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Leading Change in Schools: Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model

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Leading Change in Schools:

Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model

by

Monica C. Verra

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Hiram, and our children. My sons, Michael and Robby have traveled with me through this dissertation journey for most of their childhood. Your support, encouragement and patience have been the wind beneath my wings. Thank you.

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I am extremely thankful for everyone who assisted in the completion of this project. I am especially appreciative to Dr. Darlene Bruner, whose commitment, guidance, support and encouragement have been invaluable. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Greenlee, Dr. Sedlack and Dr. Hines for their tremendous dedication to my growth through this challenging, yet rewarding, process. Finally, I must express my most sincere gratitude to my family and friends, and to my coworkers for providing the support and encouragement I needed to complete this journey.

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Leading Change in Schools:
Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model

Monica Verra

ABSTRACT

The reauthorization of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 strongly encourages the use of a response-to-intervention (RtI) model to reduce the number of students identified as learning disabled, to increase student achievement, and to close learning gaps between subgroups of students. RtI is based on the systematic assessment of students' responses to high-quality research-based instruction and interventions. The implementation of a research-based school-specific intervention model, such as RtI, may result in significant change for schools and districts.

The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of the level of change the implementation of RtI represents in a school district and perceptions of school and district leadership practices used to implement RtI. The literature on organizational change and learning, the role of principals and district leaders in school reform, and the effect of leadership behaviors on the ability to influence change form the theoretical basis for this study.

This mixed-methods study is descriptive in nature. Data were gathered through the administration of a leadership-behavior assessment measure and focus-group interviews. The sample included seven elementary schools in a large school district in west-central Florida.

The results of this study suggest that the implementation of RtI is perceived as a second-order change by most stakeholders. The findings point to the need for principals and district leaders responsible for implementing RtI to employ leadership practices needed for second-order change, paying particular attention to practices that have been identified in the literature as having a negative association with second-order change.

It is recommended that districts consider the use of a collaborative process in order to develop nonnegotiable strategic and specific, measurable goals for the implementation of RtI. In addition, districts and schools responsible for implementing RtI should consider benchmarking their practices against practices identified in this study to identify the strategies needed to scale-up district-wide reform and promote sustainability.

Chapter One

Introduction

As U.S. schools are becoming more diverse, they are faced with issues regarding disparity of achievement and outcomes for subgroups of students. School systems must respond with equity, access, and the ability to provide all students with the skills needed for success after schooling. Improved student performance continues to be a national priority. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) both have clear targets for improving student performance and closing achievement gaps for students who have historically underperformed in schools. These student groups are typically children of color and poverty. These same students tend also to be over-identified as needing special education services. These concerns have caused U.S. policymakers to rethink programs designed to assist struggling students (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

In an attempt to reduce the over identification of students with disabilities, the reauthorization of IDEA no longer requires state and local education agencies to use the IQ/achievement-discrepancy model when determining eligibility for specific learning disabilities and strongly encourages schools to use a response-to-intervention (RtI) model (Galvin, 2007). RtI models use a process based on systematic assessment of the student's response to high quality research-based general-education instruction that incorporates response to a research-based intervention (Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007). RtI focuses on providing earlier intervention for students experiencing difficulty learning.

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The goal is to reduce the number of students identified as needing special education and to close achievement gaps between subgroups of students. The research suggests that while RtI has the potential to improve outcomes for students, the success of the implementation is dependent on leaders who can establish infrastructures to support school-wide assessment, data-based decisions and interventions (Batsche, Curtis, Dorman, Castillo, & Porter, 2007).

Past studies point to the role of the principal as key to leading a school-based reform such as RtI (Morrison, 2005). According to Kotter and Cohen (2002) principals must engage in specific leadership practices that will support the magnitude of change that reform represents or even the best innovation is likely to fail. There is recent research to suggest district leadership also has a positive effect on school improvement efforts and without district support individual schools may not have the resources to improve on their own (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Additionally, as is noted in David and Shields (2001), systemic district leadership is needed if it is expected that all or most schools within the district should improve. According to Feist (2003) research suggests that without combined efforts of both principal and district leadership, school-based reform is not likely to be widespread or lasting; however, little is known about the actual leadership practices that principals and district leaders employ when implementing district supported school-based reform.

Theoretical Framework

The literature on organizational change and learning, the role of principals and district leaders in school reform, and the effect of leadership behaviors on the ability to influence change, form the theoretical basis for this study. Two goals of school improvement are to increase student learning and achievement and strengthen schools' ability to effectively manage change (Waters et al., 2003). Fullan (2001) defined the implementation of school improvement as a change from existing practices to new ways of work that will result in increased learning for students. Implementation should be considered a process and not an event.

Hall and Hord (2006) suggest that schools differ in their readiness for change and are on a continuum of various phases of development. Factors essential to this are opportunities for school-based learning, good leadership, creating ownership, and developing schools' problem-solving abilities. Tschannen–Moran and Gareis (2004) contend that in this era of accountability and significant school reform, principals are charged with leading change efforts at the school level. They argue it is commonly accepted that good schools are led by good principals and that their leadership is necessary to raise student achievement. The principal is expected to be the change agent by raising expectations for staff and students.

Waters and Cameron (2007) explain that effective change leadership requires a fundamental understanding of the change process, which is dynamic and complex. Change has been defined as an event that occurs when something passes from one state or phase to another, or when something is altered. It is interconnected with learning.

According to Hall and Hord (2006) change is a process through which people move as they gradually come to understand and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways. When change occurs, something ends and something new or different begins. This usually involves moving from the familiar to the unknown, letting go of the old and embracing the new. Most people have a strong psychological response to this process. One of the strongest responses can be a feeling of loss, along with the struggle to accept and become familiar with a new direction. Even when change is positive it is not uncommon for a person to feel an ending or loss associated with it (Bridges, 2003).

The process of change typically unfolds in a manner that can be recognized and predicted. The process generally has three main stages in common: status quo, transition/chaos, and new status quo. Variations on the process are determined by the type of change and the individual's involvement or reaction to the change (Prochaska & Norcross, 2001).

According to Wirth (2004) organizational change involves numerous individuals in an organization undergoing the change process at the same time. Individuals will make choices based on their personal situation and the culture that binds the group together. While there may be large subgroups with similar beliefs and values, there will also be some individuals who are outside the norm of any particular subgroup. Typically each subgroup will be uniquely different from the others and will require special consideration for the change effort. At the same time there will be individuals at all stages of readiness to change, each requiring a different level of support to transition through the change.

Marzano et al. (2005) maintained that principal leadership is a critical factor to implementing change in schools. Specifically the leader must engage in behaviors that

are consistent with the magnitude of the change represented by the innovation. If the leadership behaviors do not match the order of change required by the innovation, the innovation will probably fail, regardless of its value. Some innovations require change that is gradual and subtle, while others require change that is drastic and far reaching.

Marzano et al. (2005) described these categories of change as first-order change and second-order change. First-order change is incremental. It is often the next most obvious step to take in a school or district. Second-order change involves dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining the problem and in finding a solution. Incremental change fine tunes the system through a series of small steps that do not depart radically from the past. Deep change alters the system in fundamental ways, offering a dramatic shift in direction and requiring new ways of thinking and acting (p. 66). The degrees of change have been identified by others and described with such terms as technical vs. adaptive change, incremental vs. fundamental, and continuous vs. discontinuous.

Waters and Cameron (2007) proposed that when schools undertake an initiative with second-order impact for most stakeholders, staff might feel there is less cohesion and more fragmentation in the school and a loss of clarity of the school's vision. They may also feel that the principal is less accessible and less willing to listen to their concerns. These two factors tend to have a negative impact on staff's perception of school culture and communication. Principals must understand and adequately estimate the magnitude of the improvement for all stakeholders. They also must understand the change process; they must understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize and

how to emphasize them when working with staff for whom the change may have different implications (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Waters et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate possible relationships between student achievement and school-level leadership. The correlational studies they reviewed shared the following characteristics (p. 2): (a) the dependent variable in each study was student achievement, (b) the independent variable in each study was leadership, (c) student achievement measures were all quantitative and standardized, and (d) measures of school-level leadership were all quantitative and standardized.

Their work produced three major findings. First, they identified a statistically significant correlation of .25 (p < .05) between school-level leadership and student achievement. Second, they identified 21 leadership responsibilities with statistically significant correlations to student achievement and 66 practices or behaviors for fulfilling these responsibilities. The responsibilities are: culture; order; discipline; resources; involvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment; focus; knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment; visibility; recognition; communication; outreach; input; affirmation; relationship; change agent; optimization; ideas and beliefs; monitoring and evaluation; flexibility; situational awareness and intellectual stimulation (Waters et al., 2003).

Waters and Cameron (2007) proposed that all 21 leadership responsibilities are needed when implementing any type of change. Three responsibilities are associated with first-order change (monitoring/evaluation, ideals/beliefs, and knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and seven responsibilities, including the three emphasized

for first-order change, are strongly associated with leading second-order change. The responsibilities are ideas/belief; optimization; flexibility; knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; intellectual stimulation; change agent; and monitoring and evaluation. Four responsibilities: culture, order, communication and input are negatively associated with second-order change (Waters & Cameron, 2007).

Waters and Cameron (2007) also proposed a four-phase process of change with corresponding leadership behaviors: create demand (change agent and intellectual stimulation); implement (knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; optimization); manage personal transitions (flexibility), and monitoring and evaluation. They argue that the responsibilities are grounded in the literature in the areas of living systems, organizational learning, change and change management, transition management, and leadership.

In addition to literature supporting the important role of the principal in leading school reform, there has been an increased realization of the importance of school district level administrators in implementing and supporting school-based and district-wide reform. In a recent meta-analysis, Waters and Marzano (2006) investigated the relationship between district-level leadership and average student achievement in a school district. The analysis included 27 correlational studies from 1970 to 2005 across 2,714 school districts. They found a .24 (p < .05) effect size relating district-level leadership variables and average student achievement in a school district. Additionally, they identified six district-level leadership responsibilities with a statistically significant correlation to student achievement: (a) the goal-setting process, (b) nonnegotiables for achievement and instruction, (c) board alignment with and support of district goals,

(d) monitoring goals for achievement and instruction, (e) use of resources to support goals for achievement and instruction, and (f) defined school autonomy (i.e., principals have autonomy to lead their schools toward district goals).

Four of these responsibilities have been also been correlated to leading second-order change: (a) the goal-setting process, (b) nonnegotiables for achievement and instruction, (c) monitoring goals for achievement and instruction, and (d) defined school autonomy (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

The literature has identified potential limitations to district-led reform, needed infrastructure for successful systemic reform, and specific leadership behaviors that are needed to implement change (Feist, 2003). Many researchers acknowledge that without school-district support it is impossible to move beyond isolated islands of excellence at the classroom and school level toward the creation of powerful school systems, able to educate all children with equity (Balfanz & MacIver, 2000). More recent literature defined the role of the district as one of a mediator or facilitator between state and national policies (e.g. NCLB oversight responsibilities) and school implementation. Districts are crucial for mobilizing local support for policy implementation as they work closely with communities and schools (David & Shields, 2001).

The literature also suggests that leaders must properly identify and focus on research-based initiatives that are most likely to have a positive effect on student achievement. Focusing on the right classroom and school practices can have a positive effect. Focusing on practices that are unlikely to make a difference can have a minimal or even negative effect on student performance (Waters et al., 2003). One practice that has been found to have a positive effect on student learning is the use of a school-wide

problem-solving response to intervention model (Deno, 2002; Kratochwill, Elliot &

Callan-Stoiber, 2002).

The specific school-level reform initiative that was explored in this study involves

the implementation of a school-wide problem-solving response to intervention model

(specifically Problem Solving/Response to Intervention-PS/RtI) as part of a Florida

Department of Education (FLDOE) initiative. To help facilitate and inform

implementation of a PS/RtI model in the state, the FLDOE created the Florida PS/RtI

project. This project represents a collaborative effort between the FLDOE and the

University of South Florida, created to (a) systematically evaluate the impact of PS/RtI

implementation in a limited number of demonstration project sites, and (b) provide

professional development across the state on the PS/RtI model. The training component

of the project is intended to provide school-based teams with the knowledge and skills

needed to implement the PS/RtI model and includes on-site coaches for follow up and

support. The project requires participants to establish district and school-based leadership

teams. All Florida districts were invited to apply to participate in the demonstration

project. The project selected a purposeful sample from the interested districts. The

demonstration project involves 38 schools in eight school districts (Problem Solving &

Response to Intervention Project, 2009).

The PS/RtI model is a multi-tiered approach to providing high quality instruction

and intervention matched to student needs, using learning rate over time and level of

performance to inform instructional decisions. PS/RtI involves the systematic use of

assessment data to most efficiently allocate resources in order to improve learning for all

students (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2006). The PS/RtI

model includes the use of a four-step process: (a) problem identification; (b) problem analysis; (c) plan development and implementation, and (e) plan evaluation. A desired outcome of the use of this model is to provide a process for empowering teachers to identify solutions that will increase effective outcomes for students who have historically underperformed (e.g., students of poverty, students with disabilities, second-language learners) in school systems (Batsche et al., 2007).

Galvin (2007) points out that PS/RtI requires a collaborative effort between general education and special education. This effort will require many educators to adopt new ways of thinking, collaborating, and acting (Elliott & Morrison, 2008). The goal of the Florida DOE is to implement the PS/RtI model statewide. Given that implementation of the model will give rise to a change in the way of work for schools and school districts, there is a need to determine the level of change involved.

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of a research-based school-specific intervention model, such as RtI, is likely to result in significant change for schools and districts. RtI may result in a change for most stakeholders that involves a challenge to existing ideas and beliefs, the need to acquire new skills and take on new roles. Waters and Marzano (2006) described this type of change as *second-order change*. Others have described deep change that alters a system in fundamental ways with terms such as adaptive, fundamental, and discontinuous. Fullan (2001) argued that decline occurs in organizations when struggling to implement changes that require new knowledge and skills, that challenge the status quo, or conflict with personal or group values. This decline has been described as the experience of things getting worse before they get better and referred to as the

implementation dip. Leaders need to understand and adequately estimate the magnitude of change that an improvement initiative represents for all stakeholders so that they are able to respond appropriately. They must also know and understand how to implement specific leadership responsibilities that have been shown to be successful when implementing change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) have identified specific leadership behaviors necessary for school improvement and leading school change. The literature also suggests that leaders must properly identify and focus on research-based initiatives that are most likely to have a positive effect on student learning.

The implementation of a research-based school specific intervention model, such as RtI, may result in significant change in the way of work for schools and districts. School and district leaders need to understand the magnitude of change and understand their role in leading change in the organization. This can be difficult to manage successfully because of the different degrees of readiness for change, perceptions of change and any loss associated with individuals in the organization. If leaders are able to respond with research-based leadership strategies they will increase the likelihood that the implementation will be successful and ultimately result in improved outcomes for all students.

In order to respond to this challenge, there is a need to determine stakeholders' perceptions of the magnitude of change that the implementation of RtI represents for schools and districts. There is also a need to identify the extent to which leadership practices used by principals and district leaders implementing a district supported school-

based reform such as RtI are consistent with practices identified in the research as likely to facilitate change.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers, principals and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team regarding the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention represents in seven elementary schools in a large west-central Florida district. In addition, the study sought to determine perceptions of teachers, principals and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team regarding the school and district leadership practices used to implement Problem Solving/Response to Intervention and the extent to which these practices are consistent with a profile of specific leadership responsibilities that have been identified as being associated with successful implementation of change (Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the context of this study:

1. (a) What is the perceived level of change for schools associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, school faculty and the principals' supervisor in participating schools?

    (b) To what extent is there agreement between respondent groups relative to their perceptions of the level of change associated with the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative?

(c)   What is the perceived level of change for the district associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team?

2.   (a)   To what degree are identified research-based principal leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by principals to implement PS/RtI in participating schools as perceived by principals of participating schools, school faculty, and the principals' supervisor?

(b)   To what extent is there agreement among respondent groups relative to their perceptions of identified leadership practices employed by principals to implement the initiative?

3.   To what degree are identified research-based district leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by the district PS/RtI leadership team members to implement the initiative as perceived by members of the district PS/RtI leadership team, principals of participating schools, and members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams?

4.   What facilitating factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI are perceived by principals, members of the school-based PS/ RtI leadership teams, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team?

Importance of Study

The implementation of PS/RtI is Florida's response to mandates of NCLB and IDEA so all students receive high-quality, effective instruction. The Florida Department

of Education has emphasized the use of PS/RtI by changing rules and procedures for identifying students in need of assistance. For example, Florida rules now require parent conferences, to include discussion regarding a student's response to interventions, prior to consideration of special-education eligibility. School practitioners in Florida will be required to implement PS/RtI at district and school levels to meet the new statutory state requirements for interventions and special-education eligibility (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2006). School leaders in Florida will need to know and be able to put into practice essential leadership responsibilities related to school improvement if they are to play a key role in the success of implementation of PS/RtI and improved outcomes for students. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the implementation of PS/RtI.

Operational Definition of Terms

First-order change: Marzano et al. (2005) described categories of change as first-order change and second-order change. First-order change is incremental and occurs through a series of small steps that do not depart radically from the past. It is often the next most obvious step to take in a school or district (p.66).

Second-order change: Second-order change involves dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining the problem and in finding a solution. It alters the system in fundamental ways, offering a dramatic shift in direction and requiring new ways of thinking and acting (Marzano et al., 2005, p.66)

Problem Solving/ Response to Intervention (PS/RtI): This school-wide problem-solving approach uses a multi-tiered system of interventions, selected by a team, that can address multiple students' needs prior to identification of interventions that target each

individual student's needs (Batsche et al., 2007). This includes providing high quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying student-response data to important educational decisions (Elliott & Morrison, 2008).

McREL Balanced Leadership Profile: McREL researchers, Waters et al. (2003) have identified 21 leadership responsibilities with a statistically significant relationship to student achievement. Eleven of the 21 responsibilities are associated with implementing change. Three are positively associated with first or second-order change. Seven are positively associated with second-order change and four are negatively associated with second-order change. The Balanced Leadership Profile identifies evidence of the 21 leadership responsibilities.

School-based PS/RtI Leadership Team: This team includes the following members: principal, assistant principal, reading specialist, school psychologist, speech pathologist, general education teachers, and special education teachers. Only instructional staff are included in this study as representatives of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams.

District PS/RtI Leadership Team: This team is comprised of 27 members and includes representation from the district level and school-based administrators. The following district instructional departments are represented by directors, supervisors and specialists: research and evaluation, student services, exceptional student education, curriculum and instruction, pre-kindergarten services, staff development, and leadership development. The school-based representatives include principals and assistant principals from elementary and middle schools. The assistant superintendents for curriculum and

instruction, elementary and middle schools also serve on the leadership team. Only district level staff are included in this study as representatives of the district PS/RtI leadership team.

<center>Delimitations</center>

This mixed-methods study is descriptive in nature. The large west-central Florida district in this study is part of an ongoing PS/RtI demonstration project and was selected due to accessibility to the researcher. There are seven elementary schools in this district participating in the PS/RtI pilot project. Teachers and administrators who constitute the sample were volunteers. The findings of this study may only be generalized to similar elementary schools in Florida involved in the PS/RtI project.

<center>Limitations</center>

This researcher is the Director of Exceptional Student Education in this district and a member of the leadership team for the implementation of PS/RtI. There is the potential for researcher bias due to the nature of the researcher's role in the project; however, steps were taken throughout the study to control for the bias. The questionnaire was anonymous and the researcher recruited facilitators to conduct the focus groups. Data gathered though the McREL Balanced Leadership Questionnaire and focus group interviews were self-report. A limitation to self-report is that participants may have responded in ways that they perceived were socially acceptable.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

The literature in the areas of change theory, leading school change and school-wide reform using a problem-solving model, form the basis of this literature review. The section on change theory emphasizes change from a psychological and organizational perspective. The section on leading school change focuses on the role of leaders and specific behaviors needed to facilitate successful school improvement. The last section examines the need for a site-specific approach, specifically PS/RtI to improve student achievement.

Introduction

There is an increasing awareness that changes to our world are happening at a rate that exceeds the capacity of schools and educational systems to respond. Visionaries and futurists have been warning educational leaders that schools must change or they will no longer be able to prepare students for the world that they will be entering. According to Suarez-Orozco and Sattin (2007) during the last century basic formal education has become a global expectation. Schools across the world—whether in Africa, Asia, Europe, or the Americas—tend to share similar features. Schools are now being redesigned to prepare students to become engaged citizens, ethical human beings, and productive workers who will contribute to the societies in which they live (Stewart, 2007).

In response to local and global pressures, the federal NCLB act is addressing the achievement gap in America's public schools. There is a demand for equity and excellence in education for all students. American students from disadvantaged backgrounds and minority students continue to underperform in school, defining the U.S. achievement gap crisis (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). The goals of the IDEA act also support the need to reduce the number of students identified as having learning disabilities, particularly students of color and those from poverty backgrounds, by providing high quality instruction and interventions (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). Educators have long been aware of the challenges, but have not been successful in overcoming them.

In order to respond to current educational challenges school leaders must understand how to lead change in schools. By improving the learning capacity of schools leaders can deal with change dynamics. Schools will need to become places where groups and individuals continuously engage in new learning processes. Without combined efforts of both principal and district leadership practices focused on successful implementation of change, school-based reform is not likely to be widespread or lasting (DuFour & Eaker, 2002; Feist, 2003; Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000).

Understanding Change

Waters and Cameron (2007) argued that effective change leadership requires a fundamental understanding of the change process, which is dynamic and complex. The literature included in this section forms a framework offered by recognized authors of leading change in business and educational contexts, grounded in theories of human behavior from change psychology, learning theory, and anthropology.

Change is a construct that is frequently described with a set of assumptions that are rooted in cultural, social, ideological, and personal histories (Sayles, 2002). Change has been defined as an event that occurs when something passes from one state or phase to another, or when something is altered or made different. Change has been described as a process through which people move as they gradually come to understand and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways (Hall & Hord, 2006). When change occurs something ends and something new or different begins. This usually involves moving from the familiar to the unknown, letting go of the old and embracing the new. Most people have a strong psychological response to this process. One of the strongest responses can be a feeling of loss, along with the struggle to accept and become familiar with a new direction. Even when change is positive it is not uncommon for a person to feel an ending or loss associated with it (Sayles, 2002).

Conner (2006) argued that the human need for control has a powerful influence on how people perceive and react to change. Change is considered major when it is perceived to be so by those affected. Major change is the result of significant disruption in established expectations. This occurs when people believe they have lost control over some important aspect of their lives or environment. People have a sense of control over their lives when their expectations are matched with their perceptions of reality. Whether the outcomes and events are positive or negative, people tend to feel more in control when they have predicted the outcome and are not surprised by it.

Conner further contended that the human need for control can be met by planning for or at least anticipating the future. People then have specific expectations that are

established based on what can be planned or anticipated. There are two possible outcomes when life changes: (a) perceived reality matches expectations, a sense of control is achieved, and there is equilibrium or (b) perceived reality does not match expectations, a feeling of control is lost, and people must adjust to the changes they were unprepared to face (Conner, 2006; Kelly & Hoops, 2004).

The idea that human beings naturally resist change is deeply embedded in thinking about change. The language (e.g., "resistance to change"), assumptions, and mental models about change all seem to imply that something in human nature leads people to resist change. However, it is easy to find examples of human beings, from childhood through old age, actively seeking out change of all sorts. When people have not sought change themselves, but rather are having changes imposed on them, they are more likely to be resistant due to the need to feel in control of their lives (Bridges, 2003). According to Zell (2003) deeply felt experiences associated with change such as shock, anger, helplessness, and depression have been ignored by theorists of organizational change and are mistakenly labeled resistance to change. The difficulty of overcoming resistance to change may be the reason why efforts to bring about change in professional bureaucracies such as universities, hospitals, and school systems are usually described as slow, messy, and often unsuccessful (Zell).

The constant changes of life, whether planned or unplanned, are difficult for most people because of loss and uncertainty associated with ending the old and beginning the new. Planned purposeful change involves a commitment to renew and learn. Unplanned change is often unaccompanied by a desire or commitment to change and can mimic the grief process (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

Why Change?

There are many reasons people change. The first is fundamentally connected to our very being. We change physically, we age, we accumulate experiences, and we participate in a variety of roles throughout our lives. We also are influenced by the changes around us. Society changes, as do families, cultures, even expectations of gender. As these changes occur we are forced to learn to adapt and evolve to respond to the new context. Some change is sudden and unexpected. These changes are often the hardest to assimilate especially when they involve a loss—of a loved one, a job, or even our freedom (O'Connor & Fiol, 2006). Other change is planned in our attempts to improve our lives and ourselves. The changes we seek are often based on inspiration: we seek improvement with our health, relationships, appearance, community, and profession; or desperation: we want to stop a negative behavior such as smoking, overeating, drinking, being abusive, or worrying, and replace it with a new behavior (Prochaska & Norcross, 2001, 2002).

According to Knowles (2005), there are at least six factors that tend to motivate adults to learn and change: (a) to meet a need for associations and friendships, (b) to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with authority, (c) to prepare for service to the community and improve one's ability to participate in community work, (d) for personal advancement to achieve higher status in a job, secure professional advancement, and to stay ahead of the competition, (e) to relieve boredom, provide a break in the routine of home or work, and (f) to learn for the sake of learning, seek knowledge for its own sake and satisfy an inquiring mind.

What are the Stages of Change?

The process of change typically unfolds in a manner that can be recognized and predicted. The process has been described by many and generally has three main stages in common: status quo, transition/chaos, and new status quo. Variations on the process are determined by the type of change and the individual's involvement or reaction to the change. The literature primarily deals with change that is unexpected and unavoidable and that causes a significant loss to an individual. These changes are often unpleasant such as the death of a loved one, or the loss of a marriage or a job. There is much to learn about the ways humans react and adjust to this type of change. An overview of the stages of change follows.

Status quo describes the period of time before the possibility of a change event is introduced to the individual. This time is marked by stability and life is familiar, predictable, and secure (Habar, 2002). The individual is not aware of a need to change or that anything may be wrong.

In the transition/chaos stage there are several phases that most people experience. According to Sayles (2002), when change occurs the status quo is forever disrupted by the introduction of a foreign element. This foreign element can be positive (promotion) or negative (demotion). It can also be an idea that one has chosen or been advised to consider in an effort to improve the current situation (e.g., the need to learn a new skill).

When the foreign element is something shocking and unexpected people often react by thinking "this can't be happening to me." During this stage people instinctively react with denial and disbelief. Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2005) observed denial as the first stage in the process by which people deal with grief and tragedy, particularly when

diagnosed with terminal illness. Longaker (1998) noted similar stages through work with families facing the loss of a loved one. People tend to feel numb and confused during this stage. DiClemente and Prochaska worked with people struggling to overcome alcoholism and contended that in the precontemplation stage people are often unable to acknowledge that a problem exists. This is also described as being in "denial" (DiClemente, 2006).

Bridges (2003) connected processes in this stage to work-related transitions. After a professional career and location change he found himself more upset and confused than he had anticipated he would have been and began to question if he had made a bad decision and should go back to his previous situation. He argued that a common error in managing change at work is underestimating the affect it has on individual people. Denial at work is often characterized by a complete lack of response, concern or reaction to an announced change. Business continues as usual until resistance and bargaining behaviors begin to emerge.

Sayles (2002) explained that as people move through the numbness of denial they begin to resist the change and begin to experience self-doubt, anger, depression, anxiety, frustration, fear, or uncertainty. More often than not at the heart of resistance to change is a very powerful emotion: fear—of being inadequate to the new demands, of failing and suffering humiliation, of being seen as inept or weak, or, if in a position of authority, of having that power and status diminished. Resistance is also characterized by anger: "Why me? It's not fair," and bargaining "Please just give me one more chance." Finally, when one becomes convinced that resistance is having no impact on the new element or change (e.g. the old way of work is gone forever) a deep awareness and understanding of the

situation becomes clear. Depression, sorrow, and sadness often occur in response to reality (Bridges, 2003; Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

During the chaos stage, people have a strong sense of urgency and a plethora of strong emotions. They have a wide variety of ideas, rational and irrational, of what can be done to address the foreign element. Behaviors, feelings, and performance vary and are constantly changing. The stress found in chaos is necessary to motivate people to make sense of what is going on and figure out how to respond to the change. Chaos can be a creative time, but often the urgency and stress overpower the sense of creativity (Sayles, 2002). Habar (2002) described transformation as the time when a transforming idea emerges out of the chaos. This idea helps to make sense of the foreign object, or at least manage it. This is the idea that gives a new understanding of what to do and to begin to see a way out of the chaos. Next, in the integration stage one begins to try the new idea or behavior. Progress is rapid as people learn what works and what does not and become more skilled and hopeful. Performance improves, often to levels higher than before the foreign element was introduced. This stage can be one of the most challenging because it involves learning new behaviors that will replace old behaviors (Bridges, 2003).

Finally, after moving through the transition or chaos stage a new status quo begins to be defined. In this stage equilibrium is being reestablished, new skills become second nature and learning transforms into assumptions and expectations. Ultimately the new status quo becomes *the* status quo (Habar, 2002). This stage has also been described as the "new normal."

How Do People Learn New Behaviors Needed for Change to Occur?

Learning is often defined as a change in behavior demonstrated by people implementing knowledge, skills, or practices derived from education. The theories of learning in psychology have a profound impact on how change is viewed and practiced, and are based on human nature and the possibility that humans can learn and change (Pajares, 2002). Bandura (2001) suggested that individuals learn by direct experiences, human dialogue, interactions, and observations. Behavior change is affected by environmental influences, social-personal factors and attributes of the behavior itself. The three factors—environment, people, and behavior—constantly influence each other. Behavior is not simply the result of the environment and the person, just as the environment is not simply the result of the person and behavior (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2002). Behavior is a result of consequences. For learning to occur the individual's positive expectations of the behavior should outweigh negative expectations (Pajares, 2002).

Behavioral capability means that if people are to perform a behavior, they must know what the behavior is and have the skills to perform it. Additionally, for change to occur individuals must have a sense of self-efficacy (Pajares, 2002). Bandura (2001) introduced the concept of self-efficacy as the primary motivational force behind an individual's actions. Self-efficacy is one of the most consistently defined motivational constructs used in the research (Murphy & Alexander, 2000). As defined by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes" (p. 193).

Individuals must believe in their capability to perform the behavior and must perceive that there is an incentive to change. Self-efficacy is believed to be the most important characteristic that determines a person's behavior change because the individual must have expectations that they are able to perform the behavior in the first place (Pajares, 2002; Robbins, 2003). As identified by Bandura (2001) efficacy beliefs can be supported by four factors: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. Mastery experiences are those that individuals perform personally with success. Vicarious experiences are successful experiences observed by others. Observing successful models helps individuals to determine their abilities to accomplish the same task. Verbal persuasion is found in the collective voice of an individual's friends and colleagues as they provide support for attempts to take on and complete tasks. The last source of self-efficacy is physiological cues. The human body often provides clues of emotions that may not be superficially evident. All factors that influence self-efficacy can have a negative effect as well as positive one (Bandura, 2001).

Most individuals have knowledge and skills that are not used regularly. Therefore knowledge alone does not ensure effective practice. People must also be guided by a belief in their ability to effectively use their knowledge in a given context to be moved to action (Kritsonis, 2005). Self-efficacy is thought to lead individuals from knowledge to action. Bandura (2000) contends that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between knowledge and action. Having knowledge and skills needed to perform actions does not guarantee an individual will perform the action.

Ajzen (2002) argued that individual performance of a given behavior is primarily determined by a person's intention to perform that behavior. This intention is determined by two major factors: (a) the person's attitude toward the behavior (i.e., beliefs about the outcomes of the behavior and the value of these outcomes), and (b) the influence of the person's social environment or normative beliefs (i.e., beliefs about what other people think the person should do, as well as the person's motivation to comply with the opinions of others; Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2003). The concept of perceived behavioral control is similar to the concept of self-efficacy—people's perception of their ability to perform a behavior. Perceived behavioral control over opportunities, resources, and skills necessary to perform a behavior is believed to be a critical aspect of individual change processes (Ajzen, 2002; Aronson et al.).

The literature clearly supports the need to understand the change process, and importance of transitions, in order to manage change successfully. Transitions always start with an ending, which means there is a loss. Even when the change is desired and highly positive there is some degree of loss "for the way things were." Resistance to change may be partially due to the desire not to feel the loss, confusion and uncertainty that are associated with change. The literature does not describe outcomes when individuals are unable to navigate change successfully and become overwhelmed with fear, anxiety and depression. A clearer understanding of how leaders can identify the stages of transitions that people are in and how to assist them in transitions is needed. Additionally, while the literature defines self-efficacy and emphasizes the need for it, there is a need to further explore how self-efficacy can be developed in oneself and

others. This is particularly needed to understand how perceptions and beliefs about one's abilities can be directed towards self-efficacy.

How Do Organizations Change?

According to Wirth (2004), organizational change can be described as numerous individuals undergoing a similar change process at the same time. Individuals will make choices based on their personal situation and the culture that binds the group together. While there may be large subgroups with similar beliefs and values, there will also be some individuals who are outside the norm of any particular subgroup. Typically each subgroup will be uniquely different from the others and will require special consideration for the change effort. At the same time there will be individuals at all stages of readiness, each requiring a different level of support to transition them through the change.

The organizational change effort should be thought of as a process of identifying where individuals and individual subgroups fall along a continuum of readiness to change. Each subgroup will require a change process that is specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals within the group (Wirth, 2004). Several theorists have identified models to assist with the change process as it relates to individuals who are part of a larger group. Their theories are described in the following section.

In 1951, Lewin introduced the three-step change model. He viewed behavior as a dynamic balance of forces working in opposite directions. Driving forces facilitate change while restraining forces hinder change. To identify strategies that assist with change the forces must be analyzed. His three steps are unfreeze, move, and refreeze (Burnes, 2007):

1.   Unfreeze—The first step in the process of changing behavior is to unfreeze the existing situation or status quo. This is necessary to overcome individual and group resistance to the proposed change. There are three ways this can be accomplished:

(a)   increase the driving forces that are needed to direct the behavior away from status quo;

(b)   decrease the restraining forces that negatively affect the movement from the status quo; and

(c)   utilize a combination of increasing and decreasing force.

Lewin suggested that allowing groups to actively participate in recognizing problems and brainstorming solutions in the group will assist in motivating individuals by preparing them to change and will build trust and recognition for the need to change.

2.   Movement—Lewin's second step in the process of changing behavior is movement. In this step the goal is to move the group to a new status quo. Three actions that can assist are:

(a)   helping the group to understand and agree that the status quo is not beneficial to them and encouraging them to view the problem from a fresh perspective;

(b)   enabling the group to work together on a quest for new relevant information; and

(c)   connecting the group to well-respected leaders and colleagues who also support the change.

3.   Refreeze—This step occurs after the change has been implemented and is needed to establish the change as the new status quo. If this step is not taken there is a danger that the change will be short lived and people will revert back to the old status quo. This step involves the integration of new values into the community values and traditions. An action that can be used to assist with this step is to institutionalize the new change through formal and informal structures including policies and procedures (Burnes, 2007, pp. 213–231).

Oseni (2007) describes the Beckhard and Gleicher formula for organizational change. The formula proposed that the combination of organizational dissatisfaction, vision for the future, and possibility of immediate deliberate action must be stronger than the resistance within the organization for meaningful change to occur. The formula-for-change framework has four main themes: (a) determining the need for change, (b) articulating a desired future, (c) assessing the present and what needs to be changed in order to move to the desired future, and (d) getting to the desired future by managing the transition (Coghlan, 2000).

Additionally, Beckhard and Pritchard developed a model to assist with understanding the transitions. The transition model outlines three stages as follows: (a) current state: familiar, comfortable, can be controlled, roles are understood (b) transition state: letting go of the old, taking on the new, changes are pervasive, there are feelings of loss, depression, gain, and exhilaration, and (c) future state: unfamiliar, risky, unknown, controls not understood, new roles (Oseni, 2007).

According to Heifetz and Laurie (2001) leadership would be an easy and safe undertaking if organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions. Everyday, people have problems for which they have the necessary know how and procedures—these are called technical problems. But there are also a multitude of problems that are not responsive to traditional expertise or standard protocol. The authors referred to these problems as adaptive challenges.

Heifetz and Linsky (2004) have identified the six principles necessary for leading adaptive work:

1. Getting on the balcony—leaders must be able to observe and mobilize the organization; this involves moving back and forth between the field of play and the balcony view. Without this view the leader can get caught in the trees and not see the forest clearly.

2. Identifying the adaptive challenge—the balcony view allows the leader to identify the adaptive challenge.

3. Regulating distress—during this stage the leader's task is to generate enough distress among the people so that the need for change is felt by everyone.

4. Maintaining disciplined attention—it is the leader's role to ask questions, reframe the issues, get conflict out in the open, and use it to generate creativity. Teamwork and collaboration are essential.

5. Giving the work back to the people—leaders should provide support, rather than control, to allow people to solve their own problems. People at all levels of the organization possess specialized knowledge and

information. They should be empowered to improve issues of importance to them.

6. Protecting the voices of leadership from below—encouraging people to share ideas, opinions, and suggestions must be protected even when their voices are in contrast to senior-management ideas. Most people would rather have the person in authority take the work off their shoulders, protect them from disorienting changes, and meet challenges on their behalf. The real work of leadership usually involves giving the work back to the people who must adapt, and mobilizing and supporting them in their work (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004, pp. 33–37).

Pascale and Sternin (2005) stated, "Somewhere in your organization, groups of people are already doing things differently and better. To create lasting change, find these areas of positive deviance and fan their flames" (p. 72). The Positive Deviance Change Model suggests that in a typical organization people do not have to go far to find a solution to the problems they face. There are usually some individuals or teams who have figured out a solution and are exceeding the group norms or standards. The theory of positive deviance argues that in many cases classic change-management steps overlook the solutions that already exist and instead rely on the leaders or outside consultants to provide the vision (Hook, 2008; Pascale & Sternin, 2005). Pascale and Sternin's six-step positive-deviance model is based on their inductive research of organizations:

1. Make the group the guru—if organizations rely on leaders to solve problems this absolves the community from owning the solutions it must adopt for change to succeed. In the positive-deviance model, problem

identification, ownership, and action begin in and remain with the community.

2. Reframe through facts—reframing a problem has three steps. First, identify the problem as the group sees it. Second, find out if there are exceptions to the norm, people in identical circumstances who seem to be coping exceptionally well. Third, reframe the problem to focus attention on the exceptions.

3. Make it safe to learn—people get attached to the status quo, even when it is not good for them. Positive deviants may be afraid of being exposed, ridiculed, or subjected to retaliation if their new ideas or influence challenge the status quo of others.

4. Make the problem concrete—this step requires that the group be brutally honest about what the problem is, even when the truth is uncomfortable.

5. Leverage social proof—gather the positive deviants together to provide social support and to allow the skeptics to indulge in "seeing is believing."

6. Confound the immune defense response—every action has an equal and opposite reaction. In an organization that reaction often comes in the form of avoidance, resistance, and exceptionalism. When the ideas of change come from within the organization, from its own members, solutions are more easily accepted without the need for excessive use of authority (Pascale & Sternin, 2005, pp. 72–81).

The positive-deviance approach requires a role reversal in which experts become learners, teachers become students, and leaders become followers. The leader is no longer

the CEO—chief expert officer, but rather the CFO—chief facilitation officer whose job it is to guide the process of positive deviance as it naturally emerges (Hook, 2008; Pascale & Sternin, 2005; Sternin & Choo, 2000).

According to Adams (2003) organizations must be healthy to tackle adaptive work. He identified the characteristics of healthy organizations to include: (a) the organization as a whole, and all subgroups, focus their work on the achievement of the organizations goals, (b) form follows function—resources support the needs, (c) managers are held accountable for outcomes (profit or productivity), growth and development of staff, and creating a team, (d) communication is open both horizontally and vertically, (e) there is minimal conflict; when it occurs it is seen as an opportunity to problem solve, (f) there is little energy spent on interpersonal conflicts, (g) the organization and its parts see themselves interacting with each other and the larger environment, (h) there is a shared value and management strategy to support the organization and to help each individual maintain their independent identity and uniqueness, and (i) the organization and its members operate in an action-research process; individuals and groups can learn from their own experiences (Coghlan, 2000).

In summary, the literature identifies frameworks that can assist with organizational change. Lewis' influence can be found in many of the current approaches to change, particularly action research. Lewis' democratic approach empowers those closest to the work to identify the need to change and to develop solutions. A concern is that his model seems to ignore the human reaction to the transitions that change brings about. In contrast, Beckhard's approach was focused more on the entire organization rather than the smaller groups within. He recommended that change be lead from the top

and is systematic and strategic. He also includes the need for action research and encourages groups to learn from their experiences. His approach seems to ignore the possibility that something as complex as change may not always be neatly managed with a formula.

Understanding adaptive change is critical in today's rapidly changing world, as leaders today will face challenges for which they do not know the solutions. Adaptive change often has no easy answers; sometimes the problem itself is difficult to identify. Heifetz' ideas of adaptive leadership and positive deviance encourage leaders to act as facilitators and to empower the individuals in the organization to identify the challenges and create solutions. Positive deviance is especially interesting because it argues that the classic change models actually may cause a leader to overlook the solutions that already exist. This researcher wonders if the theory still applies when there is not a positive deviant within the organization and one must be sought from outside the organization to facilitate change.

How Do Organizations Learn?

Both people and organizations need to learn new ways of coping with problems. Organizations must continuously transform themselves into learning organizations, to become places where groups and individuals continuously engage in new learning processes (Bell-Rose & Desai, 2005). Only by improving the learning capacity of organizations can they deal with change dynamics. Learning organizations can create networks that will support individuals as they experience losses and celebrations brought by personal and professional changes (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000).

Senge et al. (2000) suggested that the guiding ideas for learning organizations start with vision, values, and purpose: what the organization stands for and what its members seek to create. In addition, a learning organization can be thought of as a strong, human-energy system that explores options and opportunities to advance the quality of life to its potential. Building connections is the major strategy for creating learning organizations that respond to life itself, because connections build the energy for change-useful connections (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar & Snyder, 2000).

According to Senge et al. (2000) learning organizations are communities where communication is used to connect, create, and collaborate. People can speak from their hearts and connect with one another at a deep level. When people talk and listen to each other in this way it creates a power that can turn conversations into reality. Marsick and Gephart (2003) added that learning organizations must be based on three foundations: a culture based on human values of love, wonder, humility, and compassion; a set of practices for productive conversation and coordinated effort; and a capacity to see and work with the flow of life as a system. The culture of a learning organization should support and reward learning and innovation, promote inquiry, dialogue, risk taking, and experimentation, and allow mistakes to be shared and viewed as opportunities for learning (Bridges, 2003).

DuFour and Eaker (2002) compared the concept of a learning organization to a professional learning community. The conceptual framework of a professional learning community shares the major characteristics evident in policies, programs, and practices of learning organizations such as: (a) a solid foundation consisting of collaboratively developed and widely shared mission, vision, values, and goals, (b) collective inquiry as

evidenced by relentless questioning of the status quo, seeking new methods, testing those methods, and challenging the results, (c) collaborative teams that work interdependently to achieve common goals, (d) action orientation and experimentation that turns aspirations into action and visions of reality, and (e) a focus on results as evidenced by a commitment to continuous improvement. The concept of the learning organization appears to have needed supports to encourage continuous learning, change, and improvement (DuFour & Eaker, pp. 25–29).

The literature clearly describes the learning organization as an environment that encourages people to identify the need for change, transition through change and have success with new behaviors or roles. In the learning community change is not something that happens once a year or every 3 years, but rather there is continuous learning, change and improvement. This researcher recognized many of the core elements of the preceding theories of change integrated into the theory of the learning organization. One might predict that change would be practically effortless in a learning organization; however there appears to be a lack of empirical research to support such a claim.

What is Known About Leading Change in Schools?

Tucker (2007) contended that 20[th]century educators were preparing youth for a stable and predictable world. Today's workers and leaders are challenged with unparalleled ambiguity and contradictions as they rapidly invent and design new adaptations and prototypes to fit the times. Empowering all students to learn and live in the 21st century has been a goal of stakeholders for many years. Quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. There is greater recognition today at the local, state, and national levels that sustained high quality

teaching and learning is essential if all students are to achieve at high levels (Sparks & Hirsh, 2000). This new context requires a radically different form of schooling (Snyder et al., 2000).

Marzano et al. (2005) suggested that one of the constants in education is that someone is always attempting to improve or change it through a new practice or program. Many of these programs and practices have real promise. They are well developed and based on research. Yet many, some argue most, attempts to implement change are short lived. Cuban (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005) investigated the fate of a number of sound educational innovations that were successful. In nearly every case within 6 to 10 years after the implementation the innovations were no longer in existence. In some examples the new faculty and staff of the school were not even aware that the innovation ever existed. So why is it so difficult to reform schooling? According to DuFour and Eaker (2002) past efforts to improve schools have not realized the expected results for a variety of reasons: the complexity of the task, misguided focus and ineffective strategies, lack of clarity on the intended results, failure to persevere, and lack of understanding of the change process.

Marzano and colleagues (2005) argued that principal leadership is a critical factor to implementing change in school. Principals must understand the change process; they must understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize and how to emphasize them when working with staff for whom the change may have different implications. Specifically, leaders must engage in behaviors that are consistent with the magnitude of the change represented by the innovation. If the leadership behaviors do not match the order of change required by the innovation, the innovation will probably fail regardless of

its value. Some innovations require change that is gradual and subtle, while others require changes that are drastic and far reaching (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Marzano et al. (2005) described these categories of change as *first-order change* and *second-order change*. First-order change is incremental. It is often the next most obvious step to take in a school or district. Second-order change involves dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining the problem and in finding a solution. Incremental change fine tunes the system through a series of small steps that do not depart radically from the past. Deep change alters the system in fundamental ways, offering a dramatic shift in direction and requiring new ways of thinking and acting (p. 66). The degrees of change have been identified by others and described with such terms as technical vs. adaptive change, incremental vs. fundamental, and continuous vs. discontinuous.

Heifetz and Linsky (2004) described technical problems as those that could be clearly defined and that have a reasonable expectation that traditional solutions will solve them. Adaptive problems are not easily defined and current ways of thinking do not provide a solution. Technical problems usually require first-order change and adaptive problems require second-order change. Adaptive change or second-order change expands an organization's view of the world while adding new strategies to an organization's skill set.

The common human response is to address virtually all problems as though they were first-order challenges. Humans tend to approach new problems from the perspective of past experiences. There is hope that the issues can be solved from the previous

repertoire of solutions. Unfortunately, solutions to most modern-day problems require a second-order perspective. Heifetz (1994) noted,

> For many problems, however, no adequate response has yet been developed. Examples abound: poverty at home and abroad, industrial competitiveness, failing schools, drug abuse, the national debt, racial prejudice, ethnic strife, AIDS, environmental pollution. No organizational response can be called into play that will clearly resolve these kinds of problems (p. 72).

Clearly the problems Heifetz (1994) described over a decade ago are resistant to change, as they remain our current problems today. Second-order change cannot be approached hesitantly. Fullan (2001) asserted that second-order change calls for decisive, swift action and argues that if school change moves to slowly it will only succeed in upsetting everything without getting the desired benefits of change.

Waters and Cameron (2007) argued that it is important that the terms first order or second-order have less to do with the actual change initiative and more to do with the implications of change for the individuals who are responsible for implementing the innovation. Whether stakeholders perceive a change as first-order or second-order has less to do with the change itself than it does with participants' own experiences, knowledge, values, and ability to adapt to change. Thus, few changes are of the same magnitude for all stakeholders (Maurer, 2007). Indeed, the same change can be perceived as a first-order change for some and a second-order change for others. Strong leaders, even when focusing change initiatives in the right directions can have a negative impact on student outcomes if they do not understand implications for stakeholders. See Table 1 below for a comparison of first-order and second-order change.

Table 1

Comparison of First-Order Change and Second-Order Change

First-order change	Second-order change
When a change is perceived as:	When a change is perceived as:
An extension of the past	A break with the past
Within existing paradigms	Outside of existing paradigms
Consistent with prevailing values and norms	Conflicting with prevailing values and norms
Implemented with existing knowledge and skills	Requiring new knowledge and skills to implement

Fullan (2001) and others described the *implementation dip* associated with second-order change. Declines in organizations when struggling to implement changes requiring new knowledge and skills that challenge status quo or conflict with personal or group values are well documented. The implementation dip is the experience of things getting worse before they get better.

Waters and Cameron (2007) proposed that when schools undertake an initiative with second-order impact for most stakeholders, staff might feel there is less cohesion and more fragmentation in the school and a loss of clarity of the school's vision. They may also feel that the principal is less accessible and less willing to listen to their concerns. These two factors tend to have a negative impact on staff's perception of school culture and communication. Principals must understand and adequately estimate the magnitude of the improvement for all stakeholders. Principals must also understand which leadership responsibilities to emphasize when supporting staff with different needs (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Schmoker (2006) suggested the model for the school as a learning organization or professional learning community can support schools' improvement as they implement the process of change; however, Waters and Cameron (2007) argued that much of the

literature about schools as learning organizations or professional learning communities is insufficient. They make the case for a new model, the purposeful community. They define a purposeful community as one with the collective efficacy and capability to use all available assets to accomplish purposes and produce outcomes that matter to all community members through agreed purposes (p. 46). The purposeful community stands apart as a more highly effective school community due to emphasis on collective efficacy.

The research on teacher efficacy focuses on the belief in the collective ability of teachers to help or reach students beyond external factors that impact the learning process. Teacher efficacy has been described as a teacher's feeling that schools are able to have a positive impact on students despite negative external factors (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Waters and Cameron (2007, pp. 52–53) expanded on Bandura's sources of collective efficacy with corresponding leadership behaviors:

Mastery experiences: Efficacy grows when people experience initial success and have opportunities to build on these successes. Establishing conditions for "early wins" and building on these experiences reinforce group beliefs.

Vicarious experiences: Efficacy is strengthened when individuals and groups have the opportunity to observe successful individuals in situations with similar circumstances.

Social persuasion: This source of efficacy is also referred to as "normative press." Influential individuals in a group create high expectations and provide encouragement and support to others to persist in pursuing desired outcomes.

Affective states: A shared sense of hope and optimism that the group can accomplish its desired outcomes, even after disappointments, is another key source of collective efficacy.

Group enablement: Groups build efficacy when they have opportunities to provide input on challenges and problems and to develop their own responses to these challenges.

To summarize, Kinsler and Gamble (2004) argue that an often understated challenge to school improvement is that changes in school culture, beliefs and assumptions are often necessary for any type of school reform to work. Stakeholders must believe that their students can learn and that the improvement effort can work if the reform is to have any hope at all. The significance of the culture and beliefs of stakeholders rests in its ability to either energize or move the change forward or to impede and stop it. Most school improvement models include affective components that stakeholders are asked to adopt when implementing change. Most commonly, the ideas staff are asked to adopt include the following: the belief that all children can learn, risk taking, trust, collaboration, empowerment and shared accountability. Values are often a critical component of the professional development associated with the reform initiative. There appears to be an assumption that appropriate beliefs and attitudes can be mandated or instituted as with a technical change or procedural innovation.

According to Fullan (2001) beliefs cannot be mandated by laws, or introduced like a set of procedures or a program. While school personnel can be forced to comply with new teaching practices, innovative methods and changes to organizational structures, values and beliefs are personal and connected to an individual's sense of self.

Attempts to change beliefs can leave staff resentful. Even carefully delivered training, with evidence supporting the need to change beliefs, does not guarantee that particular attitudes will be internalized. Additionally, the authentic adoption of values that lead to change does not guarantee that staff have the skills to translate the ideal of high expectations into appropriate teaching and learning practices.

Tye (2000) pointed out that any attempts to reform education are challenged by deep cultural structures of schooling in America that are nearly impossible to change due to societal expectations of the roles of school. She argues that the cultural structures include norms such as the school year calendar, student hours and days, the sorting nature of schools, the basics of the curriculum and the understood right of privileged communities to have superior schools. When schools attempt to change in these areas they tend to start reverting back to the cultural norm almost immediately, are almost undetectable in 5 years and there is no evidence of the change ever existing in 10 years. Tye contends that school districts or systems are not the proper focus for change due to their bureaucratic nature and that school reform is easiest to achieve at the school level.

What Role Do School-Based and District-Based Leaders Play in Leading Change?

Cotton (2003) argued that it would be difficult to find an educational researcher or practitioner who does not believe school principals play a critical role in school success. Cotton's narrative review of the research has revealed much about specific ways that principals impact student learning. Cotton reviewed 81 reports that dealt with the association of principal leadership on school-related topics, including student achievement, teacher attitude, and student behavior. The author identified 25 categories of principal behavior that are positively associated with the dependent variables of

student achievement, student attitudes, student behavior, teacher attitudes, teacher behaviors, and dropout rates. Cotton concluded that principal leadership does have a relationship to student outcomes, although an indirect one. While principals' daily interactions with students may have some direct influence on learning, most of it is transferred through teachers and others.

Cotton (2003) also noted that the research on effective schools identified a common set of variables associated with the success of high achieving schools. These include strong principal leadership, instructional leadership, a safe and orderly school environment, a purposeful focus on student learning, alignment of resources to achieving goals, and regular monitoring of student progress. Additionally, Cotton noted research points to the principal as an instructional leader and suggests the implementation of this role is a key difference between more effective and less effective schools. Principals of high-achieving schools were found to establish and gain school-wide commitment to clear learning goals and to promote these qualities throughout their school and even into the community. These principals engaged in assertive achievement-oriented leadership that included acquiring and distributing resources needed to meet school goals. They involved school staff and community members in decision making and modeled the types of behaviors they expected to see in their staff. They provided instructional improvement activities for their staff. They built positive relationships with staff that allowed them to focus others on achieving goals, monitored classroom instruction, gave feedback, and facilitated communication internally and externally. This type of instructional leadership was found to contrast with what researches described as typical leadership; day-to-day

management of the school with little time to attend to program improvement (Cotton, 2003).

Marzano et al. (2005) argued that whether a school operates effectively or not increases or decreases a student's chances for academic success by as much as a 44% difference in their expected passing rate on a test. The authors argued that principal leadership is vital to the effectiveness of a school. They point out that this is not surprising when in fact for centuries, people have assumed that leadership is critical to the success of any institution. The traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools are no different from leadership in other organizations.

In summary, leadership is considered to be a critical factor in school success. The following aspects of schooling have been linked to leadership: whether a school has a clear mission and goals; the overall climate of the school and the climate in individual classrooms; the attitudes of teachers; the classroom practices of teachers; the organization of curriculum and instruction; and students' opportunity to learn. Leaders must emphasize leadership responsibilities necessary to the development of schools and districts as organizations that are continuously implementing and sustaining the changes necessary to prepare all students to live and work in today's rapidly changing world (Waters & Cameron, 2007).

District's Role in School Reform

According to Feist (2003) there has been an increased realization of the importance of district support in implementing reform, both in schools and across the district. This stands in contrast to the image of superintendents, school boards, and district office staff created by former Secretary of Education William Bennett, who

characterized superintendents, district office staff, and school board members as part of the education "blob." The "blob," he argued, is composed of people in the education system who work outside the classroom, soaking up resources and resisting reform without contributing to student achievement. While there is research that describes the potential limitations of district-led reform, there is also research that identifies the infrastructure needed for successful systemic reform and the roles the district can play in providing necessary support. In a recent study, Waters and Marzano (2006) found that when district leaders effectively address specific responsibilities they have a profound positive effect on student achievement.

Much of the focus of the school-reform literature either focuses on the limitations of the district structure in implementing or supporting reform, views it as an impediment to the process, or even omits the district altogether (Feist, 2003). Spillane and Burch (2006) pointed out that discussion of reform efforts tend to disregard the district's role in the change process, but instead emphasize the role of the national or state level and the schools and classrooms. Most commonly, reformers do not define the district role and in fact, many decentralized approaches encourage individual schools to select state-approved curriculum, models, or other school-wide efforts.

Elmore (2003) agreed there is difficulty changing schools from within existing district or institutional structures. He argued that standards-based reform tends to hold schools, not school districts, accountable to state accountability systems. Elmore saw districts as struggling to find a new role while a more direct relationship forms between states and schools. Spillane and Burch (2006) explained that it is school districts' complicated internal structure that makes them potentially less effective in leading

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reform. The central office structure is fragmented and segmented, creating barriers to school-reform efforts. The fragmented organization of the district restricts the division of the district office into organizational subunits, in which each person or department is only working with part of the problem. They cited several factors that contribute to the fragmentation of the district office: the lack of a district vision or mission, differences among school communities, and specializations of district-level staff, which can cause administrators to pursue missions supported by their particular professional field rather than the district as a whole.

Feist (2003) suggested that districts are also inefficient for two additional reasons: there are too many administrators and noninstructional resources; and the office is too centralized, hierarchical, and rule bound. Spillane and Burch (2006) described the district as a "sprawling nonsystem" which lacks the unity that is a precondition for effective leadership and instructional improvement. Balfanz and MacIver (2000) argue that in fact individual school reform can be undone in the district office. Large school districts are multilayered, but thinly staffed in many areas. This lack of infrastructure may push district staff into compliance roles because they are using limited resources to monitor reform along with other district mandates and goals. For this reason they argued that system-based reform needs to be integrated into the infrastructure of the district's way of work.

The challenges described make it obvious why districts may have difficulty implementing and supporting systemic school-reform efforts. However, many researchers acknowledged that without the district it is impossible to move beyond isolated islands of excellence at the classroom and school level toward the creation of powerful school

systems, able to educate all children with equity (Balfanz & MacIver, 2000). More recent literature defines the role of the district as one of a mediator or facilitator between state and national polices and school implementation. Districts are crucial for mobilizing local support for policy implementation as they work closely with communities and schools (David & Shields, 2001; Spillane & Burch, 2006).

Schlechty (2000) suggested that students should be considered clients of an organization led by leaders with a shared vision. He offered the following as characteristics of a district role: (a) participatory leadership and shared decision making between district offices and school administration and teachers, (b) responsiveness to building-level initiatives, (c) engaging the participation of teacher and principals, and (d) involving the community.

Watson, Fullan, and Kilcher (2000) espoused that when facilitating change the district should focus on listening to schools' needs and provide the appropriate resources and support. They identified the following critical components: (a) shared vision and common priorities, (b) expectation about professional learning as a crucial part of all stakeholders' lives in the system, (c) a conducive political climate, (d) connections between learning and evaluations, (e) smooth labor relations, (f) focus on local capacity building, (g) commitment to rigorous accountability (tracking progress and intervening in failing situations), and (h) encouraging innovation and sharing effective improvement efforts.

Balfanz and MacIver (2000) described the district role in maintaining high academic standards for all schools as creating, supporting, and sustaining high-performing learning environments that produce gains in academic achievement at the

school and classroom level. Priority district roles include providing support and guidance in selecting curriculum, setting up and sustaining infrastructure for professional development, and providing multiple layers of sustained accountability and support.

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2001) argued that strong district leadership requires three types of leadership—organizational, public, and instructional. It suggested that districts prioritize the following activities: (a) plan for recruitment and succession; (b) design and install fail-free systems for recruiting, targeting, and professionally supporting top quality leaders; (c) create and maintain an informed leadership base, including school board members, superintendents, and professional associations, and promote preparation programs, ongoing training, and networking opportunities to help educators update their leadership skills and knowledge on a continuing basis; (d) build a learning organization—align district, staff, school board members, and the leadership team to support the goals of improved student achievement; and (h) hold leadership accountable—adopt professional standards, professional-development requirements, accountability systems, and evaluation and research programs.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) identified 12 common themes found in the literature on district efforts to improve student achievement. These areas are:

(a) district-wide sense of efficiency, (b) focus on student achievement and the quality of instruction, (c) commitment to performance standards, (d) district-wide curricula and approaches to instruction, (e) alignment of curriculum, multi-measure accountability systems, (f) targeted focuses of improvement,

(g) investment in instructional leadership development, (h) professional development with an emphasis on teamwork, (i) new approaches to board–district and in district–school relations, (j) and strategic engagement with state reform policies and resources (pp. 41–45).

In a recent meta-analysis, Marzano and Waters (2009) studied the relationship between district-level leadership and student achievement. The analysis included studies from 1970 until 2005 including 2,714 school districts. The studies they reviewed shared the following characteristics: (a) reported a correlation between district level leadership or district leadership variables and student achievement, or allowed for the computing or estimating of a correlation, and (b) used a standardized measure of student achievement or some index based on a standardized measure of student achievement (p.3). They found an overall average correlation of .24 between district-level leadership performance and student achievement. Additionally, they identified five district-level leadership responsibilities with a statistically significant correlation to student achievement: (a) the goal-setting process, (b) nonnegotiables for achievement and instructions, (c) board alignment with and support of district goals, (d) monitoring the goals for achievement and instruction, and (e) use of resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction.

An additional finding was that of *defined autonomy*, the balance between site-based management where the district has little influence on the school, and building-level autonomy where school-building leaders are expected to assume responsibility for school success. Defined autonomy is the expectation and support to lead within boundaries defined by collaborative goals set by all stakeholders. A shared understanding and

commitment to a relationship with schools of defined autonomy is critical for districts

large enough to have assistant superintendents, directors, and other administrative staff

members. In most large school districts, superintendents fulfill responsibilities for

planning, goal adoption, board alignment and support, resource alignment, and

monitoring primarily though the district-office staff. A shared understanding of and

commitment to defined autonomy by all district-level staff contributes positively to

student achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Additional information describing the

district-level leadership responsibilities and associated practices can be found in

Appendix A.

The meta-analysis also revealed that there is a positive relationship between the

length of superintendent tenure and student achievement. These positive effects become

apparent as early as 2 years into a superintendent's tenure (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

While the research shows that the typical district office structure makes support for

systemic reform efforts challenging, it is clear that the support of the district is necessary

for successful reform efforts to be sustained and scaled up (Feist, 2003).

Differential Impact of Leadership

Waters and Cameron (2007) argued that a surprising finding for both school and

district-level leaders is the *differential impact* of leadership. Not all strong leaders have a

positive impact on student achievement. Their analysis revealed several studies that

found schools had below-average achievement, despite teacher ratings of strong principal

leadership. Understanding that there are many possible reasons for this finding, they

suggest two that appear to be the most likely. First, the effect of strong leadership can be

diminished when the principal is focused on practices that are not likely to impact student

achievement. Focusing on the right classroom and school practices can have a positive effect. Focusing on practices that are unlikely to make a difference can have a minimal or even negative effect on student performance. The second explanation for the differential impact of leadership is the order of magnitude of change that the principal's improvement effort will have on stakeholders (Waters & Cameron, 2007). Principals must understand the implications these changes have for staff and adapt leadership behaviors accordingly.

Likewise, the effect of strong district-level leadership can be mitigated if a superintendent is focused on goals that are not likely to affect student achievement. By focusing a district on goals that are unlikely to impact student achievement, a seemingly strong superintendent can have a minimal or even negative effect on student learning. A goal that has the potential to improve student achievement will most likely fail if principals, superintendents, and district-level staff do not understand and estimate accurately the order of magnitude of change. When focused on effective classroom, school, and district practices; appropriate achievement and instructional goals; and effective leadership responsibilities, it is clear that school and district leadership matter (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

What Skills and Knowledge Do Leaders Need to Facilitate Change?

Waters and Cameron (2007) reported that Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) researchers have analyzed thousands of quantitative studies published over the past 30 years to determine what works in classrooms and in schools. In two earlier meta-analyses, McREL identified teacher and school practices that are related to student achievement. They first reported on nine clusters of research-based instructional strategies related to student achievement (Marzano, 1998; Marzano, Gaddy

& Dean, 2000). The second study identified school-wide practices that were also related to student learning.

According to Waters and Cameron (2007) McREL's meta-analysis of the effects of school leadership on student achievement began in 2001 with the review of more than 5,000 studies that examined the effects of principal leadership on student achievement. From these 5,000 studies, 69 were selected that shared the following characteristics (Waters & Cameron, p. 2): (a) the dependent variable in each study was student achievement, (b) the independent variable in each study was leadership, (c) student achievement measures were all quantitative and standardized, and (d) measures of school-level leadership were all quantitative and standardized.

Waters and Cameron (2007) clarified that the meta-analysis aimed to determine relationships between student achievement and school-level leadership. It produced three major findings. They found an overall average correlation of .25 between school-level leadership performance and student achievement. Second, they identified 21 leadership responsibilities with statistically significant correlations to student achievement and 66 practices or behaviors for fulfilling these responsibilities (see Appendix B). They proposed a set of research-based leadership responsibilities and practices they considered to be associated with the construct of "instructional leadership" (see Appendix C). Additionally, Marzano and Waters (2009) suggest that there is a relationship between specific principal leadership responsibilities and district-level leadership responsibilities associated with student achievement as seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of Principal Leadership Responsibilities and District Leadership
Responsibilities Related to Student Achievement

Principal leadership	District leadership
Responsibilities fulfilled by the principal	Responsibilities fulfilled by the superintendent and executive/district office staff
Input from Stakeholders	Collaborative Goal Setting
Involvement in Curriculum and Instruction	Nonnegotiable Goals
Outreach	Board Alignment and Support of District Goals
Resources	Use of Resources to Support Achievement and Instruction Goals
Monitor/Evaluate	Monitoring Goals for Achievement and Instruction
Change Agent/ Optimize	Defined Autonomy

Waters et al. (2003) suggested that there is a need for leaders to understand the magnitude of changes they are attempting to lead and adapt their leadership responsibilities in order to have a positive impact on student achievement. They must understand the change process, specifically which leadership responsibilities must be prioritized and how to prioritize them.

Waters and Cameron (2007) proposed that of the 21 principal leadership responsibilities positively associated with student achievement there are seven responsibilities that are strongly associated with leading second-order change: ideas/beliefs; optimization; flexibility; knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; intellectual stimulation; change agent; and monitoring and evaluation (see Appendix D). They also describe a four-phase theory of change with corresponding leadership behaviors: create demand (change agent and intellectual stimulation); implement (knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; optimization); manage personal transitions (flexibility) and monitoring and evaluation.

Waters and Cameron (2007) described the four phases as (a) create demand (i.e., school leaders challenge the status quo, always considering new and better ways of doing things); (b) implement (i.e., principals develop knowledge of effective, research-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, and then use this knowledge to guide teachers); (c) manage transitions (i.e., the principal makes clear the reasons for the changes, develops a change-management plan, and specifies the new roles, responsibilities, and activities for all stakeholders); and (d) monitor and evaluate (i.e., the principal pays attention to the implementation of research-based instructional practices and monitors changes carefully). Appendix E provides additional information regarding the four-phase change model.

Waters and Marzano (2009) suggest that the following district-level leadership responsibilities, with a statistically significant correlation to student achievement, have been also been correlated to leading change: (a) the goal-setting process, (b) nonnegotiables for achievement and instruction, (c) monitoring goals for achievement and instruction, and (d) defined autonomy-principals have autonomy to lead their schools toward district goals. They maintain that these responsibilities can be linked to principal leadership responsibilities as seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison of Principal Leadership Responsibilities and District Leadership Responsibilities Related to Change

Principal leadership	District leadership
Responsibilities fulfilled by the principal	Responsibilities fulfilled by the superintendent and executive/district office staff
Input from stakeholders	Collaborative goal setting
Involvement in curriculum and instruction	Nonnegotiable goals
Monitor/evaluate	Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction
Change agent/ optimize	Defined autonomy

Heifetz and Linsky (2004) contended that district goals should be clearly linked to increased learning for all students and should establish challenging targets. Goals must set specific targets rather than offer vague expressions or beliefs. Goals that are strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and timebound earn the SMART goal acronym (O'Neill & Conzemius, 2005).

Waters and Cameron (2007) further contended that there are actually four leadership responsibilities negatively correlated with second-order change: culture, order, communication, and input. Even with well-planned change processes stakeholders are likely to perceive that leadership is not attending to these responsibilities as well as they should. People often report feeling disorientated, a lack of communication, leaders who seem less accessible, and a loss of input in the decision-making process. The district leadership responsibility of collaborative goal setting may also have a negative correlation with second- order change based on the reasons listed above (Waters & Marzano, 2009).

In most cases the need for leaders to manage personal transitions is associated with second-order change, as first-order changes are typically considered an extension of the past and consistent with accepted ways of doing things. Of course the complexity of the change process in relationship to individuals may lead to a change perceived as first-order by most stakeholders and second-order by some. Leaders must be attentive to stakeholders both within and outside of their organization to properly assess the situation (Kanter, 2001; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Waters and Cameron identified examples of how a school-leadership team might fulfill these responsibilities so that the principal or leader

focuses on the seven responsibilities positively correlated with second-order change (see Appendix F).

The identification of 21 leadership responsibilities significantly associated with student achievement led to the development of the Balanced Leadership Framework. The authors contend that the Balanced Leadership Framework is grounded in evidence, and provides concrete responsibilities, practices, knowledge, strategies, tools, and resources that principals and others need to be effective leaders (Waters et al., 2003, p. 2). Waters and Grubb (2004) compared the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards (developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration) and the Balanced Leadership Framework and found that the McREL conclusions add value to the use of ISLLC Standards by policymakers and others in three key ways: (a) increased utility, (b) guidance based upon quantitative research, and (c) the identification of leadership practices that should take primacy (p. 3).

Waters and Grubb (2004) argue that the 21 leadership responsibilities and 66 practices in the Balanced Leadership Framework are easier for practitioner use compared to the 184 indicators emanating from the six ISLLC Standards. However, there are numerous instances where the two sets of standards share common language and reference. The suggestion that the quantitative results of the Balanced Leadership Framework provide ISLLC Standard acceptance mainly points to McREL filling the void left by ISLLC Standards, which are failing in numerous instances to communicate the critical connection between the standard and improved student learning. The McREL findings clarify what key points should take primacy in the ISLLC Standards and offer

guidance to policymakers, senior education officials, and practitioners about what to do (pp. 3–4).

The Balanced Leadership Framework is organized into work responsibilities and the extent to which a principal/leader meets the responsibility within the context of identified associated practices. The responsibilities include: affirmation, change agent, communication, contingent rewards, culture, curriculum, instruction, assessment, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, knowledge of curriculum, monitors/evaluates, optimizer, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness, and visibility (Waters et al., 2003).

Waters and Cameron (2007) summarized that research in the field of leadership, change, and innovation led by experts such as Heifetz, Fullan, Beckhard, Pritchard, Hesselbein, Johnson, Kanter, Bridges, Rogers, Nadler, Shaw, and Walton, make the case that not all change is of the same magnitude. Some changes have greater implications than others for stakeholders. Leaders who fail to understand the implications and manage them well can result in failed implementation of a good practice. This can result in minimal, or worse, negative impact on student achievement.

What is the Right Work on Which Leaders Should Focus?

Schools and districts across the United States generally identify focus areas for improvement each year to increase student achievement. Elmore (2003) argued that the area leaders focus on is a critical factor in the school's ability to improve student achievement. The reason that some low-performing schools do not improve is not because the staff and leadership are not working hard, but rather that they are focused on the wrong work. Elmore concluded that knowing the right thing to do is the central

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problem of school improvement. Holding schools accountable for their performance depends on having people in schools with the knowledge, skill, and judgment to make improvements that will increase student performance (p. 9).

One approach to school improvement is the adoption of a comprehensive school-reform model. The U.S. Department of Education (2008b) defined a comprehensive school reform model as having the following features: (a) has been found to significantly increase student achievement through scientifically research-based studies, (b) provides for high-quality staff development, (c) provides for meaningful involvement of parents and community, and (d) employs proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school leadership. According to Marzano et al. (2005) a meta-analysis of 29 comprehensive school-reform models suggested three generalizations: (a) the cost of the models vary significantly from zero dollars to a high of several hundred thousand dollars, (b) the effectiveness of comprehensive school-reform models varies from large positive effects on student achievement to possible negative effects, and (c) the effects over time show the greatest gains when schools have adapted the model to their specific situations.

Another approach is to identify the right work for a school by designing a site-specific intervention that is based on the needs of the school, typically using a theory or model of effective schooling. Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004) recommended six steps that can assist a school in planning a site-based intervention: identifying and clarifying the core beliefs that define the school's culture, creating a shared vision, collecting and analyzing accurate data to define the gap between reality and the vision, identifying innovations that can close the gap, implementing an action plan, and focusing on collective accountability of outcomes.

School-Based Problem Solving/ Response to Intervention

Kovaleski and Glew (2006) suggest that a critical part of site-specific school reform is the use of a problem-solving process. Two features seem to be central to meaningful change. These features include the transformation of schools into learning organizations and creating a culture of problem solving. They argue that the research demonstrates the implementation of school-based problem-solving teams resulted in positive outcomes for students and teachers, decreased referrals to and placements in special education, and increased the likelihood that referrals to special education were based on student need and not on lack of appropriate instruction and interventions (Burns, Griffiths, Parson, Tilly, & VanDerHeyden, 2007). Morrison (2005) pointed to the literature on the use of school-based problem-solving teams as a way to address academic needs of all students and to restructure general and special education. Morrison described the problem-solving model as one that typically has four or five stages in the process. The Problem Solving/Response To Intervention (PS/RtI) model uses five steps: problem identification, problem analysis, plan development, plan implementation, and plan evaluation (Batsche & Curtis, 2005; Batsche et al., 2007).

The problem-identification step requires that the problem-solving team work to define the problem and determine if the problem is an individual or organizational issue (Deno, 2002). At this stage the team establishes goals and a hypothesis as to why the problem occurs (Batsche et al., 2007). Next the team moves to problem analysis by fully investigating all possible contexts (ecological, organizational, situational, and behavioral) and either accepts or rejects the hypothesis that was developed in the first step (Batsche et al., 2007). The team then develops a plan for implementation of the agreed upon

intervention. This includes identifying the school's capacity to implement the intervention. At this time criteria, methods, and a timeline to determine whether the intervention has been successful are established (Batsche et al., 2007). Plan implementation involves the actual commitment to implementing the intervention and assessing the process to determine if revisions or adaptations are necessary for success (Batsche et al., 2007). Finally, the team evaluates whether the goals of the problem-solving process and the intervention have been met and whether it was implemented with integrity and fidelity. The team then also recommends next steps for the intervention plan: continuing, revising, or discontinuing (Batsche et al., 2007). Morrison (2005) recommended that this process should include a data-management system that guides decision making and supports both formative and summative assessments. Morrison further argued that an institutionalized data-management system can help the problem-solving process become "self-generating, self-replicating, and responsive to current and future student needs" (p. 34).

Batsche et al. (2007) defined PS/RtI as "the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important education decisions." Batsche and Curtis (2005) argued that basic components of PS/RtI are included in broad-based education-reform initiatives such as the Continuous Improvement Model, a site-specific school-based reform model in which data analysis determines classroom instruction. The theoretical framework is an adaptation of the effective schools research and total quality management. The continuous improvement model adopts the five characteristics of effective schools: (a) strong instructional

leadership, (b) high expectations for student achievement, (c) instructional focus on reading, writing, and mathematics, (d) a safe and orderly climate, and (e) frequent assessment. The total quality management theory encourages schools to become more data driven, become process oriented, and identify customers and products (i.e., students prepared for success after schooling).

The continuous improvement model utilizes the plan, do, check, act process, a continuous process in which data analysis determines classroom instruction focused on high student achievement of the standards (Florida Continuous Improvement Model, 2005). The process is a follows: (a) plan—disaggregate student performance data and formulate an instructional calendar around standards based expectations and student needs, (b) do—focus on high quality instruction, (c) check—monitor student progress frequently using assessments that can inform instructional decisions, (d) act—provide students with the interventions and/or enrichment to sustain learning, and (e) plan, do, check, act—repeat the cycle (Batsche & Curtis, 2005).

PS/RtI may be used as a data-based decision-making framework that guides the problem-solving process in a continuous improvement cycle. Batsche and colleagues (2007) suggested that the essential components of PS/RtI include multiple tiers of intervention, a problem-solving method, and an integrated data collection/assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery.

Batsche et al. (2007) further pointed out that there are two requirements in order for the "response" component of PS/RtI to be applied correctly. First, instructional problems must be identified accurately. Second, student responses to interventions selected to address those problems must be assessed in a reliable and valid manner.

The application of the problem-solving model is first applied to all students in a building to determine how all students are responding to the core curriculum. This is generally referred to as Tier I in the process. Three questions are asked (Batsche et al., 2007:

1.   Is the core curriculum effective? (80% of students meeting standards)

2.   Which students are at risk for failure? What do they have in common?

3.   Is there an overrepresentation of particular student groups who are not meeting standards?

The problem-solving team must determine if the core instructional program is effective for most students. If it is not effective, then the core (curriculum, instruction, and environment) must be improved. If the core instruction is effective, then Tier II or supplemental interventions are provided for students who are not meeting standards.

Tier II interventions have the following characteristics:

1.   Interventions focus on a particular skill-deficit area.

2.   Interventions must be additional to the core instruction. Students need more academic engaged time, not less or a replacement of the core.

3.   Interventions are implemented to small groups of students in or outside of the general-education classroom (Batsche et al., 2007).

The progress of student performance should be monitored frequently with the same measure used for Tier 1. The expectation at this level is that 70% of students receiving Tier II interventions should respond positively. Again interventions should be assessed to determine if they were implemented with fidelity. Students who do not respond to Tier II may require more intensive interventions (Batsche et al., 2007).

Tier III interventions are developed through a problem-solving process that is based on individual student needs. Diagnostic assessment should inform the intervention design and monitoring of the intervention's effectiveness (Batsche et al., 2007).

Characteristics of Tier III interventions are:

1. Interventions are very specific to the individual student's needs and are progress monitored frequently.

2. Interventions must be provided in addition to the core instruction. It is critical that students at the Tier III level receive the most instructional time.

3. Interventions are delivered to very small group of students or to students individually (Batsche et al., 2007).

The tiered levels in PS/RtI vary in minutes of instruction, number of students in the group, frequency of assessment, and the focus of instruction, ranging from school-wide decision in Tier 1 to individual student focus in Tier III. The tiers may and should look different at each school based on the needs of students (Batsche et al., 2007).

Galvin (2007) pointed out that PS/RtI requires a collaborative effort between general education and special education. This effort will require many educators to adopt new ways of thinking, collaborating, and acting. This may also lead to educators assuming new identities as their positions change from job descriptions linked to funding sources, to roles they play helping all students reach high standards. PS/RtI will require people to change, mostly in significant ways. School and district leaders who want to ensure the success of PS/RtI implementation must understand the research on

organizational and personal change. Leaders must pay attention to the magnitude of change that implementation of PS/RtI represents (Elliott & Morrison, 2008).

Galvin (2007) contends that PS/RtI will present second order, or adaptive, change implications for most stakeholders based on the following characteristics: (a) a break from the past, (b) outside of existing paradigms, (c) conflicts with existing values and norms, (d) complex, and (e) requires new skills and knowledge implemented by stakeholders. Leaders must be aware that although stakeholders may agree on moving toward a more unified approach to teaching and learning, this change cannot be easily implemented through traditional methods. Underestimating the magnitude of change could result in leaders using less effective strategies than those needed for successful change.

Galvin (2007) further suggested that it is helpful to review the areas of practice and policy that are impacted by PS/RtI at the state, district, and school level. Organizations involved in implementing PS/RtI will be involved in many levels of change. Policy changes will be significant, but more importantly the challenge incorporates the new policies into changed practices of stakeholders. Requiring stakeholders to learn new skills and knowledge and examine new values has second-order implications. The successful implementation of PS/RtI at the state and district level will require a new way of work that blends funding, reorganizes departments and organizational units, and promotes more collaborative relationships between practitioners from a variety of fields. Each of these implications will have an impact on the culture of individual departments and of the district as a whole. These strategies involve changing

the culture of the organization and will need to be led with care and attention (Kovaleski & Glew, 2006).

Galvin (2007) contends that changes at the school level are significant as special-education labels become less important. Nearly all students are held to the same high standards, the reason they are not meeting standards becomes less important than determining what instructional interventions are needed. The success of PS/RtI, and all students, will rely on the unified approach to teaching and learning by everyone in the building. Principals and teacher leaders must find ways to refocus roles and develop collaborative methods for analyzing problems and finding solutions. They will also need to work with stakeholders to establish systems of accountability that will ensure implementation and continuity of these changes. Galvin emphasized that leaders must understand how to lead under second-order circumstances for the implementation of PS/RtI to be effective. Waters and Grubb (2004) suggest the following leadership strategies:

1. *Step back as a leader*: First-order changes can be managed by stepping forward, taking charge and moving ahead with little thought or discussion. Second-order change requires taking a step back and facilitating discussion, reassuring people that uncertainty is expected and they will become more comfortable as they learn new skills and ways of working together.

2. *Support stakeholders:* Leaders should ask stakeholders, "What do you need to make this change happen and how can I help?" Supports may

include access from experts, time for staff to learn together, and a schedule

for implementation that was developed collaboratively.

3. *Do not give answers, ask the right questions:* During second-order change

most questions do not have answers yet defined. Leaders should not

attempt to address concerns with first-order responses. Rather the leader

will build confidence, capacity, and ownership on the part of stakeholders

by asking them to help answer the questions that will arise.

Leaders should also consider supporting staff through the personal transitions that

second-order change represents. Bridges (2003) noted differences between change and

transition. For school leaders to manage transitions created by changes with second-order

implications they must understand how individuals respond to transitions and how they

can help to manage those responses. Leaders can help with transitions by planning

supportive activities such as including formal celebrations of endings, understanding the

need to grieve the loss of the old way of doing things, promoting culture by creating a

new sense of identity in the organization, and developing metaphors that will

institutionalize new ways of working. The development of a new school culture toward a

learning organization is important to the school-improvement process. Factors essential

to this are opportunities for school-based learning, good leadership, creating ownership,

and developing schools' problem-solving abilities (Waters & Grubb, 2004).

Conclusion

In summary, an analysis of the literature discussed in this review suggests that

there is no one approach to learning and change that independently will meet all needs. It

is necessary for a variety of methods to assist individuals with learning depending on the

task, the environment and the learner. Learning, whether planned or not, ultimately results in changed behaviors. People often need several attempts to successfully integrate the new behavior or replace an old behavior. This is especially applicable to behaviors associated with personal change. In nearly all cases the individual must be willing to make the change and understand the impact of that commitment.

Learning and change also have profound psychological and physiological influence on people as they experience loss, confusion and uncertainty as they transition through a change. People are highly complex and their needs and abilities are not always easily understood. Adults in particular have many social roles and responsibilities that conflict with each other at times. Additionally, they are transitioning though life stages and personal changes. At times work is the only stable, predictable place. Some resistance to change can be the result of the need to change in too many roles and contexts too quickly. For example, this researcher has observed that a person who has just lost a loved one often finds comfort in the familiar routine of work.

Organizational change is the coordination of groups of people participating in a similar change process at the same time. This can be difficult to manage successfully because of the different degrees of readiness for change, perception of change and the loss associated with the individuals. The change models suggest that empowering people to be involved in identifying the need for change and implementing it can assist with the impact of transitions. All models establish the need for leadership to facilitate the change process and to provide appropriate support. Adaptive change prioritizes the role of the people closest to the work to identify solutions. They are sometimes the first to even

realize that there is a problem. Adhering to a defined model of change may cause a leader to miss the positive deviants who have already figured out the answer.

Learning organizations can create networks that will support individuals as they experience losses and celebrations that personal and professional changes can bring. The concept of the learning organization appears to have the needed supports to encourage continuous learning, change and improvement, however further study is needed to identify the leadership skills needed to foster a learning organization and to help leaders who struggle with those skills. While there is a plethora of theories surrounding change and organizational learning, there is little empirical research to support those theories.

The theory of learning organizations and their relationship to school improvement should be further developed in a future literature review to include schools and school districts as learning organizations in an era of high stakes accountability and external control.

In addition to the literature supporting the important role of the principal in leading school reform, there has been an increased realization of the importance of school district level administrators in implementing and supporting school-based and district wide reform. Waters et al. (2003) have identified specific leadership behaviors necessary for school improvement and leading school change. The literature also suggests that leaders must properly identify and focus on research-based initiatives that are most likely to have a positive effect on student learning. The implementation of a school-based problem-solving model has demonstrated an increase of student achievement.

The implementation of a research-based school specific intervention model, such as Problem Solving/Response to Intervention, may result in significant change in the way

of work for schools and districts. School and district leaders must be able to understand the magnitude of change and understand their role in leading change in the organization. If leaders are able to respond with research-based leadership strategies they will increase the likelihood that the implementation will be successful and ultimately result in improved outcomes for all students.

Chapter Three

Method

This chapter describes the procedures that were employed in this study. The population and sample selection are described. The instruments used in the study, the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile and focus group interview protocols, are also described. The data collection and data analysis procedures are discussed in relation to the four research questions posed in this study.

Research Design

This was a descriptive mixed-methods study that combined quantitative and qualitative inquiry through use of surveys and focus groups. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) descriptive research is a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena. By definition, description—viewed as understanding what people or things mean—is also an important goal of qualitative research (p. 290). Descriptive studies are primarily focused on determining what is. Most educational research seeks to discover cause and effect relationships and evaluating new programs. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) noted however, that unless researchers start with a clear description of an educational phenomenon, they lack a firm basis for explaining it or changing it.

One benefit of using a mixed-method study according to Thomas (2003) is that combining the two approaches sharpens understanding of research findings. Creswell

(2003) notes challenges to this type of research, including the need for extensive data collection, the time intensive nature of analyzing a variety of data, and the necessity for the researcher to be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative research methods (p. 210).

This study used a concurrent nested mixed methods model. In the nested approach there is a predominant method (either qualitative or quantitative) that guides the study with the secondary method (either qualitative or quantitative) embedded or nested within the dominant method. Data collected from the two methods are mixed during the analysis phase of the study (Creswell, 2003). The dominant method in this study is quantitative and the nested method is qualitative. The characteristics of the sample were measured at one point in time.

There are strengths to this type of model. The researcher is able to collect two types of data during a single data collection phase. It provides a study with benefits of both quantitative and qualitative data that allow the researcher to gain perspectives from different types of data or from different levels within the study. The challenges to this approach are integrating data in the analysis phase and reconciling differences between the two types of data (Creswell, 2003).

The use of the survey method and focus groups in this study provided complementary data to offer a more complete description of the phenomenon being studied. Advantages of the survey method are that it is easy to administer and decode and that participants can complete it concurrently. Limitations are that it provides little opportunity for a divergent response or for in-depth responses from participants. Advantages of the focus group method are that the researcher may interact directly with

the participant, allowing for assessment of nonverbal communication and more in-depth discussion, and data can be easy to code and analyze. Disadvantages are that it is more time consuming and less convenient for both the researcher and the participants (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

<p style="text-align:center;">*Population and Sample*</p>

The target population for this study consists of 38 elementary schools in eight school districts participating in the PS/RtI pilot project in Florida. The sample used was a convenience sample consisting of seven elementary schools, in a large district in west-central Florida, that are part of the PS/RtI demonstration project and are available to this researcher.

Description of the District

The district is the 11th largest in Florida and the 60th largest district nationally. It remains one of the fastest growing school systems in the state of Florida. As of May 2008, it had 72 traditional public schools (43 elementary, 14 middle schools, 11 high schools and four education centers) and 4 charter schools serving 66,788 students. Two traditional public schools and one charter school were added to the district in the 2008–2009 school year. The Florida Department of Education has reported that student enrollment has increased by over 8,800 students (or 15%) between 2003 and 2007 (District School Board of Pasco County [DSBPC], 2008, pp.1–3; Florida Department of Education, 2008).

As of May 2008, the total minority population served in the district was over 17,000 students. This represents 27% of the district's total student body (6% Black, 14%

Hispanic, 2% Asian/Pacific, and 5% Multiracial). In recent years, Hispanic students have exhibited the greatest proportional growth of any ethnic group in both the district and the state. Since 1999, the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students has increased more than 127%. Approximately 4% of students are English Language Learners. Although the majority of ELL students are Spanish-speaking, students come from 92 different countries and speak over 68 languages. Approximately 17% of students are students with disabilities (SWD). Approximately 44% of the students qualified for free/reduced lunch and 36 of the district's 72 traditional public schools had a free/reduced lunch rate of 50% or greater (DSBPC, 2008, pp. 1–3).

Data from the 2006–2007 school year reflect that the high schools have a 73.7% graduation rate, compared to the state graduation rate of 72.4 %; however, the 3.5% dropout rate is slightly higher than the state of Florida's dropout rate of 3.3%. These circumstances, combined with generally lower incomes, contribute to a population of students with special needs (DSBPC, 2008, pp. 1–3).

Description of the Sample Schools

All seven elementary schools in the district participating in the PS/RtI pilot demonstration project agreed to participate in this study. Demographic information on each of the seven elementary schools is reported in Table 4. The schools in this sample serve students from kindergarten through grade five and represent the district's demographic diversity. Three of the schools (schools A, B, and D) participate in the federal Title I program due to the high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (67% +). Based on Florida's school grading system four of the schools earned an A, two earned a B and one school earned a C for the 2007-2008 school year.

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In order to obtain information regarding perceptions of the level of change and leadership responsibilities used to implement PS/RtI at both the school and district level, the sample for this study included a school-based subsample and a district-level subsample.

Table 4

Selected Demographic Characteristics of District and Participating Elementary Schools in the District

	Student enrollment	Percentage of Students				
	N	Free/reduced lunch	Minority	SWD	ELL	Grade
District	66,778	44	27	17	4	A
School A	621	67	21	18	7	A
School B	732	73	27	17	5	C
School C	570	55	24	13	3	A
School D	697	67	11	23	1	B
School E	436	38	52	16	6	B
School F	699	39	24	14	4	A
School G	1,144	30	47	16	9	A

Note. SWD = students with disabilities; ELL = English language learners; Grade = Florida School Grade determination.
Source: *Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement*, by Florida Department of Education, 2008, retrieved February 8, 2009, from http://www.fldoe.org/default.asp

School-Based Subsample

The school-based subsample consisted of members of a PS/RtI school-based leadership team, other faculty, the principal, and the principals' supervisor for each participating school. The typical school-based PS/RtI leadership team includes the following members: principal, assistant principal, reading specialist, school psychologist, speech pathologist, general education teachers, and special education teachers. A total of 333 staff members, representing the 7 elementary schools, were invited to participate in the study.

District-Level Subsample

The district-level subsample consisted of members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. The district RtI leadership team is comprised of 27 members and includes representation from the district level and school-based administrators. The following district instructional departments are represented by directors, supervisors and specialists: research and evaluation, student services, exceptional student education, curriculum and instruction, pre-kindergarten services, staff development, and leadership development. The school-based representatives on the district-level leadership team include principals and assistant principals from elementary and middle schools. The assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction, elementary and middle schools also serve on the leadership team. This subsample consisted of seven district-level staff including assistant superintendents, directors, supervisors and specialists as representatives of the district PS/RtI leadership team. Participants in both subsamples were volunteers and they were not compensated for their participation.

Instruments/Measures

The measures that were used in this study included the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile and focus group interview protocols. The instruments are described in this section.

McREL Balanced Leadership Profile

The McREL Balanced Leadership Profile: Principal Questionnaire is designed to obtain school personnel's perceptions of the magnitude of change involved in the implementation of an improvement initiative, and a principal's performance in 21 areas

of leadership responsibilities. The instrument is also designed to provide feedback

regarding 11 of the responsibility variables correlated with implementing first and

second-order change (Marzano et al., 2005). The content of the original instrument can be

seen in Appendix G. A copy of the current version, which was used in this study, is not

made available by McREL for publication. The variables measured by the instrument are

described below:

1.   Perceived Level of Change

(a)   first-order change. First-order change is incremental and occurs

through a series of small steps that do not depart radically from the past. It

is often the next most obvious step to take in a school or district.

(b)   second-order change. Second-order change involves dramatic

departures from the expected, both in defining the problem and in finding

a solution. It alters the system in fundamental ways, offering a dramatic

shift in direction and requiring new ways of thinking and acting (Marzano

et al., 2005, p.66)

2.   Principal Leadership Responsibilities Associated with Student

Achievement and First and Second-Order Change:

(a)   ideas/beliefs: communicates and operates from strong ideals and

beliefs about schooling;

(b)   knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment: is

knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment

practices; and

(c)   monitor and evaluate: monitors the effectiveness of school

practices and their impact on student learning

3.   Principal Leadership Responsibilities Positively Associated with Student

Achievement and Second-Order Change:

(a)   intellectual stimulation: ensures faculty and staff are aware of the

most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a

regular aspect of the school's culture;

(b)   change agent: is willing to and actively challenges the status quo;

(c)   optimize: inspires and leads new and challenging innovations; and

(d)   flexibility: adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the

current situation and is comfortable with dissent.

4.   Principal Leadership Responsibilities Positively Associated with Student

Achievement and Negatively Correlated with Second-Order Change:

(a)   culture: fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community

cooperation;

(b)   order: establishes a set of standard operating procedures and

routine;

(c)   communication: establishes strong lines of communication with

teachers, staff, and among students; and

(d)   input: involves teachers in the design and implementation of

important decisions and policies (Waters et al., 2003).

The instrument consists of 92 items with multiple items designed to identify the

degree to which the leader is perceived to be implementing each of the 21 leadership

responsibilities in relation to a specific improvement initiative and the level of change the initiative represents. The instrument is administered on-line and takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. In addition to the principal's self report, the McREL survey allows for the gathering of perceptions about principal leadership from teachers and the principal's supervisor. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which the principal exhibits a leadership practice, or the level of change the initiative represents, as described in each item using a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Completely*.

For this study, directions for completing the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile: Principal Questionnaire were modified to direct respondents to identify the improvement initiative as the implementation of PS/RtI. The directions are modified as appropriate for each respondent group as seen in Table 5. The instrument is scored electronically and a report is published. The report provides the perceived magnitude of change for each respondent group and the mean score for each of 21 leadership responsibilities.

The results of the survey were made available to this researcher in a summary report by McREL with mean responses for each respondent group at the school level. This researcher did not have access to the raw data collected by McREL. An example of the summary report provided by McREL is found in Table 6.

Internal Consistency and Reliability

As reported in the technical notes provided by Marzano et al. (2005), the instrument was originally posted on a web page from September 2003 to February 2004. Principals from across the country were invited to respond to the online questionnaire. Upon completion of the questionnaire, respondents received an analysis of their responses in the form of a report on the 21areas of principal leadership responsibilities

and their perceived involvement in first and second order change. Six hundred and fifty-two principals completed the questionnaire. The items on the questionnaire were reported to have an internal consistency of .92 (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha). To investigate the content validity, respondents ratings to the items

were submitted to a factor analytical procedure (Marzano et al., 2005). The items can been seen in Appendix G. The results of the factor analysis are displayed in Appendix H.

Table 5
Examples of Directions and Survey Items

Type of participant	Directions and survey item related to level of change and the leadership responsibility of change agent	Response scale
Principal (self-assessment)	Think about your school and this improvement initiative. To what degree do the following statements describe you, your teachers, or your school? Level of change- This change represents minor refinements to our school program. Leadership Responsibility of Change Agent- I respond to the staff's concerns about this change.	Not at all Completely 1 2 3 4 5
Teacher	Think about your school and this improvement initiative. To what degree do the following statements describe you, your principal, or your school? Level of change- This change represents minor refinements to our school program. Leadership Responsibility of Change Agent- Our principal responds to my concerns about this change.	Not at all Completely 1 2 3 4 5
Principal's supervisor	Think about this school and this improvement initiative. To what degree do the following statements describe this principal, the teachers at this school or this school? Level of change- This change represents minor refinements to the school program. Leadership Responsibility of Change Agent- The principal responds to staff concerns about this change.	Not at all Completely 1 2 3 4 5

Table 6
Example of Summary Reports from McREL

	Principal response		Supervisor response		Average teacher response					
Level of change	1st Order		2nd Order		1st Order		2nd Order		1st and 2nd Order	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	1	100	1	100	6	66	2	22	1	11
Leadership responsibility										
Communication*	4.00		4.25		3.38		3.0		3.50	
Flexibility	4.33		4.67		3.78		3.83		3.67	

* Mean ratings provided for principals' perceived performance in each area of responsibility.

There are two limitations to the use of this survey. First, the instrument that is available online is a more recent edition of the original instrument (see Appendix G). This latest edition is currently being reviewed for validity and reliability evidence. Secondly, while the instrument is designed to assess a principal's leadership performance, it is not designed to provide input on district level leadership. The McREL meta-analysis and Balanced Leadership Profile defined 21 areas of leadership specifically related to principals and student achievement; however, Marzano et al. (2005) reported that the 21 areas are not new findings within the literature on business, leadership and change.

The use of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Self-Inventory (based on the ISLLC standards) to identify principal leadership practices was considered for use in this study; however according to Waters and Grubb (2006) the Balanced Leadership Profile identifies 17 additional leadership practices that are not evident in the ISLLC Standards and offers additional insight into change leadership, thus the McREL questionnaire was used for this study.

For purposes of this study participants who were invited to complete the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile included three groups: teachers at participating schools, principals at participating schools and the principals' supervisor. The principals in this study all have the same supervisor. Their supervisor responded to the survey separately for each school rating the principals independently. The survey was confidential. Upon conclusion of the survey, the researcher received a summary report from McREL based on participants' responses.

Focus Group Interview Protocol

The interview protocol and questions were developed to gather perceptions of the magnitude of change at the district level and of district leadership practices utilized when implementing PS/RtI. The questions were based on the district leadership responsibilities identified by Waters and Marzano (2006) to have been positively associated with student achievement and leading change. The variables are described below:

1. District Leadership Responsibilities Positively Associated with Student Achievement and Second-order Change:

   (a) non-negotiables for achievement and instruction: ensures that goals for student achievement and instructional programs are adopted and are based on relevant research;

   (b) monitoring goals for achievement and instruction: monitors and evaluates implementation of the district instructional program, impact of instruction on achievement, and impact of implementation on implementers; and

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(c)   defined school autonomy: provides autonomy to principals to lead

their schools, but expects alignment on district goals and use of resources

for professional development (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

2.   District Leadership Responsibility Positively Associated with Student

Achievement and Negatively Associated with Second-order Change:

(a)   goal-setting process: involves board members and principals in the

process of setting goals (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Appendices A and B

provide additional information.

The structured focus group interview protocol was reviewed by a group of experts

familiar with the content. The experts were provided an overview to the study and were

asked to determine the extent to which the items covered the variables of interest. Based

on their feedback, slight modifications (e.g., wording) were made to the instrument prior

to administration of the protocol (see Appendices I-1–I-3).

This researcher recruited individuals who were not directly associated with the

PS/RtI pilot schools to conduct the focus groups. This researcher trained the facilitators in

the use of the interview protocol and questions (see Appendix J). According to Merriam

and Simpson (2000) the focus group interview is used when in depth qualitative data are

needed to study a specific situation or phenomenon. Focus group participants are selected

because of their interest or expertise in a particular area of research. The focus group is

not intended to be representative of the total population but rather is a purposeful

sampling focused on a given topic.

Data Collection Procedures

The timeline for data collection was Spring 2009–Summer 2009. This researcher obtained approval to gather data in the school district with the district's Research and Evaluation Department, as well as by the university's IRB.

Administration of McREL Questionnaire

Participants, including teachers, principals at the participating schools, and the principals' supervisor, were invited to respond to the McREL Balanced Leadership Questionnaire by the following methods:

1.   First, the researcher provided an overview describing the study to the faculty in each school.

2.   Next, participants were contacted via email and invited to complete the survey. The email included a letter inviting staff to participate in the study. The letter included a description of the study, directions for completing the survey and information regarding adult consent for participation requirements (see Appendices K–1–K–4). The researcher requested that the principal forward the email to staff.

3.   Finally, follow up emails were sent 2 weeks after the initial request to encourage staff to complete the survey.

Focus Group Interviews

Four focus group interviews were conducted to obtain stakeholders perceptions of the magnitude of change PS/RtI represents for the district, as well as perceptions of district-level leadership. The four focus groups included: two school-based focus groups, a principal focus group and a district level focus group. The two school-based focus groups included representatives (seven and eight members respectively) of two school-based PS/RtI leadership teams. The principal focus group included seven principals from the participating PS/RtI schools. The district-level focus group was comprised of seven district-level staff including directors, supervisors, and specialists as representatives of the district PS/RtI leadership team.

Selection of school-based focus groups. Four schools volunteered to participate in the focus group interview. Two of the schools were selected by this researcher as an information rich and purposeful sample of the seven schools participating in this study (Patton, 1990). The principals at each school have been in place since the beginning of the PS/RtI pilot project and both schools have similar academic performance as determined by the Florida School Accountability System. The schools have differing student demographics representing the districts' diversity of socio-economic status and ethnicity.

Focus group participants were invited via an email, that included a letter with a description of the study, focus group guidelines, and information regarding adult consent for participation requirements (see Appendices K–2–K–5). Informed consent was obtained by participants at the focus group interview (see Appendix L). Focus group interviews took place at the two participating school sites and/or the district office based

on convenience for participants. This researcher recruited and trained focus group facilitators using the focus group guidelines. Focus group interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. The qualitative data from the focus group interviews was digitally recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The procedures that were used to answer the research questions are described in this section. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers, principals and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team regarding the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention represents in seven elementary schools in a large west-central Florida district. In addition, the study described perceptions of teachers, principals and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team regarding the school and district leadership practices used to implement Problem Solving/Response to Intervention and the extent to which these practices are consistent with a profile of specific leadership responsibilities that have been identified as being associated with successful implementation of change (Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

The variables and data sources are delineated in Appendix M. An overview of each research question, the respondent group and the study instrument used for analysis is found in Table 7. Data analysis procedures used to answer each of the research questions are described in this section.

Table 7
Data Sources for Research Questions

Respondent groups and study instruments	Data sources for research questions				
	Research question #1—level of change for school	Research question #2—level of change for district	Research question #3 —principal leadership practices	Research question #4 —district leadership practices	Research question #5— facilitating factors and barriers
School-Based Faculty (including members of the School-Based PS/RtI Leadership Team)- McREL Survey	X		X		
School-Based PS/RTI Leadership Team- Focus Group Protocol		X		X	X
Principals- McREL Survey	X		X		
Principals- Focus Group Protocol		X		X	X
Principals' Supervisor- McREL Survey	X		X		
District-Based PS/RTI Leadership Team- Focus Group Protocol		X		X	X

Research Question 1

1. (a)   What is the perceived level of change for schools associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, school faculty and the principals' supervisor in participating schools?

    (b)   To what extent is there agreement between respondent groups relative to their perceptions of the level of change associated with the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative?

    (c)   What is the perceived level of change for the district associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team?

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Perceptions of the level of change at the school level were identified through responses by faculty, principals' and the principals' supervisor's to the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile. As noted earlier in this chapter, participants responded to questions regarding the level change on a multi-point scale ranging from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Completely*. The number and percent of participants who report the perceptions of change to be first-order, second-order or both first and second-order was computed and reported by respondent groups. The Chi Square Test of Independence was conducted to determine if there was an association between the type of respondent groups and their perceptions of the level of change.

Data on the perceptions of the magnitude of change at the district were obtained through the focus group. Participants in the focus groups included 15 members of two school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, seven members of the district-based PS/RtI leadership team and the seven principals of participating schools. The procedures for employed for analysis data obtained from the focus groups are described below:

1. Participants' responses to the focus group interviews were transcribed.

2. The researcher then read the transcripts twice to become familiar with the content of the interview responses.

3. The first five pages of transcribed data were read by the researcher and a content expert familiar with the study. The researcher and content expert then independently identified and coded (or labeled) discrete units of meaning.

4. The researcher and the content expert discussed the units of meaning and developed consensus.

5. The researcher and the content expert then independently grouped similar units of meaning and their corresponding codes together and determined the emergent themes from these units of meaning. Themes generated by the researcher and content expert were compared; there was agreement on 13 out of a total of 14 themes generated, yielding an inter-coder agreement of 93% on generation of the themes. The researcher and the content expert discussed and refined the themes. One theme identified by the researcher was collapsed into another of the existing themes.

6. The researcher coded the remainder of the transcripts independently using the constant comparison method to categorize units of meaning that appeared similar in content.

7. Themes were expanded and/or collapsed until saturation was reached. Saturation was reached when no new codes or categories emerged.

Research Question 2

2. (a) To what degree are identified research-based principal leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by principals to implement PS/RtI in participating schools as perceived by principals of participating schools, school faculty, and the principals' supervisor?

    (b) To what extent is there agreement among respondent groups relative to their perceptions of identified leadership practices employed by principals to implement the initiative?

Perceptions of principal leadership practices were obtained through ratings from faculty, principals, and the principals' supervisor to the McREL Balanced Leadership

Questionnaire. As noted in earlier in the chapter, respondents were to indicate the extent to which a principal demonstrated a given practice on a multi-point scale ranging from 1= *Not at all* to 5= *Completely*. The mean ratings for items related to the 11 leadership responsibilities associated with leading change, described earlier in this chapter, were computed for each of the participating groups by school and by perceived order of change across seven schools. Mean scores were then categorized into three categories representing the extent to which the leadership responsibility was implemented: (a) high level ≥ 4.0, (b) moderate level $\leq 3.9 - \geq 3.0$, and (c) low level ≤ 2.9.

Research Question 3

3.   To what degree are identified research-based district leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by the district PS/RtI leadership team members to implement the initiative as perceived by members of the district PS/RtI leadership team, principals of participating schools, and members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams?

Perceptions of district leadership practices were obtained through data gathered from focus group interviews (questions two through seven). The focus group questions were based on the district leadership practices associated with leading change described earlier in this chapter. As described in research question one, four separate focus groups were conducted. The data analysis of the focus group protocol responses are similar to those described earlier for question one.

Research Question 4

4.   What facilitating factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI are

perceived by principals, members of the school-based PS/ RtI leadership

teams, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team?

Perceptions of facilitating forces or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI were

obtained through data gathered from focus group interviews. Question eight of the focus

group protocol asked participants to describe the facilitating forces and barriers to the

implementation of PS/RtI. The focus group composition and the method of analysis of

the focus group protocol responses were described earlier in discussion of the first

research question.

The results of this study will be described in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Results

This chapter presents the results of this study. The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of teachers, principals, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team regarding the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention represented in seven elementary schools in a large west-central Florida district. In addition, it described perceptions of school and district leadership practices used to implement PS/RtI and the extent to which these practices are consistent with a profile of specific leadership responsibilities associated with the successful implementation of change (Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

The findings are discussed in relation to the four research questions posed in this study. The findings will be described in the following sections: Perceptions of the Level of Change, Perceptions of Principal Leadership Responsibilities, Perceptions of District Leadership Responsibilities, and Perceptions of Facilitating Factors or Barriers to Implementation.

Sample

This study collected quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of seven elementary schools in a large school district in west-central Florida. The sample for this study consisted of two subsamples: a school-based and district-level subsample.

School-Based Subsample

A total of seven principals, the principals' supervisor, and 325 elementary teachers (including instructional support staff e.g., guidance counselors, school psychologists, and reading specialists) were invited to respond to the McREL Balanced Leadership questionnaire between April and July 2009. All seven principals, the principals' supervisor, and 130 teachers responded to the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 40% for teachers and 100% for principals and the principals' supervisor. A minimum number of nine teachers are required by McREL to report data for a school. School D did not meet the required number of teacher respondents in order to obtain results; as a result the responses of the principal and principal's supervisor were not reported for this school with the McREL results.

The final sample in this study consisted of 145 participants: including 130 teachers ($n = 130$) and principals ($n = 7$) representing six schools; the principals' supervisor ($n = 1$); and district level administrators ($n = 7$) in a large school district in west-central Florida. The assistant superintendent for elementary schools supervises all of the principals in this study and responded to the questionnaire for each school independently. The number of teachers and administrators from each school who responded to the questionnaire is reported in Table 8.

Two school-based focus groups, seven and eight members respectively, included representatives of two school-based PS/RtI leadership teams. The two school-based PS/RtI leadership teams were purposefully selected by this researcher to be representative of the seven school-based PS/RtI leadership teams. The principal focus group included seven principals from the participating schools. The focus groups were conducted in May

2009. Due to technical difficulty, several minutes (questions one through four) of one of the school-based focus groups was not audio recorded; however, each focus group had a co-facilitator who served as a recorder for the sessions. The co-facilitator was able to review and clarify the notes (for questions one through four) with participants at the end of the session.

District-Level Subsample

The district-level focus group was comprised of seven district-level staff including directors, supervisors, and specialists as representatives of the district PS/RtI leadership team. The district PS/RtI leadership team has 27 members in all.

Perceptions of the Level of Change for Schools and the District

This section provides the results for each school and among schools regarding the perceptions of the level of change that the implementation of PS/RtI represents at the school level. It will also report the findings for the perceptions of the level of change the implementation represents at the district level. The data obtained from the McREL questionnaire will be used to answer questions 1a and 1b. The focus group data will be used to answer question 1c.

1.   (a)   What is the perceived level of change for schools associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, school faculty and the principals' supervisor in participating schools?

(b)   To what extent is there agreement between respondent groups relative to their perceptions of the level of change associated with the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative?

(c)   What is the perceived level of change for the district associated

with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals,

members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, and members of the

district PS/RtI leadership team?

Perceptions of the Level of Change for Schools

       The McREL Balanced Leadership Questionnaire gathered the perspectives of

teachers, the principal, and the principal's supervisor regarding the level of change that

the implementation of PS/RtI represented for each school. As described in Chapter Three,

respondents were asked a series of questions related to perceptions of change. Their

responses were categorized as first-order change, second-order change, or a combination

of both. First-order change can be thought of as change that is consistent with prevailing

values and norms, that meets with general agreement, and that can be implemented using

existing knowledge and skills. Second-order change is considered to be deep change that

requires people to learn new skills and take on new roles, and often conflicts with

prevailing values and norms (Waters & Marzano, 2006)

       The perceptions of the level of change that the implementation of PS/RtI

represented for respondent groups and by school are reported in Table 8. Seventy-three

percent of all respondents reported the initiative as a first-order change, while

approximately 27% reported the change as either a second-order change or as having

some characteristics of first and second-order change.

Table 8

Perceptions of Level of Change by Respondent Type and School

| Respondent group | Perceived Levels of Change | | | | | |
| | 1st order | | 2nd order | | Characteristics of 1st and 2nd order | |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
School A						
Teachers	6	67	2	22	1	11
Principal	1	100				
Supervisor			1	100		
School B						
Teachers	15	72	3	14	3	14
Principal			1	100		
Supervisor			1	100		
School C						
Teachers	20	69	7	24	2	7
Principal			1	100		
Supervisor			1	100		
School E						
Teachers	19	86	2	9	1	5
Principal			1	100		
Supervisor			1	100		
School F						
Teachers	18	100				
Principal			1	100		
Supervisor			1	100		
School G						
Teachers	26	84	3	10	2	6
Principal			1	100		
Supervisor			1	100		

A Chi Square Test of Independence was conducted to determine if there was an association between the type of respondent group (i.e., principals and teachers) and perceptions of the level of change involved in the implementation of PS/RtI in their

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schools. Results of the Chi Square test indicate there was a significant relationship between respondent group and perception of the level of change [X^2 (1, $N = 144$) 13.1, $p < .05$]. In general, principals perceived the initiative as a second-order change. Five out of 6 (83%) principals reported the change as second-order; while only one principal (17%) reported the change as first-order. In contrast, 80% of teachers reported the change as first-order; while only 20% reported the change as being second-order or having characteristics of first and second-order change.

Table 9

Chi-Square of Number of Responses of Perceptions of Level of Change by Respondent Group Among Schools

| | Perceived level of change | | | |
| | 1st order | | 2nd order and (w/1st and 2nd order) | |
Respondent Group	n	%	n	%
Principal	1	17	5	83
Teacher	104	80	26	20
Total	105	77	31	23

Note. $X^2 = 13.1$, $p < .05$; Reject H$_o$

Perceptions of the Level of Change for the District

In order to determine perceptions of the level of change for the district, focus group participants were asked to describe in what ways, if any, PS/RtI challenged the existing norms of the district. The four focus group interviews included three groups of stakeholders: teachers on two school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, principals of the participating schools and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. Each group had seven to eight participants.

Two themes emerged from their responses: (a) increased collaboration between special education and basic education, and (b) changes to teachers' roles and responsibilities. Table 10 displays selected examples of formulated meanings and themes from question one of the focus group interviews. Appendix N provides additional information regarding the focus group interview results. More detailed descriptions of these themes are provided in the following pages.

Table 10
Selected Examples of Formulated Meanings and Themes from Focus Group Interviews

| Themes | Formulated meanings | | | |
	District	Principals	School A	School B
Increased collaboration between special education and basic education	1.Shared responsibility is a challenge to existing norms 2.Communication needed between departments is a challenge	1.Communication and collaboration between depts. 2.Departments and individual district staff not working in isolation any more 3.Paradigm shift of thinking for district and schools	1.Increased collaboration needed between district departments (reading and ESE) and school counterparts 2.Lots of changes in roles at district and schools- lots of questions, need to work together 3.Current funding does not align with flexible roles	1.Shared responsibility across disciplines 2.Changing roles- more diversified 3.Cross- departmental implementation 4.Resources based on need not eligibility 5.Current funding does not align with flexible role
Changes to teachers' roles and responsibilities	1.Less looking to others for "fixes" 2. Team work to find the "fix"	1.Looking at curriculum and instruction to better support all students- instead of looking at the student as having a learning problem	1.Basic ed teachers more responsible for all students. 2. Less looking to others to "fix" the problem 3. Accountable for fidelity of interventions 4. Process requires training and support 5.Old way compliance w/packets vs. new way problem solving to find what work 6. Use of data to progress monitor 7. Need for increased competency with standards	1. Basic ed identifying problems and providing interventions instead of labeling 2. Team work vs. individual

Increased collaboration between special and basic education. All focus groups reported that the change from the separate systems of basic education and special education to one system presented challenges at the district and school levels. They described this as a "paradigm shift" of thinking for the district and schools that requires shared responsibility for student learning across departments. A district administrator stated, "this forces us to look at one [educational system] and everybody being responsible for every child."

Increased communication and collaboration are seen as areas of continued growth for district departments and their school-based counterparts. Several participants reported a move away from individuals working in isolation in the district and more of a focus on teamwork and cross-departmental implementation. One principal said, "It's caused departments that routinely practiced in isolation to come together to look for a common goal."

Changes to teachers' roles and responsibilities. All groups reported that there were significant changes to basic education as a result of the implementation of PS/RtI. Participants described a change in thinking regarding low student achievement as a problem that results from the student having a learning problem, that should be fixed by someone else (i.e., special education), to a curriculum and instruction problem that must be addressed by basic education. One teacher stated, "I think a lot of times the teachers had the mind set that this kid is not successful. I want him in the special education class where someone else can take care of him." Several participants reported that basic-education teachers are now working with teams of colleagues to find solutions for learning problems, rather than testing for special education and a label.

A school-based focus group described the need for training and support to learn how to problem solve as it is a new skill that is very complex. They described the use of data, instead of assumptions, as a new approach to determining a student's progress. They added that there is more accountability for fidelity of interventions and a need for increased competencies for teachers regarding standards and research-based practices.

Participants across groups perceived the need for staff roles to be more diverse and flexible. They also suggested that changing roles at the district and school level result in some uncertainty and ambiguity for staff that sometimes leave unanswered questions. For example, one teacher asked, "What am I supposed to do, what am I expected to do? What can I possibly leave behind ... because I can't do it all?" Another teacher shared, "I think it's just going to be a big paradigm shift for everyone in their thinking. … It starts at the district and then goes down into the schools."

In general, when comparing these perceptions to characteristics of first- and second-order change, the implementation of PS/RtI appears to be perceived as a second-order change for the district by focus-group members at the district and school level. As with other second-order changes PS/RtI appears to be perceived as a break from the past, outside existing norms and requiring new knowledge and skills to implement.

When compared to the McREL survey results, the findings are consistent with the principals' and their supervisor's overall perceptions of the level of change as second-order change for schools. Teachers who participated in the school-based PS/RtI leadership-team focus groups also reported the change as second-order for schools and for the district. As described in Chapter Three, these teachers were members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams and were directly involved with the implementation of PS/RtI in their schools. In contrast, the results of the McREL survey suggest that the majority of teachers perceive the change as first-order. Possible reasons for these differences will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Perceptions of Principal Leadership Responsibilities Associated with Leading Change

This section will report findings among schools and for each school regarding the perceptions of principal leadership practices associated with leading change. The data obtained from the McREL questionnaire results will be used to answer the research questions:

2. (a) To what degree are identified research-based principal leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by principals to implement PS/RtI in participating schools as perceived by principals of participating schools, school faculty, and the principals' supervisor?

(b)   To what extent is there agreement among respondent groups

relative to their perceptions of identified leadership practices employed by

principals to implement the initiative?

Perceptions of Leadership Responsibilities Among Schools

The McREL Balanced Leadership Survey gathered the perspectives of teachers,

the principal, and the principals' supervisor on the level of implementation of leadership

responsibilities associated with leading change, by the principals when implementing

PS/RtI. There are 11 specific responsibilities associated with leading change. As

described in Chapter Three, seven have a positive association, while four have a negative

association. The mean responses for respondent groups were made available to this

researcher in a report from McREL. Mean responses to questions regarding perceptions

of a principal's practice of leadership responsibilities were generated using a five-point

scale, ranging from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Completely.*

Table 11 reports the mean score for each leadership responsibility grouped by the

responsibilities associated with leading change. The overall mean score for all leadership

responsibilities is 3.69. In order to provide a more descriptive profile of the level of

implementation, this researcher categorized mean scores into three groups: (a) high level

≥ 4.0, (b) moderate level $\leq 3.9 - \leq 3.0$, and (c) low level ≤ 2.9. In general, the leadership

responsibilities appear to be implemented at a moderate level. The overall mean score for

the subgroup of leadership responsibilities that are positively associated with leading

change is 3.79, while the overall mean score for the subgroup of practices that are

negatively associated with change is 3.53.

As reported in Table 11, the six principal leadership responsibilities that had the

highest mean ratings for perceived level of implementation are as follows: (a) ideals and beliefs (i.e., communicates and operates from strong ideals/beliefs about schooling); (b) optimize (i.e., inspires and leads new innovations) (c) monitor and evaluate (i.e., monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning); (d) knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment (i.e., is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices); (e) flexibility (i.e., adapts leadership behaviors to the situation); and (f) culture (i.e., fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community of cooperation. The five principal leadership responsibilities that had the lowest mean ratings for perceived level of implementation were (a) change agent (i.e., is willing to and actively challenges the status quo); (b) communication (i.e., establishes strong lines of communication with students and teachers); (c) order (i.e., establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines); (d) intellectual stimulation (i.e., ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular part of the school culture); and (e) input (i.e., involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies).

Table 11

Mean Ratings of Perception of Level of Implementation of Leadership Responsibilities,
Associated with Leading Change

Leadership Responsibilities	Mean	Overall Mean
Positively Associated with Leading Change		
Ideals/Beliefs	4.01	
Optimize	3.92	
Monitor/Evaluate	3.81	
Knowledge of CIA	3.80	
Flexibility	3.72	
Change Agent	3.67	
Intellectual Stimulation	3.53	
Subgroup		*3.78*
Negatively Associated with Leading Change		
Culture	3.72	
Communication	3.57	
Order	3.55	
Input	3.30	
Subgroup		*3.43*
Overall		*3.65*

N=137

As displayed in Table 12, only one of the 11 leadership responsibilities that are

identified as being associated with leading change are perceived to be implemented at a

high level, while the remaining 10 are perceived to be implemented at a moderate level.

When comparing the leadership responsibilities and their association with leading

change, only one of leadership responsibilities positively associated with leading change

is perceived to be implemented at a high level, while six are perceived to be implemented

at a moderate level. In contrast, none of the leadership responsibilities negatively

associated with change are reported at a high level, while all four are reported to be

implemented at a moderate level.

Table 12

Number and Percent of Responses, by Perception of Level of Implementation of Leadership Responsibilities and Association With Change Among Schools

| | Leadership Responsibilities | | | | | |
| Level of implementation | Positively associated with change (*n* = 7) | | Negatively associated with change (*n* = 4) | | Overall (*N*=11) | |
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
High	1	17	0	0	1	10
Moderate	6	83	4	100	10	90

Perceptions of Leadership Responsibilities Associated with the Phases of Change

As is shown in Table 13, the survey results suggest that the principals are perceived to be implementing the responsibilities needed to implement the four-phases of change (i.e, create demand, implement, manage transitions, and monitor and evaluate), described in Chapter Two, at a moderate level; however the mean average of the responsibilities associated with creating demand (i.e., the principal makes clear the reasons for the changes, develops a change-management plan, and specifies the new roles, responsibilities, and activities for all stakeholders) and managing transitions (i.e., the principal makes clear the reasons for the changes, develops a change-management plan, and specifies the new roles, responsibilities, and activities for all stakeholders) were rated lower than the other two phases.

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Table 13

Mean Ratings of Leadership Responsibilities by Phases of Change

Phases of Change	Mean	Overall Mean
Create Demand		*3.64*
Change Agent	3.67	
Intellectual Stimulation	3.53	
Ideals/Beliefs	4.01	
Implement		*3.86*
Knowledge of CIA	3.80	
Optimize	3.92	
Manage Transitions		
Flexibility	3.72	
Monitor and Evaluate	3.81	

The data were examined further to determine if there was agreement among respondent groups regarding the perceptions of the level of implementation of the leadership responsibilities. As reported in Table 14, principals and the principals' supervisor reported implementation of the 11 leadership responsibilities at a high level, with a mean score of 4.22. In contrast, the teachers' reported the implementation of leadership responsibilities at a moderate or low level. When the mean ratings of teachers were examined, by the perceived level of change involved with the implementation of PS/RtI, teachers who reported PS/RtI as a first-order changes had a mean score of 3.79 (moderate), those who reported it as a second-order change had a mean score of 2.99 (low) and those who perceived it to be a combination of first and second-order change had a mean score of 3.49 (moderate).

Table 14

Perceived Level of Implementation of Principal Leadership Responsibilities by
Respondent Groups

Respondent Group	*n*	Mean	Overall Mean
Principal and *principals' supervisor	7	4.22	
Teachers			3.66
1st order teachers	104	3.79	
2nd order teachers	17	2.99	
Combination of 1st and 2nd order teachers	9	3.49	

Note. *The principals' supervisor rated each of the principals independently.

Perceptions of District Leadership Responsibilities

This section will report the findings regarding the perceptions of leadership

responsibilities employed by district PS/RtI Leadership team members to implement

PS/RtI. The perspectives of teachers, principals, and district-level leaders on the

implementation of leadership practices associated with leading change by the district

PS/RtI leadership team were gathered via focus group interviews. The focus-group results

for questions two through seven will be used to answer the research question below.

3.   To what degree are identified research-based district leadership

responsibilities associated with leading change employed by the district

PS/RtI leadership team members to implement the initiative as perceived

by members of the district PS/RtI leadership team, principals of

participating schools, and members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership

teams?

The focus-group questions sought to identify participants' perceptions of the

district-level implementation of PS/RtI. The specific district leadership responsibilities

associated with leading change, described by Marzano and Waters (2009), addressed

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through the focus-group questions were: non-negotiables for achievement and instruction (i.e., the district ensures that new initiatives are research-based and support district priorities); monitoring goals for achievement and instruction (i.e., the district has a plan for the management of implementation); defined school autonomy (i.e., there is a balance of district expectations with school-based flexibility), and collaborative goal setting (i.e., there is stakeholder input into district decisions). Additionally, the focus group questions asked participants to describe any other leadership practices used by district leaders, and to compare the PS/RtI to previous district-wide initiatives. Appendix N provides additional information regarding the focus group interview results.

The District Ensures New Initiatives are Research-Based and Support District Priorities

The second focus group question sought to determine in what ways the implementation of PS/RtI was perceived to support the district's priorities. Three themes emerged: (a) consistency with the district's vision, (b) emphasizes the use of research-based best practices, and (c) focus on data-driven decisions.

Consistency with the district's vision. All groups reported that the district leadership team's implementation of PS/RtI supports the district's vision. Principals stated that PS/RtI aligns with the district's vision and helps them to work towards the vision by looking at individual student needs. A principal shared, "Even as simple as that seems, our district's vision is for all children to succeed and RtI is a framework that just embodies the ideas that you do what you need to do so that all children succeed."

District staff stated that both the district's vision and PS/RtI are about helping every child reach his or her highest potential. One district administrator stated, "I don't

think [PS/RtI] supports it, I think it is our district vision." The teachers perceived that PS/RtI assists in implementing the district's vision because it is student centered, focused on success for all learners and that all students have good-quality core instruction. A teacher added, "this supports the district's mission of making sure that all children have a fair and equal playing [field] in the classroom, the good water, the good core instruction."

Emphasis on use of research-based best practices. District staff, principals, and teachers explained that PS/RtI aligns with recent district-wide initiatives that emphasized the use of best instructional practices and using the continuum of services in the least-restrictive environment for students with disabilities. A district leader explained, "[PS/RtI] is really aligned with how we have really worked to make initial instruction strong with the concept of research-based practices we learned with [a previous district initiative]." Principals and teachers stated that PS/RtI assists teachers to use research-based best practices to support learning and make initial instruction strong. A teacher shared, "with RtI you start within the classroom, that is the least restrictive environment. We are going to do everything we can before we move to a more restrictive environment."

Focus on data-driven decisions. All groups perceived that PS/RtI promotes the use of data to make decisions, monitor progress, and ensure that students are meeting standards. A teacher explained, "the use of data is driving what is causing these students to succeed. … When something doesn't work we don't continue to use it." Teachers reported that PS/RtI increases accountability by emphasizing fidelity of implementation and assists schools to meet the expectations of NCLB and Florida's Accountability System. District leaders and principals did not mention these ideas.

The District Plans the Management of the Implementation of PS/RtI

The third focus group question sought to gather examples of how the district leadership team managed the implementation of PS/RtI. Three themes emerged regarding the district-leadership-team management of the implementation of PS/RtI:

(a) establishing a PS/RtI leadership taskforce, (b) piloting the process to learn, and (c) ongoing support to the implementation of PS/RtI.

Establishment of a PS/RtI leadership taskforce. All groups described the establishment of a district PS/RtI leadership taskforce as a key component of the implementation of PS/RtI. District staff reported that the PS/RtI leadership taskforce includes diverse stakeholders, including school and district-based staff and union representation. They added that the taskforce gets input from schools to learn what is working and to refine the implementation based on need. Principals shared that the creation of the taskforce provided critical ongoing monitoring and assisted with union acceptance, as union members perceived that they were able to provide input to the process. A principal stated,

> the district task force has met on a regular basis to monitor the implementation in the schools, but also to think about next steps and how to meet the requirements of the law. To take what we've learned … and connect those things together with the goal of making this successful in all the schools.

One school-based focus group member stated, "the district team gives a framework with concrete steps that each school implements according to needs."

Piloting the PS/RtI process to learn. The district's decision to participate in the FLDOE PS/RtI demonstration project was perceived to be very beneficial. District staff reported that it has allowed for time to learn. Principals shared that writing the state grant and recruiting schools to pilot first will help the district prepare for full implementation.

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Teachers explained that piloting started at the kindergarten level and moved up slowly, helping build consensus and readiness.

Ongoing support for the implementation of PS/RtI. Participants across groups described the ongoing implementation and support that the PS/RtI district leadership team provides. Principals reported that the district leadership provided ample support. One principal stated, "without the support it would not have flown and the support has been rich, and it has been deep, it's been a good experience, not only for the principals but for our schools." They mentioned the use of on-site coaches as critical to success. The district provided additional on-site coaches to supplement the two PS/RtI coaches provided through the state project. A teacher shared, "the [district] team was definitely front-lining things, making sure there were coaches at pilot schools and certain expectations were laid out of what was supposed to happen at the school level." Teachers also reported that ample support was provided through technical assistance from various district departments involved in the project as well as through the onsite coaches.

Balance of District Expectations With School-Based Flexibility

The fourth focus group question asked participants to describe how the PS/RtI leadership team's expectations allowed for school-based flexibility. Participants perceived that the PS/RtI district-leadership team provided a framework for PS/RtI that allows individual schools to tailor implementation to their needs. District-level leaders reported that the district sets expectations by developing consensus around core values and guiding principles. They explained that schools then adapt based on their needs. One group member added, "this is done by asking guiding questions, instead of providing answers." Principals gave examples of school-based flexibility such as being able to

select the roles and membership of their leadership teams and the use of RtI coaches who focus on each school's individual needs. One principal stated, "this process empowers school teams to make decisions." Another principal who had just been transferred from one school in the pilot to another reported, "having been at two places you really see that there are those core things and you are moving toward that same goal, but it looks different in different places." Participants said that allowing pilot schools to identify their focus, either academic or behavioral, and starting at kindergarten and moving up allowed time to build consensus and address beliefs. One teacher explained, "Our RtI coach broke it down into pieces and has taken us through in baby steps." Regarding flexibility with the timeline for implementation a teacher added, "I didn't feel negativity from the district. I mean we were not reprimanded, what's wrong with you guys!"

Stakeholder Input Into District Decisions

The fifth focus group question asked participants to describe ways school-based stakeholders have input into PS/RtI leadership team decisions. District leaders and principals reported that school-based stakeholders provide input through their representation on the PS/RtI District Leadership task force and through survey data. Principals added that RtI coaches also provide input to the district team. One principal gave an example of how school input is used: "We had a [school developed] form listing the inventory for academic and behavioral resources and that was shared. It's even been shared throughout the state."

Perceptions of school-based input were different between the two school-based focus groups. Teachers at one school clearly explained that the principal and the PS/ RtI coach gathered input from the staff that was shared at district leadership meetings.

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Teachers at the other school acknowledged that they were not quite certain how input was provided. They mentioned that it might be through the principal or PS/RtI coach and surveys. A teacher shared, "I don't know if we have input or not, unless they are taking our feedback on all the forms that we're filling out and the research that they're doing with the project." Another added, "We don't have a hotline to the district. I think the channel is through our RtI Coach and principal."

Additional Practices Used by District Leaders

The sixth focus group question sought participants' responses regarding any additional district leadership practices that were used by the district PS/RtI leadership team to implement PS/RtI.

The following themes emerged regarding perceptions of district leadership practices: (a) superintendent's level support for PS/RtI, (b) support with resources, (c) consensus built throughout the organization, and (d) clear district expectations that allow for school flexibility.

Support from the superintendent's level for PS/RtI. District leaders and principals

both agreed that there is support for PS/RtI at the superintendent's level. One district

leader shared, "There's been support from the superintendent's level all the way though

the layers. So the sense was that key people were involved and supporting the efforts."

Principals added that both district and school leaders have knowledge of best practices.

One principal explained, "There is an understanding of high quality instruction and best

practices as just common language, common knowledge, and how to monitor

instructional practices is a huge piece, data-based decision making is a huge piece."

Support with resources. All participants expressed that there was support from the

PS/RtI leadership team through resources. They described a commitment to provide the

support needed for successful implementation of the pilot. The teachers at one school

discussed the district's commitment to initiate participation in the pilot. A teacher stated,

"That was a big undertaking, especially in these economic times and to continue to

support and fund it." They also discussed the support that was provided through onsite

coaches. A principal shared,

> I think the whole coaching cycle, too, is another leadership responsibility. … We
>
> talk about how important the coach is to us. Definitely in my case it has been why
>
> this has been so successful, because she provides that consistency.

The principals added that the district support also included professional development and

assistance with the technology needed to use data.

Consensus was built throughout the organization. District leaders and principals

both discussed the role of the PS/RtI leadership team in building consensus through the

organization. One district leader shared, "I think [the district emphasized] facilitation, problem solving, systems knowledge in terms of bringing people together and making connections, and understanding the importance of consensus building before you look at implementation." Principals perceived that there was consistent communication of vision and expectations. A principal added, "I mean we all heard it over and over again, but it was consistent and repeated. I think it really got us all really knowing where we are going."

There are clear district expectations that allow for school flexibility. Participants perceived that the district set expectations, but allowed for school-based autonomy. As one teacher explained "They laid the framework and then we've been allowed to have the flexibility to implement what would satisfy the needs of our school."

Comparison to Other District-Wide Initiatives

The seventh focus group question asked participants to compare the implementation of PS/RtI to other district-wide initiatives. Four themes emerged: (a) with PS/RtI there was emphasis to the change process (b) PS/RtI is based on individual school's needs, (c) PS/RtI was piloted and the process allowed for slower implementation, and (d) PS/RtI provided training and onsite support through coaches.

Emphasis to the change process. All participant groups compared the PS/RtI with the implementation of a recent specific district-wide initiative regarding consistent use of best practices. Participants shared that with PS/RtI, attention was paid to the change process including consensus building and knowledge. Principals and teachers perceived that there was more development of the rationale and understanding the compelling

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reasons for implementation. All groups discussed that this initiative included everyone from a team approach. One teacher shared, "We have representation from every grade level, plus support staff, we have ESE and non-ESE."

PS/RtI is based on individual school's need. Principals and teachers perceived that PS/RtI was based on individual school's needs. They described it as customized to the school. A teacher explained, "With the other district initiative it was a cookbook approach." Principals reported that there was more opportunity with PS/RtI to share and build background knowledge among principals. They added that teachers feel more empowered and excited with this initiative.

PS/RtI was piloted for slower implementation. Participants discussed that piloting the implementation of PS/RtI allowed for slower implementation and time to make changes based on needs. Principals described the ability to take it slow, even tiny increments when needed. They added that there was time to revise plans based on data prior to the next phase of implementation. Teachers perceived that the implementation allowed time to learn and gain skills.

Principals and teachers reported that the implementation of PS/RtI provided adequate training and support. Teachers discussed the importance of professional development and onsite coaching as critical for success. As one teacher explained, "With RtI the support has been there for the teacher every day. Hey we're going to help you, this is part of a team." Several teachers agreed that there were no onsite coaches for the other district initiative. A teacher added, "The other initiative went faster, and I don't think people had the understanding. PS/RtI is at a slower pace and it is actually showing that it is working at each grade level and it is more comfortable for us."

Training and onsite support through coaches. Teachers also reported that there was support provided from multiple departments.

A teacher explained,

With other initiatives you like what you hear, but when you get back to your school site, you don't have the support that you need. Now there's so many people at the school doing this that we have lots of support so we can implement it and I like that part of it. It isn't, here's the plan and we'll leave you alone. It's like there's all kinds of support from all areas.

Perceptions of Facilitating Factors or Barriers to Implementation

This section will report the findings regarding the perceptions of facilitating factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI. The focus group interviews gathered the perspectives of teachers, principals, and district-level leader. The focus-group results for questions eight and nine were used to answer the research question below.

4.   What facilitating factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI are perceived by principals, school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, and the district PS/RtI leadership team?

Facilitating Forces

Four themes emerged from the focus-group responses regarding perceptions of facilitating forces to the implementation of PS/RtI: (a) support for the initiative, (b) consistency with the district's vision, (c) collaboration and sharing ideas, and (d) student success.

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Support for the initiative. All groups discussed the importance of support for the initiative. District-level staff mentioned that there was support from the superintendent's level. Principals and teachers discussed the support they received from onsite coaches. A principal explained, "I really do think having the coaching support was amazing. If all initiatives could have that piece where you had that expert and could do that I think lots more success would happen." A teacher asserted, "If every school had a coach that could be available more often, then that would be a huge facilitator." Teachers perceived that support from school-based administrators was key. A teacher shared, "[We had] our principal and vice principal brought into RtI and [they] want it to work so they give us the time. They definitely try to give us the time to meet. It couldn't have happened [without them]." Participants from one school perceived that the district implementation plan provided support. They described the process as starting small, with a focus on beliefs and consensus building, and encouragement to implement the next steps. Teachers and principals also reported that the district supported the initiative by making necessary data available.

Consistency with the district's vision. District-level leaders agreed that a facilitating force was the district's vision and core beliefs. One person explained, "I think a facilitator … is who we are. Our vision, our mission, guiding principles and key concepts make this happen more easily [here]." They also mentioned that PS/RtI appears to be more favorably viewed than past district-wide initiatives.

Collaboration and sharing ideas. Participants across groups identified the sharing of ideas and collaboration as facilitating factors. Principals mentioned that they were able to learn from each other and exchange ideas at some district meetings. Teachers felt that

the weekly team meetings, required by the initiative, fostered collaboration and shared accountability. Several school staff reported that district departments were beginning to work together more and there is a more unified approach in how the message is sent to the schools.

Student success. Both groups of teachers described the success that students were having because of PS/RtI as a facilitating force. They perceived that they were better able to meet the needs of all learners, from those at risk to those who are gifted. One teacher expressed, "The theory behind this is just phenomenal and wonderful for children … a godsend to children who were falling through the cracks."

Barriers to Implementation

Three areas emerged from the focus-group responses regarding perceptions of barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI: (a) limited resources, (b) state and district requirements, and (c) negative perceptions.

Limited resources. All groups discussed the limitations of resources (including time, staff, and data) as a potential barrier. District staff worried that implementing other initiatives without adequate support staff would spread people thin. Several participants mentioned the need for enough staff to assign reasonable case loads to teachers so they don't feel overwhelmed. Special-education teachers were concerned that there would be less staff available to assist in the future if there is a reduction of students identified as special needs. A teacher stated, "If you don't have those additional people [to provide interventions] it'll start going back to more [special-education] referrals." Special-education teachers also mentioned that students with disabilities may get less support

when the teacher's time is spent providing interventions in basic education. A teacher explained, "Kids that are going through the problem-solving process are getting more help than [students with disabilities] are receiving."

There was agreement among groups that having the necessary time for problem-solving meetings and to implement interventions was a challenge for teachers. Teachers reported their time being pulled in many different directions. In addition to the need for adequate staffing ratios, principals expressed concern regarding the differences of teacher expertise levels between trained and untrained staff. Principals also mentioned the need to increase resources regarding the types of student data made available by the district.

State and district requirements. Another barrier that emerged as a theme was state requirements and expectations for implementing PS/RtI throughout the district. District leaders were concerned about the timeline set by the state. They felt that it moved much faster than the timeline for the pilot schools and that they would not be able to replicate the implementation plan used for the pilot. They also worried that stakeholders' perceptions of mandated change may hurt the process. All groups expressed frustration with the state requirement to maintain the previous special-education referral process while implementing PS/RtI. Participants at one school reported that although there are improvements, district expectations from different departments are not consistent and this results in contradictory views or messages being sent.

Negative perceptions. Several participants viewed negative perceptions as a barrier to implementing PS/RtI. District leaders warned that there will be change resisters and people whom mistakenly believe they are already "doing it." They added concerns that negative impressions left from another district-wide initiative may influence

perception of PS/RtI. Teachers at one school encouraged newcomers to keep an open mind: "It's a process that people have to be open to. If you come in with a certain expectation and you don't let the process work, then it is not going to." Both principals and teachers at a newly opened school believed that being in a new school helped staff to be open to embracing new ideas.

Summary

Based on the results of the McREL survey the majority of teachers reported the implementation of PS/RtI is perceived as a first-order change at the school level. This perception varied by respondent type. The majority of administrators reported this initiative as a second-order change for the schools. Focus-group participants—district-level staff, principals, and teacher leaders—perceived the implementation of PS/RtI as a second-order change for schools and for the district.

The McREL survey results revealed that the majority (90%) of principal leadership responsibilities associated with leading change were implemented at a moderate level. Only 10% were reported at a high level. This varied by participants' perception of the level of change. Participants who perceived the initiative as a second-order change reported that 1 out of 11 leadership responsibilities were implemented at a high level, while participants who perceived the initiative as a second-order change reported no responsibilities at a high level. Perceptions of leadership also varied by respondents' roles. Principals and their supervisors reported high levels of implementation of leadership responsibilities; in contrast teachers perceived the responsibilities were implemented at a moderate or low level.

Perceptions of district leadership practices were gathered through focus-group

questions that sought input regarding the following themes: support for district priorities,

management of implementation, balance of district expectations with school-based

flexibility, stakeholder input into district decisions, practices used by district leaders, and

comparison to other district-wide initiatives.

Finally, focus-group participant perceptions were sought regarding facilitating

factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI. Participants reported that facilitating

factors included: (a) support for the initiative, (b) consistency with the district's vision,

(c) collaboration and sharing of ideas, and (d) evidence of student success. Perceived

barriers included: (a) limited resources, (b) conflicting state and district requirements, and

(c) negative perceptions.

The next chapter will provide a discussion of conclusions and implications drawn

from data presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five

Summary of Findings, Discussion and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the study and important conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter Four. It provides a discussion of the implications for action and recommendations for further research.

The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of teachers, principals, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team regarding the level of change the implementation of PS/RtI represents in seven elementary schools in a large west-central Florida district. In addition, it described perceptions of school and district leadership practices used to implement PS/RtI and the extent to which these practices are consistent with a profile of specific leadership responsibilities that have been identified as being successful when implementing change (Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

The implementation of a research-based school specific intervention model, such as RtI, may result in significant change in the way of work for schools and districts. According to Kotter and Cohen (2002), school and district leaders must be able to understand the magnitude of change, and understand their role in leading change in the organization, if the change is to be successful. This can be difficult to manage successfully because of the different degrees of readiness for change, perceptions of change and any loss associated with individuals in the organization. If leaders are able to respond with research-based leadership strategies, they will increase the likelihood that

the implementation will be successful and ultimately result in improved outcomes for all students.

In order to respond to this challenge, there is a need to determine stakeholders' perceptions of the magnitude of change that the implementation of RtI represents for schools and districts. There is also a need to identify the extent to which leadership practices used by principals and district leaders implementing a district-supported school-based reform such as RtI are consistent with practices identified in the research as likely to facilitate change.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the context of this study:

1.   (a)   What is the perceived level of change for schools associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, school faculty and the principals' supervisor in participating schools?

    (b)   To what extent is there agreement between respondent groups relative to their perceptions of the level of change associated with the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative?

    (c)   What is the perceived level of change for the district associated with the implementation of PS/RtI from the perspective of principals, members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team?

2.   (a)   To what degree are identified research-based principal leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by principals to

implement PS/RtI in participating schools as perceived by principals of participating schools, school faculty, and the principals' supervisor?

(b)   To what extent is there agreement among respondent groups relative to their perceptions of identified leadership practices employed by principals to implement the initiative?

3.   To what degree are identified research-based district leadership responsibilities associated with leading change employed by the district PS/RtI leadership team members to implement the initiative as perceived by members of the district PS/RtI leadership team, principals of participating schools, and members of the school-based PS/RtI leadership teams?

4.   What facilitating factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI are perceived by principals, members of the school-based PS/ RtI leadership teams, and members of the district PS/RtI leadership team?

A mixed-methods study design was used. Instrumentation included a leadership behavior assessment (McREL Balanced Leadership Profile) and focus-group interview protocols. The final sample in this study consisted of 145 participants: including 130 teachers ($n = 130$) and principals ($n = 7$) representing six schools; the principals' supervisor ($n = 1$); and district level administrators ($n = 7$) in a large school district in west-central Florida. The assistant superintendent for elementary schools supervises all of the principals in this study and responded to the questionnaire for each school independently. The sample for this study consisted of two subsamples: a school-based subsample and a district-level subsample.

Summary of Study Findings and Discussion Related to the Literature

The findings are discussed in relation to the four research questions posed in this study. Discussion of the findings in relation to the literature are discussed in the following sections: Perceptions of the Level of Change, Perceptions of Principal Leadership Responsibilities, Perceptions of District Leadership Responsibilities, and Perceptions of Facilitating Factors or Barriers to Implementation.

Perceptions of the Level of Change for Schools and the District

Level of Change for Schools

Based on the results of the McREL survey the majority of respondents perceived implementation of PS/RtI as a first-order change (i.e., incremental change) at the school level; only 26% reported the change as either a second-order (i.e., change that alters the system) or as having characteristics of first and second-order change. Results of the Chi - Squared analysis indicate that there is a significant association between respondent type and perception of the level of change. In general, administrators perceived the initiative as a second-order change. Five out of six principals perceived the change as second order; only one principal reported the change as first-order. No principals perceived the change as mixed. The principals' supervisor perceived the change as a second-order change for each school. The results of the McREL survey show that 80% of all teachers perceived the implementation of PS/RtI is consistent with first-order change. In contrast, it appears that teachers who participated in the school-based leadership-team focus groups perceived the implementation of PS/RtI as having second-order change implications for schools.

Discrepancy between perceptions of the level of change that new initiatives represent is not unusual. Fullan (2001) explained that few changes are perceived as having the same magnitude for all stakeholders. The same change can be perceived as first-order for some stakeholders and second-order for others. According to Maurer (2007), whether stakeholders perceive a change as first-order or second-order change has less to do with the change itself than it does with the participants' own experiences, knowledge, values, and the ability to adapt to change. The research suggests that a common human response is to address virtually all problems as though they were first-order challenges. Heifetz (1994) states that humans tend to approach new problems from the same perspective of past experiences with the hope that the issues can be solved with solutions learned through past experiences. In the focus-group discussion, district leaders warned that there will be people who do not fully understand the change that the implementation of PS/RtI represents and believe that they are "already doing it."

The discrepancy between perceptions of the level of change, between the majority of teachers and the principals, suggests that the majority of staff may not fully understand the improvement initiative in the same way as the principal and the school-based leadership team does. This may be attributed to the degree of participants' direct involvement in the implementation of PS/RtI. The implementation plan required that each school develop a school-based leadership team that included administration and key teacher leaders and support staff. The leadership teams participated in extensive training so that they would be able to provide support for the staff. Additionally, at the time of this study the schools had completed year two of the three-year demonstration project. The pilot project began only with kindergarten teachers the first year and first-grade

teachers the second year in the school district involved in this study. Each year a grade level will be added until the whole school is trained. In a typical school, in the district, the entire staff has been involved in awareness activities around the guiding principles and key concepts of RtI; none the less, the school-based leadership team and the classroom teachers who are involved in the pilot project may have a deeper understanding of PS/RtI.

In summary, the perceptions of the level of change, associated with the implementation of PS/RtI, at the school level appear to be second order for participants who were directly involved with the implementation of PS/RtI and first order for participants who have not yet been directly involved.

Level of Change for the District

In order to determine perceptions of the level of change for the district, focus group participants were asked to describe in what ways, if any, PS/RtI challenged the existing norms of the district. Two themes emerged from the data: (a) PS/RtI creates a need for increased collaboration between special education and basic education, and (b) PS/RtI creates changes to special education and basic education teachers' roles and responsibilities for students with learning difficulties.

All focus groups (school-based, principal and district-based) reported that the change from separate systems of basic education and special education to one system presented challenges at the district and school levels. They described this as a paradigm shift of thinking for the district and schools that requires shared responsibility for student learning across departments. They also suggest that changing roles at the district and school level result in some uncertainty and ambiguity for staff who sometimes have unanswered questions. Participants reported the implementation of PS/RtI resulted in

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significant changes to basic education and a need for additional training and support. When these perceptions are compared to characteristics of first- and second-order change, the implementation of PS/RtI appears to be perceived as a second-order change for the district by focus-group members at the district and school level. PS/RtI presents second-order, or adaptive, change implications for stakeholders based on the following characteristics described by Galvin (2007): (a) a break from the past, (b) outside of existing paradigms, (c) conflicts with existing values and norms, (d) complex, and (e) requires new skills and knowledge implemented by stakeholders.

Marzano and colleagues (2005) argued that leaders must understand the change process and must engage in behaviors that are consistent with the magnitude of the change represented by the innovation. If leadership behaviors do not match the order of change required by the innovation, the innovation will probably fail regardless of its value. Thus, based on the nature of change reported above, the implementation of PS/RtI will require school-based and district leaders to respond with practices that support the implementation of second-order change.

Perceptions of Principal Leadership Responsibilities Associated with Leading Change

The McREL Balanced Leadership Survey gathered the perceptions of teachers, the principal, and the principals' supervisor on the principals' of implementation of leadership responsibilities associated with leading change, when implementing PS/RtI in their schools. Waters and Cameron (2007) proposed that 11 leadership responsibilities are necessary when implementing any type of change. Three responsibilities are associated with first-order change (monitoring/evaluation, ideals/beliefs, and knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and seven responsibilities, including the three

emphasized for first-order change, are strongly associated with leading second-order change. The responsibilities are ideas/belief; optimization; flexibility; knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; intellectual stimulation; change agent; and monitoring and evaluation. Four responsibilities: culture, order, communication and input are identified by Waters and Cameron (2007) as having a negative association with leading second-order change. The survey results suggested that the principals are demonstrating to varying degrees the leadership responsibilities needed for leading second-order change. Ten of the 11 leadership responsibilities were perceived as being implemented at a moderate level, one was perceived to be implemented at a high level, and none were perceived to be implemented at a low level.

The principals and their supervisor reported the implementation of leadership responsibilities at a high level. This contrasts sharply with the teachers' perceptions of the principals' level of implementation of the responsibilities at a moderate level only. According to McREL (2009), the discrepancy between the principals' views of fulfillment of the leadership responsibilities and that of the teachers is not uncommon when principals are implementing second-order change. Waters and Cameron (2007) argued that several of the leadership responsibilities (e.g., change agent) needed for leading second-order change tend to have the effect of destabilizing or challenging the organizational and individual norms or routines and are likely to disrupt routines, procedures, and practices. Based on all participants responses, one of the seven leadership responsibilities positively associated with leading change was reported as high; in contrast, none of the leadership responsibilities negatively associated with leading change was reported as high.

The six principal leadership responsibilities that had the highest mean ratings for perceived level of implementation are as follows: (a) ideals and beliefs (i.e., communicates and operates from strong ideals/beliefs about schooling); (b) optimize (i.e., inspires and leads new innovations) (c) monitor and evaluate (i.e., monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning); (d) knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment (i.e., is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices); (e) flexibility (i.e., adapts leadership behaviors to the situation); and (f) culture (i.e., fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community of cooperation. A surprise finding is that the responsibility of culture was rated among the highest. According to Marzano et al. (2005), the leadership responsibility of culture tends to have a negative association with leading second-order change. One explanation for the higher rating of culture in this study is that focus group results suggest the implementation of PS/RtI is perceived to be supportive of their district's vision and increases collaboration among colleagues.

The five principal leadership responsibilities that had the lowest mean ratings for perceived level of implementation were (a) change agent (i.e., is willing to and actively challenges the status quo); (b) communication (i.e., establishes strong lines of communication with students and teachers); (c) order (i.e., establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines); (d) intellectual stimulation (i.e., ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular part of the school culture); and (e) input (i.e., involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies). The lower ratings of communication, input and order is consistent with the research that suggests that when

leading second-order change, principals place emphasis on the seven responsibilities

positively associated with leading second-order change, while they struggle to effectively

implement the four that have a negative association with leading change (Waters &

Cameron, 2007). This is not to imply that these four responsibilities have a negative

impact on leading second-order change. Nor does this finding imply that principals are

not working hard to fulfill their responsibilities, but rather it is seen as the unintended

consequence of leading second-order change. Fulfillment of these responsibilities will

increase the likelihood of successful implementation of second-order change. Fullan

(2001, p. 40) described this as the *implementation dip* associated with leading second-

order change. Declines in performance in schools and other organizations when

implementing change that requires new knowledge and skills, that challenges prevailing

norms, or that conflict with personal values are well documented. A surprise finding in

this study was that the responsibilities of change agent and intellectual stimulation were

ranked among the lowest; however, these leadership responsibilities have been positively

associated with leading second-order change in the literature. One explanation for this

discrepancy is that PS/RtI coaches and district staff, rather than the principals, may have

been perceived to have introduced the change and the research behind it.

As described in Chapter Two, Waters and Cameron (2007) proposed a framework

that associates the 11 leadership responsibilities to four phases of change. They posit that

leaders must first *create demand* for the change by emphasizing the responsibilities of

change agent, intellectual stimulation, and ideals/beliefs. Next, they must *implement the

change* by emphasizing knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment and

optimization. Third, they must *manage personal transitio*ns during the change. The

responsibility of flexibility is key during this stage. Finally, leaders *must monitor and evaluate the change*. The results of the survey administered for this study suggest that the principals are perceived as carrying out those responsibilities needed to implement the four-phases of change; however the mean rating for the responsibilities associated with *creating demand* and *managing transitio*ns were lower than the other two phases. The area of *creating demand* may have been rated lower because, for the most part, PS/RtI coaches and district staff may have been perceived as having introduced the change to schools, rather than principals. Additionally, the area of *managing transitions* has been associated negatively with implementing second-order change in past studies. Second-order change has significant impact on most people and requires leaders to pay attention to transitions (Waters & Cameron, 2007).

Perceptions of District Leadership Responsibilities

The perspectives of teachers, principals, and district-level leaders on the implementation of leadership practices associated with leading change by the district PS/RtI leadership team were gathered through focus-group interviews. As described in Chapter Three, the focus-group questions sought input regarding the following areas: support of district priorities, management of implementation, balance of district expectations with school-based flexibility, stakeholder input into district decisions, practices used by district leaders, and comparison to other district-wide initiatives. The focus-group findings will be discussed in the context of the following themes: the district ensures that new initiatives are research-based and support district priorities, the district has a plan for the management of implementation, there is a balance of district

expectations with school-based flexibility, and there is stakeholder input into district decisions.

The District Ensures New Initiatives are Research-Based and Support District Priorities

DuFour (2003) argued that vision instills an organization with a sense of direction and is essential to a successful change process. DuFour added that the lack of a compelling vision for school systems is a major obstacle in any attempt to change schools. According to Senge (1990), "you cannot have a learning organization without a vision" (p. 209). Additionally, a district vision will have little impact until it is widely shared and accepted and until it connects with personal visions of those in the schools.

Kotter (2006) argued that vision plays a key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people. The results of this study suggest that the district's vision drives the implementation of PS/RtI. Principals shared that PS/RtI aligns with the district's vision by looking at individual student needs and that helps them realize the vision. District staff explained that both the district's vision and PS/RtI are about helping every child reach his or her highest potential. The teachers perceived that PS/RtI is consistent with the district's vision, and supports the implementation of the district's vision, because it is student centered, focused on success for all learners, and all students have good-quality core instruction. A characteristic of effective schools, and school districts, is that there is a clear and focused vision and mission (Lezotte, 2005).

Waters and Marzano (2009) argue that the establishment of nonnegotiable goals for student achievement and classroom instruction is critical for successful district improvement. There must be clear priorities among the district's instructional goals and

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objectives with district achievement and instructional practices emphasized. The findings of this study suggest that there is some understanding of, and commitment to, the district's instructional goals and priorities. Principals and teachers in this study shared that PS/RtI assists teachers to use research-based best practices to support learning and make initial instruction strong. All groups perceived that PS/RtI promotes the use of data to make decisions, monitor progress, and ensure that students are meeting standards. Shannon and Bylsma (2004) argued that improved districts use data to make instructional decisions and to allocate resources.

Teachers in this study reported that PS/RtI increases accountability by emphasizing fidelity of implementation and assists schools to meet the expectations of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Florida's Accountability System. Shannon and Bylsma (2004) pointed out that effective district leaders serve as helpful mentors to schools, balancing state and federal policies with local policies. They help to buffer schools against external distractions (Dailey et al., 2005).

Shannon and Bylsma (2004) contended that effective districts communicate high expectations, align curriculum and assessment, and provide job-embedded professional development. District staff, principals, and teachers reported that PS/RtI aligns with recent district-wide initiatives that emphasized the use of best instructional practices and uses the continuum of services in the least-restrictive environment for students with disabilities. A district leader explained, "it is really aligned with how we have really worked to make initial instruction strong with the concept of research-based practices we learned with [a previous district initiative]."

Thus, the district, by volunteering to participate in the PS/RtI demonstration project, exercised leadership responsibilities by becoming involved in an initiative that is research-based and that is considered by school and district staff to be supportive of the districts priorities and vision.

The District Plans the Management and Implementation of PS/RtI

Kotter (2006) argued that in successful transformations, a powerful guiding coalition comprised of key decisions makers and other people with a commitment to improved performance pull together as a team.

District leaders and principals both agreed that there is support for PS/RtI at the superintendent's level. The establishment of a district leadership taskforce was viewed by all groups as a key component to the implementation of PS/RtI. It is important to note that the PS/RtI demonstration project required each district to have a district leadership team. This district expanded upon that requirement and created a taskforce to provide greater support and guidance for the project in this district. District staff noted that the district's PS/RtI leadership taskforce had membership from diverse stakeholders, including school and district-based staff as well as union representation. They added that the team gets input from schools to learn what's working and to refine implementation based on need. Feist (2003) found that districts that were successful with system-wide reform included the union early in discussions and collaborated with them to identify mutually beneficial strategies. Principals in this study shared that the creation of the team provided critical ongoing monitoring and assisted with union acceptance, as union members perceived that they were able to provide input to the team.

Heifetz and Linsky (2004) contended that district goals should be clearly linked to increased learning for all students and should establish challenging targets. Goals must set specific targets rather than offer vague expressions or beliefs. Goals that are strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and timebound earn the SMART goal acronym (O'Neill & Conzemius, 2005). The results of this study revealed that none of the focus groups reported that the district or schools had established SMART goals for the implementation of PS/RtI.

Waters and Marzano (2009) argued that successful districts not only monitor the progress of district initiatives, they also provide sufficient financial and human resources to accomplish the goals. In this study participants across groups described the ongoing implementation and support that the PS/RtI district leadership team provided through professional development, data management tools and on-site coaching. The on-site coaching was partially funded through the FLDOE PS/RtI project; the district also provided funding to fully support a cadre of coaches the district believed necessary to implement PS/RtI.

Feist (2003) contended that site-based professional development is necessary for district reform and added that job-embedded learning should be supported with coaching during implementation. Shannon and Bylsma (2004) pointed out that effective districts provide training in the use of data and help schools collect and interpret information.

The District Ensures a Balance of District Expectations with School-Based Flexibility

Fullan (2005) argued that one of the superintendent's biggest challenges in the change process is finding the right balance between district control and site-based autonomy. Participants in this study perceived that the PS/RtI district leadership team

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provided a framework that allowed individual schools to tailor PS/RtI implementation to their needs. More specifically, they perceived that in the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative, the district set expectations that allowed for school-based autonomy. District-level leaders reported that the district sets expectations by developing consensus around core values and guiding principles. They explained that schools then adapt based on their needs. Such adaptation is consistent with what Fullan (2005) calls school-based flexibility. Principals gave examples of school-based flexibility such as their being able to select the roles and membership of their PS/RtI leadership teams and the use of RtI coaches who focus on each school's individual needs. Participants said that allowing pilot schools to identify their focus, either academic or behavioral, and starting at kindergarten and moving up through the grades allowed time to build consensus and address beliefs. Principals and teachers perceived that PS/RtI was based on individual school's needs. They described it as customized to the school.

Based on the findings of this study it appears that the PS/RtI district leadership team facilitated the initiative in a way that allows for individual schools to operate under defined autonomy. According to Waters and Marzano (2009), defined autonomy occurs when district leaders expect principals and other leaders in the district to lead in the framework set by collaboratively developed district goals.

The District Ensures there is Stakeholder Input into District Decisions.

Shannon and Bylsma (2004) found that "school districts can create a vision, a professional culture, and a sense of urgency among stakeholders to implement teaching and learning strategies to advance the work of educational reform." Waters and Marzano

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(2009) added that successful district leaders must ensure that all stakeholders are included in setting goals for the district.

District leaders and principals both discussed the role of the PS/RtI district leadership team in building consensus through the organization. One district leader shared, "I think [the district emphasized] facilitation, problem solving, systems knowledge in terms of bringing people together and making connections, and understanding the importance of consensus building before you look at implementation." Principals perceived that there was consistent communication of district vision and expectations.

All participant groups compared the PS/RtI project with the implementation of a recent specific district-wide initiative regarding consistent use of best practices. Participants shared that with PS/RtI, attention was paid to the change process including consensus building and knowledge. They mentioned that the PS/RtI demonstration pilot project implementation process started small in a few schools and grade levels. Principals and teachers perceived that there was more development of the rationale and understanding of compelling reasons for implementation. All groups discussed the PS/RtI initiative included everyone from a team approach. They perceived that the previous initiative lacked the components described above.

District leaders and principals reported that school-based stakeholders provide input through their representation on the PS/RtI District Leadership taskforce and through survey data. Principals added that PS/RtI coaches also provide input to the district taskforce. It is worth noting, that not all teachers in this study were able to clearly describe the ways in which they provided input to the PS/RtI process. Feist (2003) argued

that it is critical for district leaders to ensure that school-based personnel have a clear understanding of how their input is used to guide the reform. The results of this study suggest that while principals have a clear sense of their ability to provide input into the initiative, not all teachers are able to articulate their role in influencing the change.

Marzano and Waters (2009) contend that districts that fulfill multiple responsibilities associated with high levels of achievement implement the following actions: facilitate an inclusive goal-setting process that results in nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction; ensure that district resources are aligned with district goals; and monitor and evaluate progress toward goal achievement.

Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) added that effective district leaders leverage their position to implement their vision of large-scale reform. They stressed that district leaders cannot do the job alone. They need to build a coalition of leaders or "teams of people creating and driving a clear, coherent strategy" (p. 1). They pointed to the need for a "moral imperative" giving everyone responsibility for improving discussion in a broad context. They asserted, "District leaders must foster a culture in which school principals are concerned about the success of every school in the district, not just their own (p. 2)."

In summary, the findings of this study suggest that there is a focus on student achievement and learning; meaningful professional development and data-based decision making. There also appears to be evidence of stakeholder involvement, district and school collaboration and autonomy, and support that is specific to each school's needs (Dailey et.al.; Waters & Marzano, 2009).

Perceptions of Facilitating Factors or Barriers to Implementation

The findings regarding the perceptions of facilitating factors or barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI will be discussed in this section. Focus groups were used to gather the perspectives of teachers, principals, and district-level leaders on the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the initiative.

Facilitating Forces

When participants were asked to share their perceptions of factors that facilitate implementation of PS/RtI, four themes emerged: (a) support for the initiative, (b) consistency with the district's vision, (c) collaboration and sharing ideas, and (d) student success. The findings suggest that the leadership practices discussed in the preceding section, support for the initiative and consistency with the district's vision, were identified as facilitating factors to the implementation of PS/RtI. Additional facilitating factors included collaboration, sharing ideas and student success.

District-level leaders agreed that a facilitating force was the district's vision and core beliefs. They also mentioned that PS/RtI initiative appears to be more favorably viewed, by teachers and principals, than past district-wide initiatives due in part to the support provided for the reform.

Participants across groups identified the sharing of ideas and collaboration as facilitating factors. Principals mentioned that they were able to learn from each other and exchange ideas at principal meetings and on the PS/RtI District Task Force. Teachers felt that the weekly team meetings, required by the initiative, fostered collaboration and shared accountability. Several school staff reported that district departments were beginning to work together more and there is a more unified approach in how the

message is sent to the schools. This supports Feist's (2003) argument that district-wide change has been successful when staff in different departments foster new relationships and work closely with one another. In addition, Shannon and Bylsma (2004) add that improved districts foster collaborative relationships. They "build a culture of commitment, collegiality, mutual respect, and stability" (p. 46).

Teachers in both school-based focus groups described the success that students were having because of PS/RtI as a facilitating factor. They perceived that they were better able to meet the needs of all learners, from those at risk to those who are gifted. These findings are consistent with Lencioni's (2005) arguments that providing evidence of results is one of the most effective ways to win the support of resisters and create a sense of momentum. When teachers see that the result of their hard work is increased student achievement they are more likely to continue their commitment to the change process. Kanter (2005) pointed out that when people expect to be successful they are more likely to put forth the effort to ensure it.

Barriers

Three themes emerged from the focus-group responses regarding perceptions of barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI: (a) limited resources, (b) state and district requirements, and (c) negative perceptions.

All groups discussed the limitations of resources (including time, staff, and data) as a potential barrier to the successful implementation of PS/RtI. District staff worried that implementing other initiatives without adequate support staff would cause people to have too many responsibilities. Feist (2003) found that a challenge to district-wide reform is that district-level staff often believe that they are not able to prioritize adequate time

and energy to support all schools, given the scope of the new initiative. This often leaves schools feeling overwhelmed with the perception that the district is not providing the support that they need.

Galvin (2007) found that the successful implementation of PS/RtI requires districts to reallocate general-education and special-education resources and personnel. Several participants in this study also mentioned similar challenges. Special-education teachers were concerned that there would be less staff available to assist in the future if there are fewer students identified as having special needs. Special-education teachers also mentioned that students with disabilities may get less support when the teacher's time is spent providing interventions in basic education.

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) found that ambiguity and concern about change and disruption to personal routines are common and that even the best-laid plans will typically fall short in some areas. The results of this study provide evidence that these types of concerns are present in the implementation of PS/RtI. For example, staff reported that having the necessary time for problem-solving meetings and to implement interventions was a challenge for teachers. Teachers reported their time being splintered in many different directions. In addition to the need for adequate staffing ratios, principals expressed concern regarding the differences in level of teacher expertise between trained and untrained staff. Principals also mentioned the need to increase resources regarding the types of student data that are made available by the district. Waters and Marzano (2009) added that second-order change requires leaders to respond to challenges without known solutions and that some individuals will perceive that things are worse as a result of the new initiative. DuFour and colleagues (2006) caution that the

most common cause of the downfall of a new initiative is not a single event, but rather repeated compromises to the initiative based on staff concerns. "There is not one fatal blow… [it] dies from a thousand fatal wounds (p. 195).

Other barriers mentioned were state requirements and expectations for implementing PS/RtI throughout the district. District leaders were concerned about the timeline set by the state for full-fledged implementation for PS/RtI in schools. They felt that the state-wide timeline for implementation moved much faster than the timeline for the demonstration pilot schools and that they would not be able to replicate the FLDOE PS/RtI implementation plan used for the demonstration project. They also worried that stakeholders' perceptions of mandated change may hurt the process. All groups expressed frustration with the state requirement to maintain the previous special-education referral process while implementing PS/RtI, the two processes are not consistent and require a duplication of efforts in many cases. Feist (2003) argued that districts must serve as a mediator between state policies and district implementation, adding that districts have more power in this role than they often use.

Participants at one school reported that although they have experienced improvements due to PS/RtI, in some cases district expectations from different departments are not consistent and this results in contradictory views or messages being sent. DuFour (2003b) wrote, "When all central office administrators are separately chanting, 'Pay attention to my department's directive! My initiatives are the priority!' they sow seeds of confusion, frustration, and cynicism in schools" (p. 16).

Fiest (2003) found that negative perceptions contribute to initial resistance when leaders attempt to implement dramatic change. Several participants in this study viewed

negative perceptions as a barrier to implementing PS/RtI. District leaders warned that there will be change resisters and people whom mistakenly believe they are already "doing it." They added concerns that negative impressions left from another district-wide initiative may influence perceptions of PS/RtI. Gladwell (2002) argued that when dealing with resisters, leaders should focus their attention on cultural norms, which creates peer pressure that will convert people to being supportive. People are powerfully influenced by the culture in which they work.

Delimitations

The results of this study contribute to the existing knowledge of district-supported school-based reform, specifically PS/RtI. There are some delimitations to this study which calls for a need for caution in generalizing the study findings. The large west-central Florida district in this study was part of an ongoing PS/RtI pilot project and was available to this researcher. Thus, the district was selected due to convenience and the researcher's desire to gain knowledge to influence practice. The sample consisted only of elementary schools involved in the PS/RtI demonstration project. Thus, findings of this study may only be generalized to elementary schools in Florida involved in the PS/RtI project.

Implications for Action

The results of this study provide information that may assist in the implementation of PS/RtI and other similar district-supported school-based reforms.

Finding 1—PS/RtI Represents a Second-Order Change

The findings from this study suggest that the implementation of PS/RtI represents second-order change for the majority of stakeholders. The perceptions of the level of change at the school level appears to be second order for participants who were directly involved with the implementation of PS/RtI and first order for participants who have not yet been directly involved.

According to McREL (2009), the following actions should be considered when the staff may not fully understand the improvement initiative in the same way the leadership does:

1. Explain the specific details of the initiative to staff members and encourage feedback about them, including suggestions for effective implementation.

2. Share the data that supports the initiative with staff members.

3. Be explicit with staff members about the policies, practices, and procedure that are ending and the new policies, practices, or procedures that are beginning.

4. Meet with the leadership teams to better understand the knowledge, skills, and practices staff members have in relation to the initiative.

The area of managing personal transitions should receive particular attention by both principals and district leaders implementing second-order change. Waters and Cameron (2007) argued that new initiatives that represent a gain for students, schools, or school districts, are often perceived as a loss for teachers and principals. This is particularly true when they must learn new approaches and procedures, redefine

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relationships, and reconsider norms and values. These changes often require staff to undergo personal transitions, which they often respond to by resisting change. Understanding individual responses and managing personal transitions created by second-order change is critical for successful change leadership (Waters & Cameron, 2007). Principals and district leaders must fulfill the leadership responsibility of flexibility. Fulfillment of this responsibility involves the leader understanding when to direct, when to step back, when to ask questions and when to answer them, when to speak and when to listen. The leader must understand the fear and stress the change may represent for staff. The leader should also attend to the importance of symbolic events and traditions and be willing to establish temporary agreements with staff who may need additional support (Waters & Cameron, 2007). According to Waters and Cameron (2007), principals and district leaders lead initiatives that represent second-order change for themselves. This requires them to engage in thoughtful reflective practice, maintaining an awareness of the implications of change for themselves and others.

Leaders should not take the initiation of PS/RtI lightly. Second-order change is very difficult for most stakeholders and is likely to fail if not implemented correctly. Leaders should pay particular attention to the change process and emphasize key leadership skills needed for change. Without such attention from district and school leaders the initiative is not likely to succeed.

Finding 2—Principal Leadership Responsibilities

In general, teachers perceived that principals were moderately implementing the key leadership responsibilities needed for change. Teachers rated the implementation of necessary leadership practices for leading change at a lower level than principals did.

This may be a result of principals over-rating their performance or may be a result of the negative association that second-order change has on perceptions of leadership performance, as described earlier in this chapter.

The responsibilities of ideals and beliefs, monitoring and evaluation, and optimization were ranked highest by all participants. The responsibilities of input, intellectual stimulation and order were ranked the lowest. This is consistent with the research that second-order change tends to have the effect of destabilizing or challenging the organizational and individual norms and routines.

The study's findings point to the need for principals to employ leadership practices needed for leading second-order change, paying particular attention to practices that have a negative association with leading second-order change. To help mitigate the negative consequences of second-order change, emphasis must be placed on the areas of input, intellectual stimulation and order. According to Waters and Cameron (2007) these areas include the following practices:

1. Input—involve teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.

2. Intellectual Stimulation-ensure faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and include the discussion of these as a regular aspect of the school's culture.

3. Order—establish a set of standard operating procedures and routines.

The principal should consider sharing the responsibilities of these areas with other members of the leadership team, so that all can focus on implementing the seven practices positively associated with leading change.

District leaders and principals should prepare for an "implementation dip" when initiating PS/RtI. This dip may cause leaders to assume that the initiative was a mistake or that it is being poorly implemented. Leaders must remember that most important reforms have faced these challenges. Leaders should not let the implementation dip derail needed change and instead continue to move forward while emphasizing the responsibilities of culture, order, communication, input, and managing transitions to increase the likely hood of successful reform.

Finding 3—District Leadership Responsibilities

Teachers and administrators who were directly involved with the PS/RtI reported that district leaders implemented key practices linked with successful district improvement, as defined by Marzano and Waters, described in Chapter Three. These practices include: the district ensures that new initiatives are research-based and support district priorities, the district has a plan for the management of implementation, there is a balance of district expectations with school-based flexibility, and there is stakeholder input into district decisions through collaborative goal-setting.

The district responsibility of collaborative goal setting tends to be perceived negatively when districts are implementing second-order change (Marzano & Waters, 2009). The results of this study suggest that while principals have a clear sense of their ability to provide input into the initiative at the district level, not all teachers are able to articulate their role in influencing the change. District-level staff should continue to involve principals and other key stakeholders in the goal-setting process. Principals should review the goals with their faculty and staff to provide input to district-level leaders on school-based perceptions. This process should be clearly explained to teachers

and other staff, so that there is an understanding of how they influence the district's goal-setting process.

According to Heifetz and Linsky (2004) district goals should be clearly linked to increased learning for all students and should establish challenging targets. Organizations benefit when they have a few key goals that clarify the results they seek and how each member can contribute to achieving those results (Lencioni, 2005). They are more effective when they see how their goals and their efforts are linked to the larger organization (Druskat & Wolf, 2001). They are strengthened by the accomplishment and celebration of short-term objectives (Collins, 2001). There is no evidence in this study that the district has developed specific, measurable goals linked to the implementation of PS/RtI in its schools. Districts should consider developing such goals.

The PS/RtI model empowers school leaders and staff to identify problems, work together to identify solutions and use data to determine the effectiveness of the solutions. This model shows promise in the quest to increase student achievement and close learning gaps. District leaders should implement essential leadership practices needed for leading change to provide the needed support and infrastructure that will allow principals and teachers to implement PS/RtI. District leaders must also ensure that each school has effective leadership that can implement the practices needed for change. They should establish consensus around non-negotiables for student learning. Individual schools must have flexibility to develop ways to meet those non-negotiables that make sense for their students and their staff. The literature on district reform shows that without effective district leadership practices, individual schools are unlikely to reform on their own, and if they do, the reform is often not sustainable.

Finding 4—Facilitating Factors and Barriers

Teachers and administrators who were directly involved with the PS/RtI demonstration project perceived that the following were facilitating factors for PS/RtI implementation: (a) support for the initiative from district and school leaders, (b) consistency with the district's vision, (c) collaboration and sharing of ideas, and (d) student success. These findings support the idea that a more powerful model of school reform involves the collaboration between teachers, principals and district leaders. Effective leadership at the district and school levels has a positive effect on what happens in the classroom and what happens in the classroom has a positive effect on student achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009). A non-negotiable for PS/RtI must be measurable improvements in student achievement. When reformers see that their work is resulting in significant student success their resolve to continue the reform is strengthened.

Leaders in this district should review the specific barriers to the implementation of PS/RtI reported by staff in this study: (a) limited resources, (b) state and district requirements, and (c) negative perceptions. DuFour et al. (2006) cautioned that because significant change generates concern, leaders must encourage the discussion of those concerns, seek to understand them, and address them honestly. Understanding barriers to implementation can assist leaders in developing responses that will move the initiative forward. To respond to barriers that threaten the successful implementation of PS/RtI, leaders must ensure that sufficient resources, including time, training, materials and personnel are allocated to the initiative. The area of training can best be supported through continued use of the coaching model for teachers and administrators. District

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leaders should review state and district policies and procedures to reduce the effects of conflicting requirements. Local policies and procedures that interfere with the initiative should be reviewed and removed if possible. Leaders should continue plans for ongoing communication and collaboration to mitigate the effects of negative perceptions that some stakeholders may have of the change. They should also communicate and celebrate successes frequently to continue the momentum of the reform, encourage staff who may want to give up and quiet the naysayers and resisters.

This researcher recommends that districts and schools responsible for implementing PS/RtI, benchmark their practices against the practices identified in this study to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. Although findings suggest that implementation of PS/RtI in this district appears to be consistent with the literature on successful district reform, as Kotter (2006) notes, leaders can be tempted to declare victory in a major change initiative too soon. Until changes become part of the culture, which can take three to ten years, new approaches are vulnerable and prone to regression. Kotter (2006) explained that complex efforts to change an organization risk losing momentum if there are no short-term goals to meet and celebrate. Without short-term success, too many staff give up or actively resist the initiative. Victory can be declared when the initiative becomes firmly rooted in social norms and shared values. The full implementation of a second-order change, such as PS/RtI, may take a typical district 10 years or more (Kotter, 2006).

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study provide direction for further research in three areas. First, the relationship of onsite coaching and successful improvement initiatives should be

further explored. Second, the critical components used for gradual implementation and creation of sustainability of PS/RtI should be identified. Finally, the effects of PS/RtI on student achievement, including reducing achievement gaps between subgroups of students and the reduction of students identified as learning disabled, must be determined. Feist (2003) cautioned that districts find it increasingly difficult to maintain the focus on reform if stakeholders do not see significant improvement in student outcomes.

Conclusion

The implementation of PS/RtI is Florida's response to mandates of NCLB and IDEA so all students receive high-quality, effective instruction. School practitioners in Florida will be required to implement PS/RtI at district and school levels to meet the new statutory state requirements for interventions and special-education eligibility (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2006).

School leaders in Florida will need to know and be able to put into practice the essential leadership responsibilities related to leading second-order change and school improvement, such as those identified in this study, if they are to play a key role in the successful implementation of PS/RtI and improved outcomes for students. It may be helpful if the results of this study are shared with the state and university leaders responsible for the PS/RtI pilot project for dissemination to other district and school-based leaders. Additionally, the results of this study will be shared with the PS/RtI district leadership team, principals, and school-based leadership teams in the district, in which this study was conducted, to identify the strategies needed to scale-up the reform district-wide and promote sustainability.

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Appendices

Appendix A: District Leadership Responsibilities, Average r, and Leadership Practices

Table A1
District Leadership Responsibilities, Average r, and Leadership Practices

Responsibilities	The extent to which the superintendent	Avg. *r*	Practices used by superintendent and executive/district office staff to fulfill superintendent responsibilities
Goal-setting	*Involves board members and principals in the process of setting goals.*	.24	•Developing a shared vision for the goal-setting process •Using the goal-setting process to set goals developed jointly by board and administration •Developing goals that are coherent and reflect attendant values which support involvement and quality in achievement rather than maintenance of the status quo •Communicating expectations to central office staff and principals
Nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction	*Sets goals for student achievement and instructional programs based on relevant research.*	.33	•Modeling understanding of instructional design •Establishing clear priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives •Adopting instructional methodologies that facilitate the efficient delivery of the district's curriculum •Incorporating varied and diverse instructional methodologies that allow for a wide range of learning styles that exist in a multiracial student population •Adopting 5-year nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction •Ensuring that a preferred instructional program is adopted and implemented
Board alignment with and support of district goals	*Maintains board support for district goals for achievement and instruction is maintained.*	.29	•Establishing agreement with the board president on district goals •Establishing agreement with the board president on type and nature of conflict in the district •Along with the board president, remaining situationally aware, agreeing on the political climate of the school district •Establishing agreement with the board president on the nature of teaching/learning strategies to be used in the district •Providing professional development for board members •Establishing agreement with the board president on the effectiveness of board training
Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction	*Monitors and evaluates implementation of the district instructional program, impact of instruction on achievement, and impact of implementation on implementers.*	.27	•Using an instructional-evaluation program that accurately monitors implementation of the district's instructional program •Monitoring student achievement through feedback from the instructional-evaluation program •Using a system to manage instructional change •Annually evaluating principals •Reporting student achievement data to the board regularly •Ensuring that all student populations' curricular needs are met •Observing classrooms during school visits •Coordinating efforts of individuals and groups within the

Responsibilities	The extent to which the superintendent	Avg. r	Practices used by superintendent and executive/district office staff to fulfill superintendent responsibilities
			organization to increase reliability of the system, with adjustments by individuals to quickly respond to system failures
Use of resources to support the goals for achievement and instruction	*Dedicates resources for professional development of teachers and principals to achieve district goals.*	.26	•Adopting an instructional and resource management system supporting implementation of the district instructional philosophy
			•Providing extensive teacher and principal staff development
			•Training all instructional staff in a common but flexible instructional model
			•Controlling resource allocation
			•Providing access to professional growth opportunities through a master plan to coordinate in-service activities of the district
Defined autonomy; Superintendent relationship with schools	*Provides autonomy to principals to lead their schools but expects alignment on district goals and use of resources for professional development.*	.28	•Developing a shared vision and understanding of *defined autonomy*
			•Using standards for content and instruction as basic design principles
			•Committing the district and schools to continuous improvement
			•Screening, interviewing, and selecting teachers along with principals
			•Hiring experienced teachers
			•Rewarding successful teachers and terminating the employment of unsuccessful teachers
			•Establishing teacher evaluation as a priority for principals
			•Ensuring that principals speak with teachers about results
			•Establishing strong agreed-upon principles/values which direct actions of people
			•Ensuring that schools have a clear mission focused on school performance
			•Ensuring that school practices are characterized by opportunity for all students to learn
			•Including socializing functions in district meetings
			•Maintaining high expectations for school performance
			•Expecting principals to fulfill instructional leadership responsibilities
			•Directing personnel operations to assure a stable yet improving and well-balanced work force
			•Ensuring that schools are characterized by an orderly climate
			•Promoting innovation
			•Developing principal awareness of district goals and actions directed at goal accomplishment
			•Providing leadership of curriculum development
			•Ensuring that homogeneous ability groupings within classrooms do not segregate students into racial or other inappropriate groups
			•Applying district sanctions to students for unsatisfactory academic performance
			•Rewarding students beyond standard honor rolls and recognition

Responsibilities	The extent to which the superintendent	Avg. r	Practices used by superintendent and executive/district office staff to fulfill superintendent responsibilities
			assemblies for exceptional performance

Source: *School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Student Achievement,* by J. T. Waters & R. J. Marzano, 2004, working paper, Denver, CO: McREL.

Appendix B: Principal Leadership Responsibilities, Average r, and Leadership Practices

Table B1
Principal Leadership Responsibilities, Average r, and Leadership Practices

Responsibilities	The extent to which the principal	Avg. *r*	Practices associated with responsibilities
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	.29	•Promotes cooperation among staff •Promotes a sense of well-being •Promotes cohesion among staff •Develops an understanding of purpose •Develops a shared vision of what the school could be like
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines	.26	•Provides and enforces clear structure, rules, and procedures for students •Provides and enforces clear structures, rules, and procedures for staff *Establishes routines regarding the running of the school that staff understand and follow
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.24	•Protects instructional time from interruptions •Protects/shelters teachers from distractions
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.26	•Ensures teachers have necessary materials and equipment •Ensures teachers have necessary staff-development opportunities that directly enhance their teaching
Curriculum, instruction, assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.16	•Is involved in helping teachers design curricular activities •Is involved with teachers to address instructional issues in their classrooms •Is involved with teachers to address assessment issues
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.24	•Establishes concrete goals and expectations that all students meet them •Establishes concrete goals for all curriculum, instruction, and assessment •Establishes concrete goals for the general functioning of the school •Continually keeps attention on established goals
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.24	•Is knowledgeable about instructional practices •Is knowledgeable about assessment practices •Provides conceptual guidance for teachers regarding effective classroom practice
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students	.16	•Makes systematic frequent visits to classrooms •Maintains high visibility around the school •Has frequent contact with students
Contingent rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	.15	•Recognizes individuals who excel •Uses performance versus seniority as the primary criterion for reward and advancement •Uses hard work and results as the basis for

Responsibilities	The extent to which the principal	Avg. *r*	Practices associated with responsibilities
			reward and recognition
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students	.23	•Is easily accessible to teachers •Develops effective means for teachers to communicate with one another •Maintains open and effective lines of communication with staff
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.28	•Assures the school is in compliance with district and state mandates •Advocates on behalf of the school in the community •Advocates for the school with parents •Ensures the central office is aware of the school's accomplishments
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	.30	•Provides opportunity for input on all important decisions •Provides opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies •Uses leadership team in decision making
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures	.25	•Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishments of teachers •Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishment of students •Systematically acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school
Relationship	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff	.19	•Remains aware of personal needs of teachers •Maintains personal relationships with teachers •Is informed about significant personal issues within the lives of staff members •Acknowledges significant events in the lives of staff members
Change agent	Is willing to and actively challenges the status quo	.30	•Consciously challenges the status quo •Is comfortable with leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes •Systematically considers new and better ways of doing things
Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations	.20	•Inspires teachers to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp •Portrays a positive attitude about the ability of the staff to accomplish substantial things •Is a driving force behind major initiatives
Ideals/beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	.25	•Holds strong professional beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning •Shares beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning with the staff •Demonstrates behaviors that are consistent with beliefs
Monitors/ evaluates	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact	.28	•Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Responsibilities	The extent to which the principal	Avg. *r*	Practices associated with responsibilities
	on student learning		
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent	.22	•Is comfortable with major changes in how things are done •Encourages people to express opinions contrary to those with authority •Adapts leadership style to needs of specific situations •Can be directive or nondirective as the situation warrants
Situational awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems	.33	•Is aware of informal groups and relationships among staff of the school •Is aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord •Can predict what could go wrong from day to day
Intellectual stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture	.32	•Keeps informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling •Continually exposes staff to cutting-edge ideas about how to be effective •Systematically engages staff in discussions about current research and theory •Continually involves the staff in reading articles and books about effective practices

Source: McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework: Developing the Science of Educational Leadership, by J. T. Waters, R. J. Marzano, & B. McNulty, 2004, *ERS Spectrum, 22*(1), 4–13, pp. 7–8.

Appendix C: Balanced Leadership Responsibilities

Table C1
Leadership Responsibilities

Culture	Focuses shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation
Order	Establishes a set of standard-operating procedures and routines
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their time or focus
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful completion of their jobs
Curriculum, instruction, and assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum instruction and assessment practices
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students
Recognition	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures
Relationship	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff
Change agent	Is willing to and actively challenges the status quo
Optimization	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations
Ideas/beliefs	Communications and operates from strong ideals and beliefs
Monitoring/evaluation	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning
Flexibility	Adapts leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent
Situational awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrent in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems
Intellectual stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture

Source: *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action,* by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, pp.1–9.

Appendix D: Balanced Leadership Responsibilities Positively Correlated with Second-

Order Change

Table D1

Responsibilities positively correlated with second-order change

Responsibilities (the extent to which the principal…)	Associated practices
Ideal/beliefs: communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling.	Holds strong professional beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning
	Shares beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning with the staff
	Demonstrates behaviors that are consistent with beliefs
Optimize: inspires and leads new and challenging innovations.	Inspires teachers to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp
	Portrays a positive attitude about the ability of the staff to accomplish substantial things
	Is a driving force behind major initiatives
Flexibility: adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent.	Is comfortable with major changes in how things are done
	Encourages people to express opinions to those with authority
	Adapts leadership style to needs of specific situations
	Can be directive or nondirective as the situation warrants
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment: is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.	Is knowledgeable about instructional practices
	Is knowledgeable about assessment practices
	Provides conceptual guidance for teachers regarding effect classroom practice
Intellectual stimulation: ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture.	Keeps informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling
	Continually exposes the staff to cutting-edge ideas about how to be effective
	Systematically engages staff in discussions about current research and theory
	Continually involves the staff in reading articles and books about effective practices
Change agent: is willing to and actively challenges the status quo.	Consciously challenges the status quo
	Is comfortable with leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes
	Systematically considers new and better ways of doing things
Monitor and evaluate: monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning	Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Source: *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action,* by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, pp. 31–32.

Appendix E: Four-Phase Theory of Change with Corresponding Leadership Behaviors

Table E1

Leadership Responsibilities Associated With Creating Demand

Responsibilities associated with 2nd order change	Phase of change process
Intellectual stimulation: ensures teachers and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture. Change agent: is willing to and actively challenges the status quo. Ideals and beliefs: communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling.	Create demand—A pervasive expectation of continuous improvement, regardless of perceived obstacles or limitation contributes to a push for continuous improvement. Principals expose teachers to research and related information about effective practices, and then engage them in discussions about how to apply research findings in their classrooms. School leaders challenge the status quo, always considering new and better ways of doing things. Principals also keep themselves up-do-date on cutting edge ideas about how to improve individual and school effectiveness. They routinely share beliefs about teaching and learning, modeling these beliefs through actions.

Source: The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action, by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, p. 36.

Table E2

Leadership Responsibilities Associated With Implementing Change

Responsibilities associated with 2nd order change	Phase of change process
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment: is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Optimize: inspires and leads new and challenging innovations.	Implement—Principals develop knowledge of effective, research-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, and then use this knowledge to provide conceptual guidance to teachers. Principals also inspire teachers to use demanding, research-based classroom practices and believe that teachers can successfully implement these practices and convey this belief to teachers. Principals should interpret disappointments in ways that help school staff to see them as temporary and isolated and interpret successes in ways that help staff view them as permanent and universal.

Source: *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action,* by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, p. 37.

Table E3

Leadership Responsibilities Associated With Managing Personal Transitions

Responsibilities associated with 2nd order change	Phase of change process
Flexibility: adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent.	Manage personal transitions—The principal understand when to direct, when to step back, when to answer questions and when to ask them, when to speak and when to listen. He or she understands the fear and stress of second-order change for stakeholders. There is attention paid to the importance of symbolic events and a willingness to establish temporary agreements to assist those who need extra support. The principal makes clear the reasons for changes, shares an attractive vision of what will be different because of the change, develops a change-management plan, and specifies the new roles, responsibilities, and activities for all stakeholders.

Source: *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action*, by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, p. 39.

Table E4

Leadership Responsibilities Associated With Monitoring and Evaluating Change

Responsibilities associated with 2nd-order change	Phase of change process
Monitor and evaluation: monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning.	Monitor and evaluate—There is real-time access to and use of all relevant data on needs and performance of individuals, groups, and the organization. Attention is paid to the quality of implementation of research-based instructional and classroom practices. Analyses of formative data on leading indicators of implementation and impact are fed into decisions about the pace and intensity of additional changes. Change implementation is also carefully monitored.

Source: *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action,* by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, p. 41.

Appendix F: Sharing Leadership Responsibilities Negatively Associated With Second-

Order Change

Table F1
Sharing Leadership Responsibilities Negatively Associated With Second-Order Change

Responsibilities	The leadership and/or transition team…
Culture: fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community cooperation.	Help articulate a vision or picture of where the school or program is leading. They help set up vicarious and mastery experiences that support acquisition of new knowledge and new skills. They encourage positive attitudes. They focus on successes and interpret disappointments as opportunities for improvement. They help clarify parts that individuals can play in successfully implementing changes.
Order: establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines.	Plan and stage ceremonial events that honor the past, clarify what is ending, and what is beginning. They develop or negotiate temporary agreements or policies to provide new structures to guide and support behavior as new norms emerge.
Communication: establishes strong lines of communication with teachers, staff, and among students.	Listen to concerns about clarity of the plan for change, implementation of the plan, and needed support. They continually articulate the new direction of the organization, clarify and simplify, when possible, helping individuals see connections between shared values and aspirations and new direction, focusing on the relative advantage of changes to everyone involved. They highlight short-term successes to feature evidence of impact as well as learning opportunities.
Input: involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.	Encourage and actively seek experiences of the staff with implementation. They plan and facilitate periodic study sessions to learn what is working, what is not working, and to reiterate the reasons or purpose for the change initiatives.

Source: *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action,* by T. Waters & G. Cameron, 2007, Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, p. 42–43.

Appendix G: Balanced Leadership Profile Principal Questionnaire

1. The changes I am trying to make in my school will represent a significant challenge to the status quo when they are implemented.
2. Teachers in my school regularly share ideas.
3. In my school, the instructional time of teachers is well protected.
4. There are well-established procedures in my school regarding how to bring up problems and concerns.
5. I have been successful in protecting teachers from undue distractions and interruptions to their teaching.
6. In my school, I have been successful at ensuring that teachers have the necessary resources and professional opportunities to maintain a high standard of teaching.
7. I am directly involved in helping teachers design curricular activities for their classes.
8. Concrete goals for achievement have been established for each student in my school.
9. I am very knowledgeable about effective instructional practices.
10. I make systematic and frequent visits to classrooms.
11. Individuals who excel in my school are recognized and rewarded.
12. Teachers in my school have ready and easy access to me.
13. I make sure that my school complies with all district and state mandates.
14. In my school, teachers have direct input into all important decisions.
15. The accomplishments of individual teachers in my school are recognized and celebrated.
16. I am aware of the personal needs of the teachers in my school.
17. I consciously try to challenge the status quo to get people thinking.
18. I try to inspire my teachers to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp.
19. The teachers in my school are aware of my beliefs regarding schools, teaching, and learning.
20. I continually monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum.
21. I am comfortable making major changes in how things are done.
22. I am aware of the informal groups and relationships among the teachers in my school.
23. I stay informed about the current research and theory regarding effective schooling.
24. In my school, we systematically consider new and better ways of doing things.
25. I am directly involved in helping teachers address instructional issues in their classrooms.
26. I have successfully developed a sense of cooperation in my school.
27. I have successfully created a strong sense of order among teachers about the efficient running of the school.
28. One of the biggest priorities in my school is to keep the staff's energy level up and maintain the progress we have already made.

29. The changes we are trying to make in our school require the people making the changes to learn new concepts and skills.
30. We have made good progress, but we need another "shot in the arm" to keep us moving forward on our improvement efforts.
31. In my school, we have designed concrete goals for our curriculum.
32. I am very knowledgeable about classroom curricular issues.
33. I have frequent contact with the students in my school.
34. In my school, seniority is not the primary method of reward and advancement.
35. Effective ways for teachers to communicate with one another have been established in my school.
36. I am a strong advocate for my school to the community at large.
37. Teachers are directly involved in establishing policy in my school.
38. The accomplishments of the students and the school in general are recognized and celebrated.
39. I have a personal relationship with the teachers in my school.
40. I am comfortable initiating change without being sure where it might lead us.
41. I always portray a positive attitude about our ability to accomplish substantive things.
42. I continually monitor the effectiveness of the instructional practices used in our school.
43. I encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to my own.
44. I am aware of the issues in my school that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord.
45. I continually expose teachers in my school to cutting-edge ideas about how to be effective.
46. There are deeply ingrained practices in my school that must be ended or changed if we are to make any significant progress.
47. I can be highly directive or nondirective as the situation warrants.
48. There is a strong team spirit in my school.
49. There are well-established routines regarding the running of the school that staff understand and follow.
50. I am directly involved in helping teachers address assessment issues in their classrooms.
51. Teachers in my school are regularly involved in professional development activities that directly enhance their teaching.
52. The changes I am trying to make in my school will challenge the existing norms.
53. We have specific goals for specific instructional practices in my school.
54. I am very knowledgeable about effective classroom assessment practices.
55. I am highly visible to the teachers and students in my school.
56. In my school, we have a common language that is used by administrators and teachers.
57. Lines of communication are strong between teachers and myself.
58. I am a strong advocate for my school to the parents of our students.

59. In my school, decisions are made using a team approach.
60. In my school, we systematically acknowledge our failures and celebrate our accomplishments.
61. I stay informed about significant personal issues in the lives of the teachers.
62. Unless we make significant changes in my school, student achievement is not going to improve much.
63. I try to be the driving force behind major initiatives.
64. I have well-defined beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning.
65. I continually monitor the effectiveness of the assessment practices used in my school.
66. I adapt my leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation.
67. In my school, we have a shared understanding of our purpose.
68. In my school, we systematically have discussions about current research and theory.
69. The most important changes we need to make in my school are the ones the staff most strongly resists.
70. In my school, teachers are not brought into issues external to the school that would detract from their emphasis on teaching.
71. In my school, controversies or disagreements involving only one or a few staff members do not escalate into schoolwide issues.
72. We have established specific goals for the assessment practices in my school.
73. I provide conceptual guidance for the teachers in my school regarding effective classroom practice.
74. In my school, advancement and reward are not automatically given for simply "putting in your time."
75. I make sure that the central office is aware of the accomplishments of my school.
76. I make sure that significant events in the lives of the teachers in my school are acknowledged.
77. In my school, we consistently ask ourselves, "Are we operating at the edge versus the center of our competence?"
78. I believe that we can accomplish just about anything if we are willing to work hard enough and if we believe in ourselves.
79. I have explicitly communicated my strong beliefs and ideals to teachers.
80. At any given time, I can accurately determine how effective our school is in terms of enhancing student learning.
81. In my school, we are currently experiencing a period during which things are going fairly well.
82. I can accurately predict things that may go wrong in my school on a day-today basis.
83. In my school, we systematically read articles and books about effective practices.
84. Our schoolwide goals are understood by all teachers.

85. I am aware of what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in my school.
86. Our schoolwide goals are a prominent part of our day-to-day lives.
87. My behavior is consistent with my ideals and beliefs regarding schools, teachers, and learning.
88. In my school, it would be useful to have a period of time during which we do not undertake any new, big initiatives.
89. In my school, the materials and resources teachers request are procured and delivered in a timely fashion.
90. Individuals who work hard and produce results are identified and rewarded in my school.
91. I am aware of the details regarding the day-to-day running of the school.
92. In my school, we share a vision of what we could be like.

Source: *School leadership that works: From research to results,* by R. Marzano, T. Waters & B. McNulty, 2005, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp. 162–164.

Appendix H: Item Factor Analysis of the Balanced Leadership Profile Principal Questionnaire

Table H1
Item Factor Analysis of the Balanced Leadership Profile

	Item	Factor I	Factor II		Item	Factor I	Factor II
First-Order Change	28	.495		Involvement in CIA	7	.496	.144
	*30	.090	.269		25	.620	
	81	.479			50	.596	.134
	88	.228		Focus	8	.511	
Second-Order Change	1	.183	.555		31	.570	
	62	−.218	.569		53	.509	
	46	−.242	.598		72	.573	
	69	−.255	.550		84	.604	−.206
	52	.187	.641		86	.639	−.124
	29	.343	.422	Knowledge of CIA	9	.574	.284
Culture	26	.597	−.407		32	.485	.306
	2	.535	−.172		54	.571	.262
	48	.582	−.431		73	.597	.237
	56	.597	−.241	Visibility	10	.442	
	67	.681	−.220		33	.372	
	92	.651	−.254		55	.414	−.126
Order	4	.537	−.236	Contingent Rewards	11	.450	
	27	.587	−.201		34	.413	
	49	.549	−.254		90	.493	
Discipline	5	.405	−.130		74	.403	
	3	.428	−.172	Outreach	13	.368	
	70	.200	.170		36	.440	
	71	.416			58	.532	
Resources	6	.432	−.133		75	.324	
	89	.385		Input	14	.497	−.159
	51	.552			37	.431	−.201
					59	.561	−.202

Appendix H (continued)

	Item	Factor I	Factor II		Item	Factor I	Factor II
Affirmation	15	.516		Situational Awareness	22	.415	
	38	.513			44	.477	.260
	60	.619			91	.443	
Relation-ships	16	.529			82	.302	
	39	.419	−.144		85	.556	
	61	.481		Intellectual Stimulation	23	.511	.341
	76	.520			45	.589	.315
Change Agent	17	.471	.424		68	.592	.222
	40	.178	.237		83	.502	.031
	24	.658	.100	Communication	12	.369	−.113
	77	.519	.150		35	.569	−.283
Optimizer	18	.600	.360		57	.552	−.342
	41	.572	.061				
	63	.332	.368				
	78	.367	.251				
Ideals Beliefs	19	.601	.201				
	64	.553	.232				
	79	.629	.119				
	87	.596	.016				
Monitoring Evaluating	20	.633	.237				
	42	.642	.201				
	65	.624	.240				
	80	.616	.072				
Flexibility	21	.485	.267				
	43	.444	.130				
	66	.434	.104				
	47	.463	.202				

Appendix I–1: District PS/RtI Leadership Team Focus Group Protocol

Date:

Facilitator/s:

Group Title: District PS/RtI Leadership Team

Introduction: Facilitator introduces himself and co-facilitator. The co-facilitator may be taking notes of the discussion. *If notes are taken the provided USB flash-drive will be used to save them. The principal investigator will collect the flash-drive at the completion of the interview. A digital recorder will be used to record the session.*

Say: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. The purpose of this focus group is to provide group members the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas related to district leadership practices used to implement Problem Solving/ Response to Intervention (PS/RtI). The information will be included in a dissertation on leadership practices used when implementing district supported school-based reform initiatives. Focus group participants will not be identified by name or any other identifying information other than the title of the focus group. This session will last approximately 60 minutes.

Now let's review the ground rules:

- It is important to hear from every one

- Discussion will be confidential

- We will keep focused on objectives

Focus Group Questions

Let's start with introductions. Please state your name and position.

These questions are primarily designed to understand your perceptions of the leadership

practices you, as members of the district PS/RtI leadership team, have used to implement

PS/RtI in your district.

1. In what ways, if any, has the implementation of Problem Solving/ RtI challenged

   the existing norms of the district?

2. In what ways does the implementation of PS/RtI support the district's priorities?

3. Please give an example of how the district PS/RtI leadership team managed the

   implementation of PS/RtI?

4. How do district PS/RtI leadership team expectations for implementation allow for

   school-based flexibility?

5. In what ways do school-based stakeholders have input into important PS/RtI

   leadership team decisions?

6. What leadership responsibilities have been used to implement PS/RtI?

7. How does the implementation of PS/RtI compare to other district-wide initiatives?

8. Are there any other factors that have helped facilitate, or been a barrier to, the

   implementation of PS/RtI in your district?

9. Is there anything else that we should have discussed today?

Close the session: Say "A copy of the information gathered for this dissertation will be

made available to interested participants. Thanks again for your participation today."

Appendix I–2: Principal Focus Group Protocol

Date:

Facilitator/s:

Group Title: Principals of PS/RtI Pilot Schools

Introduction: Facilitator introduces himself and co-facilitator. The co-facilitator may be taking notes of the discussion. *If notes are taken the provided USB flash-drive will be used to save them. The principal investigator will collect the flash-drive at the completion of the interview. A digital recorder will be used to record the session.*

Say: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. The purpose of this focus group is to provide group members the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas related to district leadership practices used to implement Problem Solving/ Response to Intervention (PS/RtI). The information will be included in a dissertation on leadership practices used when implementing district supported school-based reform initiatives. Focus group participants will not be identified by name or any other identifying information other than the title of the focus group. This session will last approximately 60 minutes.

Now let's review the ground rules:

- It is important to hear from every one
- Discussion will be confidential
- We will keep focused on objectives

Appendix I-2 (continued)

Focus Group Questions

Let's start with introductions. Please state your name and position.

These questions are primarily designed to understand your perceptions of the leadership practices members of the district PS/RtI leadership team have used to implement PS/RtI in your district.

1. In what ways, if any, has the implementation of Problem Solving/ RtI challenged the existing norms of the district?

2. In what ways does the implementation of PS/RtI support the district's priorities?

3. Please give an example of how the district PS/RtI leadership team managed the implementation of PS/RtI?

4. How do district PS/RtI leadership team expectations for implementation allow for school-based flexibility?

5. In what ways do school-based stakeholders have input into important PS/RtI leadership team decisions?

6. What leadership responsibilities have been used to implement PS/RtI?

7. How does the implementation of PS/RtI compare to other district-wide initiatives?

8. Are there any other factors that have helped facilitate, or been a barrier to, the implementation of PS/RtI in your district?

9. Is there anything else that we should have discussed today?

Close the session: Say "A copy of the information gathered for this dissertation will be made available to interested participants. Thanks again for your participation today."

Appendix I–3: School-Based PS/RtI Leadership Team Focus Group Protocol

Date:

Facilitator/s:

Group Title: School-Based RtI Leadership Team

Introduction: Facilitator introduces himself and co-facilitator. The co-facilitator may be taking notes of the discussion. *If notes are taken the provided USB flash-drive will be used to save them. The principal investigator will collect the flash-drive at the completion of the interview. A digital recorder will be used to record the session.*

Say: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. The purpose of this focus group is to provide group members the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas related to district leadership practices used to implement Problem Solving/ Response to Intervention (PS/RtI). The information will be included in a dissertation on leadership practices used when implementing district supported school-based reform initiatives. Focus group participants will not be identified by name or any other identifying information other than the title of the focus group. This session will last approximately 60 minutes.

Now let's review the ground rules:

- It is important to hear from every one

- Discussion will be confidential

- We will keep focused on objectives

Focus Group Questions

Let's start with introductions. Please state your name and position.

These questions are primarily designed to understand your perceptions of the leadership practices members of the district PS/RtI leadership team have used to implement PS/RtI in your district.

1. In what ways, if any, has the implementation of Problem Solving/ RtI challenged the existing norms of the district?

2. In what ways does the implementation of PS/RtI support the district's priorities?

3. Please give an example of how the district PS/RtI leadership team managed the implementation of PS/RtI?

4. How do district PS/RtI leadership team expectations for implementation allow for school-based flexibility?

5. In what ways do school-based stakeholders have input into important PS/RtI leadership team decisions?

6. What leadership responsibilities have been used to implement PS/RtI?

7. How does the implementation of PS/RtI compare to other district-wide initiatives?

8. Are there any other factors that have helped facilitate, or been a barrier to, the implementation of PS/RtI in your district?

9. Is there anything else that we should have discussed today?

Close the session: Say "A copy of the information gathered for this dissertation will be made available to interested participants. Thanks again for your participation today."

Appendix J: Focus Group Facilitator Orientation

Agenda

1. Review *What is a Focus Group* (see below) regarding the goal of focus groups and the role of the facilitator.

2. Review the Focus Group Interview Protocols.

3. Review the expectations for interview time, location and materials.

4. Review the expectations for returning focus group data to the researcher.

5. Answer questions or provide clarification.

What is a Focus Group?

According to Krueger and Casey (2000) focus groups are a special type of group used to gather information from members of a clearly defined target audience.

A focus group is…

• composed of 6 to 12 people,

• who are similar in one or more ways, and

• are guided through a facilitated discussion,

• on a clearly defined topic,

• to gather information about the opinions of the group members.

The goal of a focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants. Because a group, rather than an individual, is asked to respond to questions, dialogue tends to take on a life of its own. Participants "piggy-back" on the comments of others and add a richness to the dialogue that could not be achieved through a one-on-one interview (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

What is the Role of the Facilitator?

Throughout the focus group interview, facilitators often use two common techniques to elicit responses from participants who may be reluctant to contribute to the discussion—the pause and the probe. The pause is simply a period of silence after the question is asked. Although a five-second pause may seem awkward to the inexperienced facilitator, it is usually successful in encouraging a response from the group. There is usually a group member who is willing to break the silence (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The probe is simply a question or statement which encourages group members to add to or elaborate on something which was said. Here are some examples of probes.

• Would you explain further?

• Would you give me an example of what you mean?

• Would you say more?

• Is there anything else?

• I don't understand.

As participants speak, effective facilitators also use active listening techniques such as a forward lean, head nodding, or short verbal responses, like "go on," to let participants know that their contributions are welcome. It is important, however, not to communicate a judgment of the participant's contribution by using words like "correct" or "good." The following are some characteristics of effective facilitators:

• Shows interest in the participants

• Interacts informally with participants before and after the focus group

• Looks at participants when they are talking

• Demonstrates active listening techniques

• Uses nonverbal communication techniques

• Demonstrates empathy and positive regard for participants

• Has working knowledge on the topic

• Restrains from expressing personal views (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Appendix K-1: Faculty Invitation to Participate in Study

Monica Verra

8039 Paperbark Lane
Port Richey, FL 34668
727-844-7672
mverra@tampabay.rr.com

April 13, 2009

Instructional Faculty at PS/RTI Project Schools
District School Board of Pasco County
7227 Land O'Lakes Blvd.
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study titled: "Leading Change in Schools: Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model." The study is a component of a dissertation for a doctorate in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this study is to describe perceptions of the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) represents for participating schools and the district. The study will also describe perceptions of school and district leadership practices used when implementing Problem Solving/Response to Intervention. School-based study participants will be asked to complete an online survey, the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile. The profile is designed to provide feedback on a principal's performance in 21 areas of leadership responsibilities and the magnitude of change implied by an improvement initiative.

If you decide to participate in the study your involvement should take no more than 40 minutes to complete the online leadership profile. Participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse or stop at any time. Informed consent for the survey is implied when you choose to complete it. All information from the Balanced Leadership Profile will be coded by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, and will be kept strictly confidential. Participants' identifies will not be revealed at any time.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Monica Verra

Appendix K-2: School-Based PS/RtI Leadership Team Invitation to Participate in Study

Monica Verra

8039 Paperbark Lane
Port Richey, FL 34668
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mverra@tampabay.rr.com

April 13, 2009

Members of School Based Leadership Teams at Two PS/RTI Project Schools
District School Board of Pasco County
7227 Land O'Lakes Blvd.
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study titled: "Leading Change in Schools: Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model." The study is a component of a dissertation for a doctorate in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this study is to describe perceptions of the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) represents for participating schools and the district. The study will also describe perceptions of school and district leadership practices used when implementing Problem Solving/Response to Intervention. School-based study participants will be asked to complete an online survey, the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile. The profile is designed to provide feedback on a principal's performance in 21 areas of leadership responsibilities and the magnitude of change implied by an improvement initiative. Completing the online leadership profile takes approximately 40 minutes.

Additionally, you will be asked to participate in a focus group. There will be four focus groups that will include up to seven members of the PS/RtI school-based leadership teams from two schools, the seven principals of participating PS/RtI schools, and up to seven members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. If you are selected to participate in the focus group the study will take an additional 60 minutes (approximately) of your time. Participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse or stop at any time. Informed consent for the survey is implied when you choose to complete it. Written informed consent for the focus group will be obtained at the interview. All information from the Balanced Leadership Profile will be coded by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, and will be kept strictly confidential. Focus group responses will also be strictly confidential. Participants' identifies will not be revealed at any time.
If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Monica Verra

Appendix K-3: Principals' Invitation to Participate in Study

Monica Verra
<div style="text-align: right">

8039 Paperbark Lane
Port Richey, FL 34668
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mverra@tampabay.rr.com
</div>

April 13, 2009

Principals of Participating PS/RtI Pilot Schools
District School Board of Pasco County
7227 Land O'Lakes Blvd.
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to invite you and/or your staff to participate in a research study titled: "Leading Change in Schools: Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model." The study is a component of a dissertation for a doctorate in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this study is to describe perceptions of the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) represents for participating schools and the district. The study will also describe perceptions of school and district leadership practices used when implementing Problem Solving/Response to Intervention. You, along with your staff and supervisor, will be asked to complete an online survey, the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile. The profile is designed to provide feedback on a principal's performance in 21 areas of leadership responsibilities and the magnitude of change implied by an improvement initiative. Completing the online leadership profile takes approximately 40 minutes.

Additionally, you will be asked to participate in a focus group. There will be four focus groups that will include up to seven members of the PS/RtI school-based leadership teams from two schools, the seven principals of participating PS/RtI schools, and up to seven members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. The study will take an additional 60 minutes (approximately) of your time.

Participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse or stop at any time. Informed consent for the survey is implied when you choose to complete it. Written informed consent for the focus group will be obtained at the interview. All information from the Balanced Leadership Profile will be coded by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, and will be kept strictly confidential. Focus group responses will also be strictly confidential. Participants' identifies will not be revealed at any time.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

<div style="text-align: center">

Sincerely,

Monica Verra
</div>

Appendix K-4: Principals' Supervisor's Invitation to Participate in Study

Monica Verra

<div align="right">
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Port Richey, FL 34668
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mverra@tampabay.rr.com
</div>

April 13, 2009

Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools
District School Board of Pasco County
7227 Land O'Lakes Blvd.
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637

Dear Assistant Superintendent:

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study titled: "Leading Change in Schools: Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model." The study is a component of a dissertation for a doctorate in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this study is to describe perceptions of the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) represents for participating schools and the district. The study will also describe perceptions of school and district leadership practices used when implementing Problem Solving/Response to Intervention. You, along with school-based staff and principals, will be asked to complete an online survey, the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile. The profile is designed to provide feedback on a principal's performance in 21 areas of leadership responsibilities and the magnitude of change implied by an improvement initiative. Completing the online leadership profile takes approximately 40 minutes.

Additionally, you will be asked to participate in a focus group. There will be four focus groups that will include up to seven members of the PS/RtI school-based leadership teams from two schools, the seven principals of participating PS/RtI schools, and up to seven members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. The study will take an additional 60 minutes (approximately) of your time.

Participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse or stop at any time. Informed consent for the survey is implied when you choose to complete it. Written informed consent for the focus group will be obtained at the interview. All information from the Balanced Leadership Profile will be coded by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, and will be kept strictly confidential. Focus group responses will also be strictly confidential. Participants' identifies will not be revealed at any time.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

<div align="center">
Sincerely,

Monica Verra
</div>

Appendix K-5: District PS/RtI Leadership Invitation to Participate in Study

Monica Verra

8039 Paperbark Lane
Port Richey, FL 34668
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April 13, 2009

Members of the District PS/RtI Leadership Team
District School Board of Pasco County
7227 Land O'Lakes Blvd.
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study titled: "Leading Change in Schools: Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model." The study is a component of a dissertation for a doctorate in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this study is to describe perceptions of the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) represents for participating schools and the district. The study will also describe perceptions of school and district leadership practices used when implementing Problem Solving/Response to Intervention.
You will be invited to participate in a focus group. There will be four focus groups that will include up to seven members of the PS/RtI school-based leadership teams from two schools, the seven principals of participating PS/RtI schools, and up to seven members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. If you are selected to participate in the focus group the study will take approximately 60 minutes of your time.

Participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse or stop at anytime. Focus group responses will be strictly confidential. Written informed consent for the focus group will be obtained at the interview. Participants' identifies will not be revealed at any time.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Monica Verra

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Leading Change in Schools:

Leadership Practices for a District Supported School-Based Reform Model

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study.

We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: Leading Change in Schools:

Leadership Practices for District Supported School-Based Reform Model

The person who is in charge of this research study is Monica Verra. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge.

The person explaining the research to you may be someone other than the Principal Investigator.

Other research personnel who you may be involved with include trained focus group facilitators.

The research will be done at select schools and the district office in the District School Board of Pasco County.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe the level of change the implementation of Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) represents for participating schools and the district. The study will also describe school and district leadership practices used when implementing Problem Solving/Response to Intervention. This study is a component of a dissertation in Educational Leadership.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you take part in this study, you may be asked to participate in a focus group. There will be four focus groups that will include the PS/RtI school-based leadership teams from two schools (up to seven members), the seven principals of participating PS/RtI schools, and seven members of the district PS/RtI leadership team. If you are selected to participate in

the focus group the study will take an additional 60 minutes (approximately) of your time.

ALTERNATIVES

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

BENEFITS

The potential benefits to you may not be direct; however, a goal of this study is to identify school and district leadership practices used when implementing improvement initiatives. This information may lead to improved practice in your school or district.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORT

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

COMPENSATION

We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study. Focus group participants will be offered refreshments, lunch or breakfast depending on the time of day the interview occurs. Participants who complete the survey may submit their names for a gift card raffle.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The Principal Investigator in this study is the Director of Exceptional Education for the District School Board of Pasco County and a member of the district leadership team for the implementation of Problem-Solving Response to Intervention. Facilitators not involved in the project will moderate the focus group interviews. All participant information will be kept confidential at all times.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. No personally identifiable information will be connected to your responses at anytime.

However, certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator and all other research staff**.**

- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.) These include:

o   The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the staff that work for the IRB. Other individuals who work for USF that provide other kinds of oversight may also need to look at your records.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION / WITHDRAWAL

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study, to please the investigator or the research staff. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your job status.

QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study or if you experience an unanticipated problem related to the research call Monica Verra at (727)808-7781.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-9343.

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. If you want to take part, please sign the form, if the following statements are true.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____   _____

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study   Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

STATEMENT OF PERSON OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands:
   • What the study is about.
   • What procedures/interventions/investigational drugs or devices will be used.

- What the potential benefits might be.
- What the known risks might be.

_____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent   Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Appendix M: Variables of the Study and Source of Data

Table M1

Variables of the Study and Source of Data

Study variable	Source of data
Perceived magnitude of change	
1st Order Change	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 1, 3, 5, 8
	Focus Group Question: 1
2nd Order Change	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 4, 8, 9, 10
	Focus Group Question: 1
Facilitating Forces and Barriers	Focus Group Question: 7, 8
Principal leadership responsibilities positively correlated with first- and second-order change	
Ideal/Beliefs	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 28, 61, 74, 81
Knowledge of Curriculum	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 18, 37, 68, 86
Monitor and Evaluate	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 29, 45, 92
Principal leadership responsibilities positively correlated with second-order change	
Intellectual Stimulation	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 1, 18, 32, 47, 64, 77
Change Agent	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 26, 30, 33, 43
Optimize	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 27, 44, 60, 72, 73
Flexibility	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 29, 45, 92
Principal leadership responsibility negatively correlated with second-order change	
Culture	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 34, 49, 63, 85
Order	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 13, 35, 50
Communication	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 2, 13, 21, 39, 56
Input	McREL Balanced Leadership Profile Item Numbers: 23, 41, 58

Study variable	Source of data
District leadership responsibilities positively correlated with second-order change	
Nonnegotiable Goals for Achievement and Instruction	Focus Group Question: 2, 6
Monitoring Goals for Achievement and Instruction	Focus Group Question: 3, 6
Defined School Autonomy	Focus Group Question: 4, 6
District leadership responsibilities negatively correlated with second-order change	
Collaborative Goal-Setting	Focus Group Question: 5, 6

Appendix N: Themes and Formulated Meanings Gathered from Focus Group Interviews

Question 1—In what ways, if any, has the implementation of PS/RtI challenged the existing norms of the district?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
A need for collaboration between special education and basic education	1. Shared responsibility is a challenge to existing norms 2. Communication needed between departments is a challenge	1. Communication and collaboration between depts. 2. Departments and individual district staff not working in isolation any more 3. Paradigm shift of thinking for district and schools	1. Increased collaboration needed between district departments (reading and ESE) and school counterparts 2. Lots of changes in roles at district and schools- lots of questions, need to work together 3. Current funding does not align with flexible roles	1. Shared responsibility across disciplines 2. Changing roles- more diversified 3. Cross- departmental implementation 4. Resources based on need not eligibility 5. Current funding does not align with flexible role
Changes to Basic Education and Special Education teachers' roles and responsibilities	1. Less looking to others for "fixes" 2. Team work to find the "fix"	1. Looking at curriculum and instruction to better support all students- instead of looking at the student as having a learning problem	1. Basic ed teachers more responsible for all students. 2. Less looking to others to "fix" the problem 3. Accountable for fidelity of interventions 4. Process requires training and support 5.Old way compliance w/packets vs. new way problem solving to find what work 6. Use of data to progress monitor 7.Need for increased competency with standards	1. Basic ed identifying problems and providing interventions instead of labeling 2. Team work vs. individual

Question 2—In what ways does the implementation of PS/RtI support the district's priorities?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
District Vision	1. RtI is about our district's vision about helping every child reach their highest potential 2. Guiding principles and Key concepts	1. Supports the district's vision of looking at individual student needs 2. Helps us to realize our vision	1. Supports district's vision by ensuring all students get good quality core instruction	1. Focus on success for all learners and student centered
Research-Based Best Practices	1. LFS helped us to make initial instruction strong with best practices 2. Foundation has been laid through other initiatives, LFS	1. Connects with LFS research-based practice	1. District is focused on using research-based practices 2. Supports other initiatives such as LRE/Continuum of Services	
Data Driven Accountability	1. Using data to monitor progress	1. Using data to make the best decisions for students	1. Using data to be sure students are meeting standards 2. Helps to meet NCLB, AYP, Florida School Accountability	1. Push to use data to make decisions 2. Helps to increase student achievement 3.Fidelity of implementation is key

Question 3—Please give an example of how the PS/RtI Leadership team managed the implementation of PS/RtI.

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
District Leadership Taskforce is Key	1.Build knowledge of leadership taskforce 2. District leadership taskforce gets input from schools 3. District taskforce learning what works/what doesn't 4. District taskforce continue to refine bas ed. on needs/feedback 5.Leadership taskforce included diverse stakeholders including union	1.Creation of district taskforce for ongoing monitoring of the implementation-critical 2.Able to provide input to district leadership taskforce 3. Union buy in		1.District team gives a framework with concrete steps-each school implements according to needs 2. Schools provide input to the district plan
Ongoing implementation and support	1. Provides ongoing implementation and support	1. Lots of support 2. District leadership/support critical 3. Providing on-site coaches is critical	1. District taskforce helpful 2. Provided good support to schools 3. RtI coach so valuable 4.Setting expectations 5. Providing data	1. Technical assistance from departments, ESE, CIS, SS, etc.
Piloting process to learn	1. Piloting process to learn has been critical	1. Writing state grant to pilot so that Pasco will be ready 2. Selection of schools to pilot first	1. Piloting/going slow 2. Starting w/K and moving up	1. Pilot school meetings and trainings

Question 4—How do District PS/RtI leadership team expectations for implementation allow for school-based flexibility?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
District Set Expectations with School Flexibility	1.District sets expectations 2.Develops consensus around core values: guiding principles, key concepts of district vision 3.Schools adapt based on needs 4. District framework schools fill it in 5.Guiding questions versus answers 6.One person stated he was not sure the process is flexible-not hearing that from schools 7.Pilot schools were able to select focus on academic or behavior	1. Schools able to select roles and membership of their leadership team 2. RtI coaches focus on each school's individual needs 3. District provides framework w/school flexibility 4. Process empowers school teams to make school decisions 5. Principal at two schools observed the differences between schools 6. School input changed focus of training days to be more flexible 7. Pilot schools were able to identify their focus	1.RtI coach was able to customize for school needs 2. Baby-steps 3. Timeline flexible as consensus was developed 4. Not hearing "you guys aren't doing this right" 5. Group believes coach conveys district level expectations- but not exactly sure 6. Pilot focused on K first-then moved up	1. Tailored to school's individual needs 2. Given framework-allowed to be creative filling it in at the school level 3. Time at district meetings to focus on school needs 4. Group discussed used of district meetings to provide expectations 5. Pilot allowed time for building consensus, addressing beliefs

Question 5—In what ways do school-based stakeholders have input into important PS/RtI leadership team decisions?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
School represented on task force	1.School staff included on task force 2. Stakeholders represented	School input shared with district team	Not clear how school influences district plan	Input gathered and shared by school representative of principal at district meetings
Surveys and other data collected	Survey data used: practice, beliefs, needs assessment and skills	Data used by district to determine next steps	Maybe surveys are used for district plan- not sure	
Coaches and principals provide input to the district leadership team		Coaches provide school input to the district team	Not sure if the principal or RtI coach provide input w/the district-think that they may	The coach and principal provided input to the district

Question 6—What leadership responsibilities have been used to implement PS/RtI?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
Support at the top	Support at the top-Superintendent's level	1. Leaders at district and school knowledge of best practices 2. Expectations of High quality CIA w/monitoring 3. Vision-consistent communication of vision and expectations		
Support with resources	Commitment to resource support	Providing necessary resources-coaches and coaching cycle; data and technology support Pasco STAR	Commitment to the pilot and to support with resources	1. Provided on-site support through coaches 2. Technical assistance (reading)
Consensus built throughout the organizations	1. Consensus building throughout the system 2. Collaboration between departments			
Clear expectations with school flexibility				District set expectations, but allowed school flexibility based on needs

Question 7—How does the implementation of PS/RtI compare to other district initiatives?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
Piloted process allowed for slower implementation and revision based on data	1. Slower implementation 2. Pilot to learn	1.Taking it slow-baby steps when needed 2. Flexibility to make changes as we learn 3. Revising based on data before each phase	Pilot schools, studying the process	1.Pilot 2. Started smaller, slower
Change process-compelling why, consensus building	1. Attention paid to the change process 2. Built consensus, knowledge 3.Ongoing communication 4.Team approach with diverse staff 5. Connections made to other initiatives	1.Focused on creating compelling why 2. Lots of sharing and building background with other principals 3.Teachers feel more empowered and excited	1. Slower implementation process 2. Built consensus	1. More development of rationale 2. Time to learn and gain skills 3. Built consensus 4. Everyone involved (ESE and basic) not just a few
Based on schools' needs		Customized to school	Based on individual school's needs- not just cookbook	
Lots of training and on-site support w/coaches				1. More support across departments 2. Provided training and on-site coaching (not just training) 3.Lots of ongoing school support

Question 8—Are there any factors that have either helped facilitate or been a barrier to the implementation of PS/RtI in our district?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
Barriers				
Limited resources	1. Insufficient time 2. Lack of resources in some cases 3. Other district-wide initiatives stretches staff thin	1. Differences between level of teacher expertise 2. Differences of understanding between trained and untrained staff 3. Lack of appropriate data for older grades	1. Process can be overwhelming if a teacher has too many low students 2. Insufficient time to meet, plan 3. Insufficient time to implement interventions 4. Teachers pulled w/too many demands 5. Less ESE students results in less staff able to provide interventions 6. ESE cuts in staff 7. ESE support is being spent on basic- less on ESE students 8. Once student identified as ESEthey do not get anymore support	1. Time to meet w/team
State and district requirements	1.State requirement for ESE referral process caused confusion 2. Scaling up will be a challenge 3. . Mandated change from the state may hurt the process	Previous ESE referral process		1. District/state expectations are not always clear 2. Departments expectations compete

	4. Concerned about timeline to scale-up			
	5. Won't be able to implement like pilot w/state timeline			
Negative perceptions	1. Change resisters	1.Use of the FAIR may help		1.Coaches are a must for every school
	2. Perceptions "we already do this"	2. Benchmark assessments (Title I schools) helpful		2.Starting small-scaling up
	3. Negative perceptions of other initiatives			
Facilitating Forces				
Support from the top for the initiative	1. District Vision-beliefs who we are	1.Coaching support amazing	1.Data availability has made a huge difference	Focus on belief/consensus
	2. Support from the top-Superintendent's level	2.Coaching should be used for other initiatives	2.Support from school based administration key	
	3. Perceived more positively than other initiatives			
Consistency w/the district's vision				1. Depts. beginning to work more closely together
				2.Weekly meetings fosters shared accountability
Collaboration/sharing of ideas		Time for principals to share with each other		
Student success			1. Student successes!!	Student success!!
			2 .Better able to meet student needs with use of data	

Question 9—Is there anything that should have been discussed that wasn't?

Themes and Formulated Meanings from Focus Group Interviews.

	Data Sources			
Themes	District	Principals	School A	School B
			1. Create ways for schools to share- such as an intervention bank	1.This team shared recommendations for scaling up
			2.Focus on advanced kids not just lowest	2.Sustain implementation by sharing success Re-energizing
			3.RtI has helped them identify potential gifted students sooner by data	3.Encourage people to engage in the process with an open mind
			4. RtI has been a Godsend!	4. Allow other schools the same time and support as pilots
				5.Build consensus and beliefs

About the Author

Monica C. Verra received a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Special Education from the University of South Florida. She is certified to teach elementary education and special education k-12. At the elementary level she has taught regular and special education. Monica has a Post-Master's Certificate in Educational Leadership from the University of South Florida, is certified in educational leadership and has served as an elementary assistant principal and supervisor of curriculum and instruction. Her current position is the director of exceptional student education in a large west-central Florida district.