meeting in January.</p> <p>Student surveys will be administered in a group setting to each section of 9<sup>th</sup> grade English with RTI support.</p>	<p>Analyze teacher survey data to determine teacher perceptions of their roles, responsibilities and level of support.</p> <p>Analyze student survey data to determine their perceived value in the RTI program.</p>
	Did students meet their target goals?		Review of grades, SRI, NWEA-MAP RIT scores, and progress monitoring tools will determine progress made toward established goals.	Data will be gathered after grades are reported. The final administration of NWEA-MAP and SRI occurred in May. All reports will be pulled by June 8 for analysis.	Analyze student data to determine what percentage of students made progress toward their goals. Determine if there is movement among tiers.

Logic Model: Year 1 RTI Process at Appoquinimink High School



## Attachment 2

### Teacher Survey

The questions below are designed to obtain your perceptions of RTI implementation at AHS and the support you have been provided during the first year of implementation. The survey will ask you to consider the following major reflection components:

- The responsibilities of the RTI Position
- The amount of support and guidance from school administrators
- The value added for students from this RTI program

Your participation is strictly *voluntary* which means you can choose whether or not to participate.

**Please rate the following statements describing your position as a teacher in the RTI program.**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

This position requires me:

1. to provide individual instruction for identified students.
2. to provide small group instruction for identified students.
3. to assist with the administration of reading tests.
4. to act as a resource reading teacher in a typical classroom.
5. to plan collaboratively with other teachers.
6. to use data to inform decisions.
7. to provide diagnostic services for students receiving RTI.
8. to provide prescriptive services for students receiving RTI.
9. to establish educational goals for students.
10. to maintain accurate records to document student growth.



**Please rate your agreement with the following statements about the purpose and value of the RTI program at AHS.**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

11. I feel a great sense of satisfaction when I do this job well.
12. The work I do in this RTI position is very meaningful to me.
13. I feel that the work I do in this RTI position is very meaningful to students.
14. I feel a high degree of personal responsibility for the work I do with RTI at AHS.
15. I understand the goal of the RTI program.
16. The work that I do in the RTI program helps students.
17. The RTI team that I work with demonstrates commitment to goal of the RTI program.
18. My work contributes to the goals of the RTI program.
19. Overall, I am satisfied with the RTI process at Appoquinimink High School.

**Please rate your agreement with the following statement below about the standards and expectations for all students in the RTI program at AHS,**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

20. The staff that I work with in the RTI program demonstrate commitment to quality education.
21. I believe that all students can meet state reading standards.
22. I believe that all students can meet grade level expectations.
23. Our RTI team believes that all students can meet state reading standards.
24. Our RTI team holds one another accountable for student learning.
25. Our RTI team holds one another accountable for behavior that is culturally sensitive.

**Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about the effectiveness of school leadership support for the RTI program.**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

- 26. My principal is committed to quality education for all students.
- 27. Staff members at all levels are treated fairly here.
- 28. I am comfortable presenting new ideas to my principal.
- 29. My principal has a student-learning focus.
- 30. My principal is comfortable presenting new ideas to the staff.
- 31. My principal facilitates systems/processes to support school improvement.
- 32. My principal listens to my ideas and concerns about RTI.
- 33. I talk with my principal/administrator about progress in the RTI program.

**Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about professional development at AHS for the RTI program.**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

- 34. I participate in a professional learning community focused on improving student learning through RTI.
- 35. My principal talks to me about my professional development for RTI.
- 36. Appropriate data are used to guide professional development to support RTI.
- 37. I engage in classroom-based professional development activities (e.g. peer coaching) that focus on improving instruction through RTI.
- 38. I engage in other professional development activities to learn and apply reading skills and strategies for RTI.
- 39. The training I attend related to collaborative teaching helps me do my job better.
- 40. The training I attend related to data analysis in RTI helps me do my job better.
- 41. Overall, the professional development I have attended related to RTI helps me do my job better.

**Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about the availability of resources, intervention strategies, and assessments at AHS for the RTI program.**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

- 42. I investigate different intervention strategies for RTI.
- 43. I have tried different intervention strategies in the RTI program.
- 44. I am able to successfully match intervention strategies with student needs.
- 45. The intervention strategies we have learned about in PD related to RTI help me do my job better.
- 46. I investigate different instructional materials for RTI.
- 47. I receive the necessary instructional materials for RTI.
- 48. The instructional materials I have requested related to RTI help me do my job better.
- 49. We investigate different assessments for the RTI program.
- 50. We use assessments to inform instruction in the RTI program.
- 51. We develop assessments for student progress monitoring in the RTI program.
- 52. We receive the assessments we request for RTI.
- 53. The assessments we use help us identify student weaknesses.
- 54. The assessments we use for RTI are standards based.
- 55. The assessments we use help us make decisions about student learning.

**Please type your response to the following questions.**

56. What components of implementing the RTI process at AHS the most beneficial?

57. What components of implementing the RTI process at AHS do you find most challenging?

### Attachment 3

#### Student Survey

You are being asked to complete this survey about your opinions of your 9<sup>th</sup> grade English RTI class. Your participation is *strictly voluntary* which means you can choose whether or not to participate. We appreciate your opinions so that we can make improvements in your class.

**Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about your 9<sup>th</sup> grade English class.**

1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know

1. My teacher makes me feel like s/he really cares about me.
2. My teacher really tries to understand how students feel about things.
3. If you don't understand something, my teacher explains it another way.
4. My teacher knows when the class understands, and when we do not.
5. When s/he is teaching us, my teacher thinks we understand when we don't.
6. My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover in class.
7. My teacher explains difficult things clearly.
8. My teacher asks questions to be sure we are following along when s/he is teaching.
9. My teacher asks students to explain more about the answers they give.
10. In this class, my teacher accepts nothing less than our full effort.
11. My teacher doesn't let people give up when the work gets hard.
12. My teacher wants me to explain my answers - why I think what I think.
13. In English class, we learn almost every day.
14. In English class, we learn to correct our mistakes.
15. My teacher wants us to share our thoughts.
16. My teacher gives us time to explain our ideas.
17. Students speak up and share their ideas about classwork.
18. In English class, we get to learn things in more than one way.
19. My teacher respects my ideas and suggestions.
20. My teacher takes the time to summarize what we learn each day.
21. My teacher checks to make sure we understand what s/he is teaching us.
22. We get helpful comments to let us know what we did wrong on assignments.

- 23. The comments that I get on my work in this class help me understand how to improve.
- 24. I like being in the year-long English class.
- 25. I like the support that I receive from my teacher in this class.
- 26. I am learning strategies in English class that help me understand better.
- 27. I use ideas from English class in my other classes.

# Attachment 4

## Teacher Survey of Year One RTI Implementation

<b>Question #1: Please rate the following statements describing your position as a teacher in the RTI Program.</b>								
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
to provide individual instruction for identified students.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
to provide small group instruction for identified students.	0	0	0	4	0	4	4.00	0
to assist with the administration of reading tests.	0	0	1	2	1	4	2.75	0.71
to act as a resource reading teacher in a typical classroom.	0	1	1	2	0	4	3.25	0.83
to plan collaboratively with other teachers.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
to use data to inform decisions.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
to provide diagnostic services for students receiving RTI.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
to provide prescriptive services for students receiving RTI.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
to establish educational goals for students.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
to maintain accurate records to document student growth.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43

<b>Question #2: Please rate your agreement with the following statements about the purpose and value of the RTI program at AHS.</b>								
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
I feel a great sense of satisfaction when I do this job well.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
The work I do in this RTI position is very meaningful to me.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
I feel that the work I do in this RTI position is very meaningful to students.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5
I feel a high degree of personal responsibility for the work I do with RTI at AHS.	0	0	0	4	0	4	4.00	0
I understand the goal of the RTI program.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
The work that I do in the RTI program helps students.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
The RTI team that I work with demonstrates commitment to goal of the RTI program.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
My work contributes to the goals of the RTI program.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
Overall, I am satisfied with the RTI process at Appoquinimink High School.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43

<b>Question #3: Please rate your agreement with the following statement below about the standards and expectations for all students in the RTI program at AHS.</b>								
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
The staff that I work with in the RTI program demonstrate commitment to quality education.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5
I believe that all students can meet state reading standards.	0	0	3	1	0	4	3.25	0.43
I believe that all students can meet grade level expectations.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5
Our RTI team believes that all students can meet state reading standards.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5
Our RTI team holds one another accountable for student learning.	0	0	1	2	1	4	2.75	0.71
Our RTI team holds one another accountable for behavior that is culturally sensitive.	0	0	1	2	1	4	2.75	0.71
<b>Question #4: Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about the effectiveness of school leadership support for the RTI program.</b>								
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
My principal is committed to quality education for all students.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
Staff members at all levels are treated fairly here.	0	0	0	3	1	4	3.00	0.43
I am comfortable presenting new ideas to my principal.	0	0	1	2	1	4	2.75	0.71
My principal has a student-learning focus.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
My principal is comfortable presenting new ideas to the staff.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
My principal facilitates systems/processes to support school improvement.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
My principal listens to my ideas and concerns about RTI.	0	0	0	3	1	4	3.00	0.43
My work contributes to the goals of the RTI program.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5



I talk with my principal/administrator about progress in the RTI program.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5
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<b>Question #5: Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about professional development at AHS for the RTI program.</b>								
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
I participate in a professional learning community focused on improving student learning through RTI.	0	1	1	2	0	4	3.25	0.83
My principal talks to me about my professional development for RTI.	0	1	2	1	0	4	3.00	0.71
Appropriate data are used to guide professional development to support RTI.	0	0	0	3	1	4	3.00	0.43
Appropriate data are used to guide professional development to support RTI.	0	0	0	3	1	4	3.00	0.43
I engage in classroom-based professional development activities (e.g. peer coaching) that focus on improving instruction through RTI.	0	1	1	2	0	4	3.25	0.83
I engage in other professional development activities to learn and apply reading skills and strategies for RTI.	0	0	3	1	0	4	3.25	0.43
The training I attend related to collaborative teaching helps me do my job better.	0	1	0	3	0	4	3.50	0.87
The training I attend related to data analysis in RTI helps me do my job better.	0	1	2	1	0	4	3.00	0.71
My work contributes to the goals of the RTI program.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5
Overall, the professional development I have attended related to RTI helps me do my job better.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.5

<b>Question #6: Please rate your agreement below with the following statements about the availability of resources, intervention strategies, and assessments at AHS for the RTI program.</b>								
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>SD</b>
I investigate different intervention strategies for RTI.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
I have tried different intervention strategies in the RTI program.	0	0	0	4	0	4	4.00	0
I am able to successfully match intervention strategies with student needs.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
The intervention strategies we have learned about in PD related to RTI help me do my job better.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
I investigate different instructional materials for RTI.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
I receive the necessary instructional materials for RTI.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.43
The instructional materials I have requested related to RTI help me do my job better.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
We investigate different assessments for the RTI program.	0	1	1	2	0	4	3.25	0.5
We use assessments to inform instruction in the RTI program.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43
We develop assessments for student progress monitoring in the RTI program.	0	1	1	2	0	4	3.25	0.83
We receive the assessments we request for RTI.	0	0	2	1	1	4	2.50	0.43
The assessments we use help us identify student weaknesses.	0	0	2	2	0	4	3.50	0.83
The assessments we use for RTI are standards based.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.5
The assessments we use help us make decisions about student learning.	0	0	1	3	0	4	3.75	0.43

# Attachment 5

## Student Survey of English-9 RTI Class

Item	Ratings										Mean	SD	N
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Do Not Know				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%			
My teachers make me feel like they really cares about me.	1	3	1	3	13	45	11	38	3	10	3.0	1.24	29
My teachers really try to understand how students feel about things.	1	3	4	14	4	48	9	31	1	3	3.0	0.87	29
If I don't understand something, my teachers explains it another way.	2	7	2	7	9	31	16	55	0	0	3.3	0.90	29
My teachers know when the class understands, and when we do not.	1	3	4	13	4	45	10	34	1	3	3.0	0.98	29
When they are teaching us, my teachers thinks we understand when we don't.	4	14	9	31	3	12	4	14	0	0	2.4	0.91	29
My teachers have several good ways to explain each topic that we cover in class.	1	3	2	7	10	34	16	55	0	0	3.4	0.78	29
My teachers explain difficult things clearly.	3	10	4	14	13	45	9	31	0	0	3.0	0.94	29
My teachers ask questions to be sure we are following along when s/he is teaching.	1	3	1	3	13	45	13	45	1	3	3.2	0.95	29
My teachers ask students to explain more about the answers they give.	1	3	4	14	16	55	8	28	0	0	3.1	0.75	29

## Student Survey of English-9 RTI Class continued

Item	Ratings					Mean	SD	N	2	7	3.0	1.05	29
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know								
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%			
My teachers want me to explain my answers - why I think what I think.	2	7	2	7	14	48	11	38	0	0	3.2	0.85	29
In English class, we learn almost every day.	1	3	2	7	13	45	12	41	1	3	3.2	0.97	29
In English class, we learn to correct our mistakes.	1	3	1	3	16	55	11	38	0	0	3.3	0.70	29
My teachers want us to share our thoughts.	1	3	1	3	18	62	7	24	2	7	2.9	1.03	29
My teachers give us time to explain our ideas.	1	3	2	7	17	59	9	31	0	0	3.2	0.71	29
Students speak up and share their ideas about classwork.	2	7	7	24	13	45	7	24	0	0	2.9	0.88	29
In English class, we get to learn things in more than one way.	1	3	1	3	15	52	11	38	1	3	3.2	0.93	29
My teachers respect my ideas and suggestions.	1	3	3	10	12	41	13	45	0	0	3.3	0.80	29

Student Survey of English-9 RTI Class continued													
Ratings													
Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Do Not Know	Mean	SD	N	2	7	3.0	1.05	29
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%			
The comments that I get on my work in this class help me understand how to improve.	1	3	2	7	15	52	9	31	1	3	3.0	1.09	29
I like being in the year long English class.	6	21	5	17	11	38	7	24	0	0	2.7	1.08	29
I like the support that I receive from my teachers in this class.	1	3	3	10	12	41	12	41	1	3	3.1	0.99	29
I am learning strategies in English class that help me understand better.	2	7	3	10	14	48	10	34	0	0	3.1	0.86	29
I use ideas from English class in my other classes.	2	7	4	14	12	41	8	28	3	10	2.7	1.26	29

## Attachment 6



### RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
Ph: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: December 5, 2014

TO: Keisha Brinkley  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [691909-1] Year One Evaluation of Appoquinimink High School's Response to Intervention Program

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS  
DECISION DATE: December 5, 2014

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # (1)

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or [nicolefm@udel.edu](mailto:nicolefm@udel.edu). Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

cc:

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