The Systemic Impact of the Implementation of the Response to Intervention Model in Elementary Schools

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE SYSTEMIC IMPACT OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE OF SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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BY
ANNETTE R. CRONIN

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my Doctorate of Education Degree to my husband, Denny and my daughter, Lauren. Denny has been my most consistent supporter and he has always encouraged me to continue on even when I wanted to give up or change my path. He has shown me how to be better and achieve more than I could have ever thought possible. He is my partner in life and he has loved me without hesitation.

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this study was to examine three factors regarding the implementation of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. First, the study discovered what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model within schools that make AYP and those that did not make AYP. Second, the study investigated the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds within schools that make AYP and those that did not make AYP. Lastly, this study examined how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. School district administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). The connection between NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) exists in a number of areas such as eligibility and evaluations, AYP and accountability, assessments, studies, and research (Norlin, 2005; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). The relationship between the NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) advocate that all students be supported by all stakeholders within the school, regardless of their academic ability or disability this has caused a paradigm shift in education.

A qualitative research method was used due to the open-ended nature of the research questions. Information gleaned from the questionnaires revealed that nearly half of the building level administrators in both groups reported that they were not aware of
the Early Intervening funds. For schools that Met AYP, 86% of the building level administrators in this study do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. All of the building level administrators for schools that Did Not Meet AYP in this study that provided an answer in the questionnaire, stated that they do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. A majority of the building level administrators in this study reported using AIMSweb, a progress monitoring program; 81% of schools that Met AYP and 86% of schools that Did Not Meet AYP. In contrast, all (100%) of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The public school system, a cornerstone of the United States, has historically and legally been controlled by state laws and local government (Reese, 2005). Reese explored the constant effort by many since the early 19th century to change society through schools, while schools internally revised their organization, curriculum, teaching practices, and overall values. Schooling, a long-established national symbol of opportunity is expected to produce educated American citizens that contribute to society in a positive manner.

Arnberger and Shoop (2008) reported that from the beginning of the 21st century, U.S. education centered on accountability and student academic progress policies. This pertinent legislation includes the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Public Law 107-110, and the 2004 Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Public Law 108-446 known as IDEA. Accountability is defined by the NCLB Act (2001) and monitored by each State Education Agency; accountability is determined by each student’s achievement on standardized tests such as the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), which measures individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. As indicated by NCLB and IDEA, an aspect of legislative policy, the Response to Intervention (RtI) a tiered-model must be implemented that includes
progress monitoring and early intervention using scientifically, researched-based curriculum.

An underlying premise of this three-tiered paradigm is the implementation of early intervention to prevent possible problems in academic and behavioral domains from becoming more severe (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). A school district is also expected to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), mandated by the NCLB Act (2001). AYP is met when a corresponding percentage of students in a district earn a score that meets or exceeds on a formal assessments such as the ISAT or the PSAE (Prairie State Achievement Examination) for the years 2003-2014. Given the accountability of AYP within the NCLB legislation, states are required to monitor and improve student performance (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). By providing states, districts, and schools with requirements, incentives, and sanctions, NCLB promotes a culture of accountability (Norlin, 2005).

Both NCLB and IDEA were purposely connected as a way of establishing continuity within law and education policy. The relationship between NCLB and IDEA exists in several areas such as eligibility and evaluations, AYP and accountability, assessments, studies, and research (Norlin, 2005; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Since stakeholders are responsible for all students, regardless of academic ability or disability, this relationship has caused a paradigm shift in education.

The implementation of the RtI model requires schools to use a process of intervention to meet the needs of all learners prior to finding a student eligible for special education services. In the state of Illinois, the implementation of the RtI model requires
district administrators to establish a culture and philosophical understanding that all students can learn, regardless of disability, primary language, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and academic or behavioral abilities, and that all students will be accounted for as measured by AYP criteria.

To achieve such universal student success, the administrator must provide a vision and a purposeful communications system so that instructional reform and resources are interconnected to ensure growth in student achievement and quality professional development for both teachers and administration. It is imperative that knowledge, appreciation, and continuous student data be used by all stakeholders when making instructional and program decisions for individual or small groups of students (Elliot, 2008). *Formative assessments*, such as weekly quizzes and unit tests, are used to inform instruction in the classroom. *Summative assessments*, such as scores from standardized testing, inform school districts if their student population has Met AYP for each school year. In the state of Illinois, students in Grades 3-8 take the ISAT; students in 11th grade take the PSAE. Students with disabilities can take the Illinois Alternate Assessment (Grades 3-8 and 11) as determined by a student’s *Individual Education Plan* team.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate three factors regarding the implementation of the RtI model from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year. First, the study ascertained what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Second, the
study investigated the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Finally this study examined how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. School district administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Changes mandated by NCLB and IDEA are reflective of federal governmental influences on how students are provided a United States education.

Research Questions

1. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

2. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

3. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

4. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

5. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?
6. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

**Legislation**

The intent of education-based legislation, policies, and case law is to provide funding, opportunity, and an equitable education for all students regardless of disability, primary language, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and academic or behavioral abilities. According to Wright and Wright (2007), in 1975, Congress determined that poor African American children were overrepresented in special education. The continuation of overrepresentation of minority students in special education has been recognized once again, so the RtI model requires districts provide scientific researched-based curriculum for all students while implementing interventions throughout the three tiers of intervention. Utilizing a scientific researched-based curriculum for all students is expected to reduce the number of students who become eligible for special education due to inappropriate and inadequate reading and math curriculum. NCLB seeks to close achievement gaps by holding states, local school districts, and schools accountable for improving academic achievement for all children (Wright & Wright, 2007).

Over time, legislation enacted by the federal government increased for public schools and affected the education of students with and without disabilities. According to the 10th Amendment of the United States Constitution, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” (“The Constitution of the United States,” Amendment X, ratified December 15, 1791). The power of providing an education to
citizens has typically been a state responsibility. However, historically, there have been education policies and laws mandated by the federal government to the states.

The first national education law (titled Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787) required new territories to designate land for public schools. Subsequently, there were a smattering of federal laws enacted from the mid-1800s through the mid-1900s that provided education grants; direct federal involvement in public schools was very limited. Then, with the rise of the Cold War, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (Public Law 85-864) was implemented to counter the Soviet Union’s growth in space technology with its launching of Sputnik in 1957. Sputnik was the Soviet Union’s first earth orbiting artificial satellite that sparked crisis level responses in the U.S. to structure its own procedures in enriching math and science education (Reese, 2005). This legislation provided grants to improve science and math in the early grades. Also included was the Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act (Public Law 85-926, 1958), which provided funding to colleges and universities for training leadership personnel in teaching children with mental retardation. Between the mid-1960s and 1975, state legislatures, the federal courts, and the United States Congress began to dictate strong educational rights for children with disabilities (Wright & Wright, 2007). Prior to this, states and federal legislation had minimal impact on the rights of students with disabilities within the public school system. In fact, until the 1970s, most state laws allowed school districts to refuse enrollment to students considered *uneducable* by local school administrators (Itkonen, 2007).
The well-known case law of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) directed school districts to desegregate its schools (347 U.S. 483, 1954). The premise of *Brown* is the inspiration of “equal education opportunity” that has been established as the standard and the foundation for change in a wide variety of legal and political constructs (Rebell & Wolff, 2008 p. 17). Nearly a decade later, in 1965, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) provided federal funds to public schools. Furthermore, the 1975 *Education for all Handicapped Children Act* (Public Law 94-142) stipulated that students with disabilities receive a free, and appropriate public education, from ages 6-18, which was amended in 1986 to include ages 3-21 (Wright & Wright, 2007). This law introduced the concept of the *least restrictive environment* (LRE) and required schools to place students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible (Wright and Wright, 2007).

The changes inspired by *Brown v. BOE* and the ESEA allowed students with disabilities to have more access to education and inclusion within its regular education setting, there still wasn’t a system of accountability, nor expectations for students especially those with disabilities. The 1983, *A Nation at Risk* report published by the *National Commission on Excellence in Education* advanced the school reform and accountability movement (Stollar, Poth, Curtis & Cohen, 2006). As the 1980s came to a close, this report was juxtaposed with the adoption of federal special education policies in all states. By the 1990s, students with disabilities saw a change from *access* to *outcomes* (Itkonen, 2007).
An overlapping trend of school reform and accountability, outcomes, and continued changes to federal legislation under NCLB and IDEA, requires school districts to create new and innovative programs to meet the needs of all learners in its school districts. The federal government implemented NCLB to ensure that all children received a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and to reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments (Wright & Wright, 2007). Additionally, IDEA affected school districts all over the U.S. The federal government reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, known as IDEA, in 2004 after the NCLB Act (2001), which created a piece of legislation that complemented NCLB legislation. The alignment of NCLB with IDEA allowed school districts to use Title I, English Language Learners, and Special Education funds, up to 15%, in a fluid manner to more fully meet the expectations of NCLB and IDEA than what had been previously permitted. These federal funds and expectations were needed to consolidate and guarantee educational programs and access for all students, including students with disabilities.

In response to the last two decades of pressure to reduce the race and social class gaps, and to ensure that all children were educated, NCLB provided direct language and expectations to schools (Rebell & Wolff, 2008). Zirkel and Krohn (2008) explained that the IDEA regulations (§300.307a) required each state to choose its Specific Learning Disability (SLD) eligibility criteria for students from among the following options:

1. **Severe discrepancy.** Must not require the use of severe discrepancy.
   
   (i) Must: to be obliged or required by morality, law, or custom
(ii) As indicated by Subpart D of IDEA (§300.307a), a state cannot require
the use of severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and
achievement that determines if a child qualifies for a SLD
[§300.308(c)(10)]. (Wright & Wright, 2007)

2. **RtI.** Must permit.
   
   (i) **Must:** to be obliged or required by morality, law, or custom
   
   (ii) As indicated by Subpart D of IDEA (§300.307a), a state is required to use
   the process based on a child’s response to scientific, research-based
   intervention to determine if a child qualifies for a SLD [§300.308(c)(10)].
   (Wright & Wright, 2007)

3. **Other alternative research-based procedures.** May permit.
   
   (i) **May:** a choice to act or no; or a promise of a possibility, as distinguished
   from *shall*, which makes it imperative
   
   (ii) As indicated by Subpart D of IDEA (2004) (§300.307a), a state can allow
   the use of other alternative, research-based procedures to determine if a
   child qualifies for a SLD [§300.308(c)(10)]. (Wright & Wright, 2007)

Of these three options, IDEA regulations consistently reference RtI as a *process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention*. However, the other two alternatives are applicable to the identification of SLD. As defined by Zirkel and Krohn (2008), if RtI is selected, the evaluation for eligibility of a SLD must consist of the following components:

   (i) The instructional strategies used and the student-centered data collected
(ii) Documentation that the child’s parents were notified about:

a. the state’s policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data collected and the general education services provided,

b. strategies for increasing the child’s rate of learning, and
c. parents’ rights to request an evaluation [§300.311(a)(7)].

As indicated in regulations 1, 2, and 3, the law provides language that allows states to either prohibit the use of the discrepancy model or permit its use. But, if a state opts to use the discrepancy model, there is an expectation that the state will and must permit the use of an RtI approach. Even if a state does not adopt an RtI model, there is an expectation that the steps of the RtI model be included in the process used. States also have the option, and are permitted, to utilize other alternative, research-based procedures to determine a SLD. At the district level, the RtI model has six essential parts needed for successful implementation:

1. Universal screening.

2. A measurable definition of the problem area.

3. Baseline data that is established before an intervention.

4. A written plan that details accountability.

5. Progress monitoring.

6. Comparison of preintervention data to postintervention data for efficacy.

(Arnberger & Shoop, 2008)
The RtI model requires that a school district direct its resources, such as personnel and curriculum, to identify a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) through proactive and early intervening services rather than adopting a wait-to-fail model. The wait-to-fail model is a reactive approach that requires a student to first show signs of grade-based failure and difficulty with skills such as note-taking and reading independently in the classroom, before receiving helps (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). A proactive, early intervening model provides students with resources such as curriculum, teachers, and time, and allows for support prior to a history of academic or behavioral failure. The wait-to-fail model withholds these resources until a student has established a history of academic or behavioral failure. In 1977, this wait-to-fail model, often referred to as the discrepancy model, was established as the standard for determining a SLD (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008). Given this formal process, SLD identification grew approximately 200% from 1975 to 2008. Students who are identified with a SLD currently make-up 50% of the special education population (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008). In 2001, this led to then, President G. W. Bush’s creation of the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education to make recommendations on priorities for the reauthorization of IDEA (Bastche, Castillo, Dixon, & Forde, 2008). The report included several key points:

1. Qualification for special education becomes the end point, not an opportunity for more valuable instruction and strong intervention.

2. The discrepancy model (wait-to-fail) is not useful. Instead, prevention and intervention should be used to support students.
3. General and special education teachers are both responsible for students with disabilities.

4. Thousands of students are misidentified when others are not given support early enough or not at all.

5. The old system did not encourage or support evidence-based practices.

6. Parents want an education system that is outcome-based and focused on the child’s needs, in school and beyond.

The report also included three key recommendations:

1. A focus on results not processes.

2. Embrace a model of prevention, not failure.


(Bastche, Castillo, Dixon, & Forde, 2008)

The state of Illinois has finalized the expectations surrounding IDEA that allows for the use of the RtI and Severe Discrepancy models until 2010. Severe discrepancy is two year below grade level and is determined by formal assessments that indicate discrepancies between a student IQ and his or her achievements. After 2010, RtI will be the only option for determining SLD. This has required Illinois educators to use a different lens for teaching, learning, and planning to meet the expectations of the RtI model. Response to Intervention provides high-quality instruction and intervention that is coordinated to students’ needs, monitors progress to determine adjustments in instruction or goals, and uses student response data to make essential educational decisions (Elliot, 2008).
Response to Intervention

The National Center of Response to Intervention defines RtI as the incorporation of assessment and intervention within a multilevel prevention system to increase student achievements and lessen behavioral problems. With RtI, schools:

1. Determine students that are at-risk for poor learning outcomes.

2. Examine student progresses.


4. Change the intensity and type intervention depending on students’ responses.

5. Identify students with learning disabilities (Batsche, Elliot, Gradens, Grimes, Kovaleski, Prasse, Reschly, Schrage, & Tilly, 2006; Prasse, 2006).

The foundation of RtI is found in the work of Deno’s data-based program modification model (Deno, 1985; Deno & Mirkin, 1977) and Bergen’s behavioral consultation model (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990). The common elements are: (a) that procedural steps be followed sequentially, (b) the implementation of scientifically-based interventions, (c) frequent data collection and modification of goals or interventions based on a child’s outcomes, and (d) decisions be based on child intervention outcome data (Bastche et al., 2006).

When implementing an RtI model, three important components should be used:

1. Multiple tiers of intervention service delivery.


3. An integrated data collection or assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery. (Bastche et al., 2008)
A multitier model is used to distribute resources efficiently within a system that provides increased support and intervention for students identified as at-risk. At each tier, the level of intervention requires an increased intensity that is accomplished by (a) teacher-centered, systematic, and specific instruction; (b) increasing frequency of intervention and instruction; (c) increasing duration; (d) establishing smaller and homogenous student groupings; or (e) using teachers with more expertise (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

This three-tiered model for academic and behavioral systems is represented in Figure 1. For this research study, the academic system of the RtI model was used to examine NCLB and IDEA integration in the areas of professional development, curriculum and instruction, and outcome data for students. The relationship among these areas has a systemic impact beyond many of the previous legislative policies thus far, which required school district resources under the umbrella of the RtI structure. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education encourages state and local education agencies to establish systematic plans with timelines and defined responsibilities to ensure the successful implementation of RtI across the educational system (Bastche et al., 2008).

When using the RtI model, decisions should be applied to general, remedial, and special education to construct a proficient and organized system of instruction and intervention directed by student outcome data (Bastche et al., 2008). To explain the implementation of the RtI model, the application of systems thinking was used to observe the relationship between the areas of professional development, curriculum and instruction, and student outcome data for a system of intervention for all students.
According to O’Connor and McDermott (1997), a system is an entity that maintains its existence and functions as a whole through the interaction of its parts. Furthermore, Senge (2006) stated that not only are systems interrelated but they are also necessary to see patterns of change over time rather than static snapshots. Understanding a system requires a perspective where the existence of a linear cause-effect chain does not occur. When a new initiative is required, the knowledge of systems thinking is needed to successfully effect change. The systemic impact of NCLB and IDEA is far-reaching as they impact the entirety of a school district, which includes district and building administration and teachers who will have to implement the necessary changes that ultimately will improve all students’ test scores. Building level administrators must foster change that allows for growth throughout the system. For instance, professional
development embedded within a system-change perspective centered on the issue, such as classroom instruction and curriculum change and its implementation, will support a given practice over time (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007). To implement the requirements mandated by legislation, the leadership of the system, a school district, must effectively communicate, provide resources, training and curriculum, and create an environment of change that occurs within the culture of an existing system. The categories of inputs, transformation, and outputs encompass these parts of an open system and allow educational administrators to understand the complexities of school districts and the necessity to consider all stakeholders, resources, and outcomes (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007; Senge, 2006).

**Inputs**

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2007) clearly represent the interactions within the system and the outside environment. A school district community includes business and neighborhood members that support schools with funding and practical hands-on support such as volunteering and fundraising. Even though there are many local community stakeholders, the implementation of legislation directly impacts stakeholders within the school district. The expectation of *highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals* in IDEA and NCLB legislation has required school districts to ensure teachers and paraprofessionals meet the basic requirements of the law [20 USC 7801(23); 20 USC 6319(d)].

Teacher and paraprofessional requirements for IDEA [602(10) (A)] and NCLB [20 USC 7801(23)] are:
To possess full state certification as a teacher (or pass the state teacher-licensing examination), hold a license to teach in the state, hold at least a bachelor’s degree, or demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the academic subjects that he or she teaches in a manner determined by the state (Norlin, 2005).

Teacher requirements for IDEA [612(a)(14)] are:

States must establish and maintain qualifications to make certain that staff members are sufficiently prepared and trained. IDEA adopted the NCLB definition for teacher requirements.

As of January 8, 2002, paraprofessional requirements for NCLB [34 CFR 200.56] are:

At least two years of study be completed at an institution of higher education and an associate’s degree or higher is held through a formal state or local assessment standards that are met to assist in reading, writing, and mathematics instruction or readiness. (Norlin, 2005)

NCLB and IDEA both provide language that each state incorporates or adopts into its own laws and initiatives such as state testing, goals, and standards. Illinois schools are governed by the *Illinois State Board of Education* as written in the *Illinois Compiled Statutes: Education*, which includes School Code (105 ILCS 5/). The Illinois State Constitution adopted at special election on December 15, 1970, Article X, which has three sections:

Section 1  Goal—Free Schools

Section 2  State Board Education—Chief State Educational
Section 3  Public Funds for Sectarian Purposes Forbidden

Given these legislative guidelines, school districts are allowed more flexibility within its historically rigid budgets. These changes allow school districts to use 15% of federal government monies for special education and early intervening services. The focus of the intervention and resources are geared to K-3 grade students who need extra support to meet academic and behavioral expectations. Title I funds (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged) are intended to support state and local school improvement efforts connected to the demanding state academic standards that support and strengthen efforts to improve teaching and learning for students least likely to meet state standards. Title I monies provide financial support for schools with high poverty rates as well. As with special educations funds, schools can use the funds for early intervening services. Title III funds (Limited English Proficient Learners) are stipulated for early intervening services such as progress monitoring (IDEA 2004, 34 CFR 300)

Personnel are an integral part of an organization especially when initiating change. For school districts to successfully implement the RtI model, the capacity of its personnel must be built. A support system must be in place for teachers to use that includes training on how to use resources effectively within the RtI model (Danielson et al., 2007). This framework provides an infrastructure that supports the use of evidence-based practices and provides professional development that promotes personal mastery (Danielson et al., 2007; Senge, 2006). As modeled by administration, a community of learners has to include a collaborative culture that supports the mandates of federal and
state legislation (Danielson et al., 2007; Patterson, Syverud, & Seabrooks-Blackmore, 2008). School districts operate the way they do because of how they function, think, and interact, but required changes are not only at the district or building level, change must also occur in the individual (Senge, 2006).

**Transformation**

The multiple areas reviewed reflect the intricacy of a school district. Within the transformation area of an open system, leadership, professional development, culture, school reform, and curriculum implementation are directly related to adopting the RtI model. An initiative mandated by legislation has to be supported by the leadership. This requires focus and knowledge of all areas of change. As indicated in Figure 2, these areas of change include professional development, understanding culture and school reform, along with providing appropriate curriculum. Leadership responsibility is initiated at the district and building levels to ensure that curriculum and professional development are provided efficiently and successfully.

Mandates through legislative and policy change have not only increased student outcome accountability, but also the need for leadership to support teachers who work every day to implement these changes. An effective leader is a change agent who provides vision for a learning community that is created, and promotes appropriate professional development, a positive culture and climate change, and needed resources such as curriculum. As defined by the *National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.*, RtI has three essential components. They are: multiple tiers of intervention service delivery (typically a three-tiered model); a problem-solving method;
and an integrated data collection or assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery.

Figure 2. Leadership

Both NCLB and IDEA refer to a scientifically, research-based reading program for classroom and assessment use (IDEA 2004, 34 CFR 300), this directive is a new concept. Districts must provide this researched-based program to prove that all students are given equal opportunities to learn.

Another leadership responsibility is to provide meaningful, results-focused professional development. As one of its purposes, NCLB states: “significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development” (NCLB 1001[10]). It is imperative for
leaders to build *capacity* and *will* by effectively utilizing personnel (Israel & Kasper, 2004). Policy and procedures need streamlining to work with the initiative. New policies and procedures should be communicated via meetings, small and large groups, email, and professional development (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Culture can be defined as the *way* things are done in a given setting that can be difficult to change, especially if the new way of doing things appears as a top down initiative. According to Reeves (2007), there are four essentials needed to change school culture:

1. Define what you will not change.
2. Recognize the importance of actions.
3. Use the right change tools for your school or district.
4. Be willing to do the “scut work.” (p. 94)

These four points allow leaders to establish a clear picture of those things that must be changed while protecting those things that do not need changing. “The greatest impediment to meaningful cultural change is the gap between what leaders say they value and what they actually do” (Reeves, 2007, p. 92). Effective leadership is revealed in the actions of administration throughout the change process. Reflecting the importance of providing the proper resources, or tools, that allow teachers to do good work is also important. The final point states that leadership should not ask teachers to do things they would not do themselves. In other words, lead by example. When the areas of transformation are effectively supported and put into action, the outputs of a system are
directly impacted and relate to the vision or expectations outlined through the change process, as guided by the administration of a school.

**Outputs**

The desired outcomes of an organization represent what it values. Danielson’s (2002) *Framework for School Improvement* centers on student learning. The outcome of student learning (one that can be measured) is standardized testing scores used to determine if a school has met the expectations of NCLB. The difficulty comes when an outcome is mandated by legislation because the administration has to tie-in what a district values to the legislation to make it part of what a school values, puts into practice, and measures. In the spirit of NCLB, teacher performances are directly linked to student achievements. As districts revamp its school improvement plans and create goals that correlate with NCLB, teachers will be evaluated according to those expectations.

There are two types of assessments used to determine if students have learned is a major output of systems thinking. These assessments are formative and summative. Schools use *formative assessments* to test student understanding in smaller chunks while *summative assessments*, such as the ISAT and the PSAE, measure general knowledge over time. The ISAT measures individual student achievement based on the *Illinois Learning Standards*. There are expectations that students should demonstrate achievement on summative assessments for NCLB because such achievement requires that a certain percentage of students *meets* or *exceeds* standards in reading and math, based on the yearly state targets. Formative assessments inform instruction and assess student understanding after a unit of instruction.
When a school district initiates a reform such as RtI, an understanding of the interrelated parts is needed to make a systemic change. Systems’ thinking is a framework that provides the lens where administrators can see not only the interrelated parts but also the patterns of change. This lens is used to see the structure of inputs, transformation, and outputs of a school district. When conducting research on RtI, the integral system parts are professional development, curriculum, financial resources, and student outcome data—all of which are interconnected parts of a school district.

**Research Questions**

1. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

2. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

3. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

4. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

5. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

6. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?
Research Method

Qualitative research was conducted using questionnaires to gather perceptions from building level administrators in charge of curriculum and program decisions in DuPage, McHenry, and Will Counties in Illinois. To promote full disclosure of district progress and resources, the questionnaires was completed by elementary building level administrators (n=168) as each building level administrator has a part in each area of the RtI model implementation process. Questionnaires were returned without any information that reveals the specific school district. However, the researcher sent a questionnaire on blue paper to schools that have Met AYP and schools that Did Not Meet AYP were sent a questionnaire on green paper. The researcher obtained the name of each elementary building level administrators and the address of each school using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). School district AYP information was accessible on the Illinois State Board of Education public website (http://www.isbe.net/).

Data collected from these questionnaires was analyzed in conjunction with the Interactive Illinois Report Card AYP data on the Illinois State Board of Education’s website, along with the expectations of the current legislation. The triangulation of student data, current legislation, and questionnaire data provided the needed information to answer the research questions and provided a representation of how Illinois schools implemented the expectations of legislative mandates within the elementary schools in DuPage, McHenry, and Will County in Illinois. Qualitative research is emergent rather than predetermined, which leads to the analysis of themes or categories as the researcher interprets or draws conclusions as the research concludes (Creswell, 2003). Working
with these data, the researcher describes, creates explanations, poses hypotheses, and
develops theories that will emerge through the research process (Glense, 2006).

Therefore, the application of systems thinking was the lens that the emerging
categories or themes will be determined from for this research. According to Senge
(2006), “systems’ thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes” (p. 68). Senge also stated
that systems’ thinking is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, as
well as for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots. For research purposes,
the interrelated parts included professional development, student data by using progress
monitoring and summative data, and financial implications as they related to professional
development and curriculum.

Bias

Any researcher must consider bias when collecting data. This researcher’s
professional experiences have been two-fold: one as a special education teacher; one as
an administrator. Most of the researcher’s experiences have been as a special education
teacher, and in one of the outcomes of RtI, referral for eligibility for SLD. At this time,
how RtI unfolds, and ultimately how it becomes part of this researcher’s role as special
educator, remains unclear. Throughout this researcher’s search for a topic, many were
considered because of the RtI connection to special education and administration, it
became the topic of choice. However, it was apparent that to effectively understand the
impact of RtI, the research focus must be in a general education setting as RtI is not a
special education initiative.
The researcher’s education and experiences as an administrator provided insight and knowledge that many teachers do not possess. Even though these experiences were somewhat limited due to the two interim positions being held no longer than six months, to ensure that opinions were not formed from a position of hindsight or made based on preliminary judgments, it was important to evaluate with a lens that is used when reviewing data collected for this study. Since the researcher’s school district participates in the implementation of the RtI model, and is part of the North Suburban Special Education District in Lake County, Illinois, the researcher chose to work with different counties (DuPage, McHenry, & Will) in Illinois so a barrier was created between the research and the researcher’s current employer. Additionally, the researcher kept a journal to note and reflect upon thoughts and knowledge gained throughout the research process.

**Definition of Terms**

The glossary terms were compiled from the website, http://www.rti4success.org/, that includes glossary terms from the RTI glossary developed by the IDEA Partnership at NASDSE, RTI Action Network Glossary, the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, the National Center on Response to Intervention, the New Mexico Public Education Department RTI Glossary, the Georgia Department of Education RTI Glossary, the South Carolina Department of Education RTI glossary, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction RTI Manual Glossary.

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions are provided:
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - A statewide accountability system mandated by the NCLB Act of 2001 that requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make AYP, as defined by states and approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

Core Curriculum - A course of study deemed critical and usually made mandatory for all students of a school or school system. Core curricula are often instituted at the primary and secondary levels by school boards, departments of education, or other administrative agencies charged with overseeing education. Core curricula must be scientific and research-based.

Criterion Referenced Assessment - An assessment used to determine if a student or group of students have met a specific standard or intended learning outcome (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006).

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) - A measurement that uses direct observation and recording of a student's performance in the local curriculum as a basis for gathering information to make instructional decisions.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) - Tools for measuring student competency and progress in the basic skill areas of reading fluency, spelling, mathematics, and written language.

Data-Based/Data-Driven Decision Making (DBDM) - The use of data to inform decision making at all levels. It requires schools and districts to collect, analyze, report, evaluate, and communicate through data. DBDM can help measure student progress, measure program effectiveness, and meet federal and state reporting requirements (Johnson, Smith, & Harris, 2009).
Differentiated Instruction - Process of designing lesson plans that meet the needs of the range of learners. Such planning includes learning objectives, grouping practices, teaching methods, varied assignments, and varied materials chosen based on student skill levels, interest levels, and learning preferences. Differentiated instruction focuses on instructional strategies, instructional groupings, and an array of materials (Johnson et al., 2009).

Disproportionality - Is there over- or under-representation of minority students in special education? In other words, there is a disproportionate number, either a significantly larger or smaller percentage, of students from a specific minority background receiving special education services than the percentage of that minority in the population generally.

Early Intervening Services (EIS) - Early intervening services are the preventive components of the NCLB Act and the IDEA Act of 2004. Early Intervening Services activities could include:

- Professional development for teachers and other school staff to deliver scientifically-based academic instruction and behavioral interventions, including scientifically-based literacy instruction, and where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software.

- Providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically-based literacy instruction.

Formative Assessment/Evaluation - An assessment for learning used to advance and not merely monitor each student’s learning (Stiggins, 2002). Formative assessments
are used to ensure students experiencing difficulty in reaching or exceeding proficiencies are given additional time and support (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) - Original passage was in 1975, and was later reauthorized in 2004. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 provided federal statute relative to public education and services to students with disabilities ages 3-21.

Intensive Interventions - Academic and/or behavioral interventions characterized by increased length, frequency, and duration of implementation for students who struggle significantly. This is often associated with the narrowest tier of an RtI tiered model, also referred to as tertiary interventions.

Learning Disability - IDEA 2004 defines a Learning Disability in the following manner:

The child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to meet state-approved, grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child’s age or state-approved, grade-level standards. They are:

(i) Oral expression
(ii) Listening comprehension
(iii) Written expression
(iv) Basic reading skill
(v) Reading fluency skills
(vi) Reading comprehension
(vii) Mathematics calculation

(viii) Mathematics problem solving (Wright & Wright, 2007)

Learning Rate - Refers to a student’s growth in achievement or behavior competencies over time as compared to prior levels of performance and peer growth rates (Bastche et al., 2008).

Local Education Agency (LEA) - Refers to a specific school district or a group of school districts in a cooperative or regional configuration (Bastche et al., 2008).

Norm-Referenced Assessment - An assessment designed to compare the performance of an individual or group with a larger norm group typically representing a national sample with a wide and diverse cross-section of students (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006).

Overidentification - The identification of more students for services through special education than the proportion of that population in the general population. Is also a reference to the overrepresentation of students in special education programs or services that is above state and national averages.

Overrepresentation - Refers to overrepresentation of students in specific disability-related categories that is above state and national averages.

Professional Development - A lifelong, collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centered, and focused approach (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Progress Monitoring - A scientifically-based practice that routinely assesses students’ academic performances to determine whether they are responding adequately to
the instructional programs. Progress monitoring can be put into practice with an individual students or an entire class. Also, progress monitoring can be used to monitor implementation of specific interventions (Johnson et al., 2009).

Remediation - Instruction intended to remedy a situation or to teach a student something that he or she should have previously learned or be able to demonstrate. Assumes appropriate strategies matched to student learning have been previously used.

Response to Intervention (RtI) - Also known as Response to Instruction or Responsiveness to Intervention, it is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions.

Scientific, Research-Based Instruction - Curriculum and educational interventions that have been proven to be effective for most students based on scientific study.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) - IDEA 2004 defines a Specific Learning Disability in the following manner:

The child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to meet state-approved, grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child’s age or state-approved, grade-level standards:

(i) Oral expression

(ii) Listening comprehension

(iii) Written expression
(iv) Basic reading skill
(v) Reading fluency skills
(vi) Reading comprehension
(vii) Mathematics calculation
(viii) Mathematics problem solving (Wright & Wright, 2007)

State Education Agency (SEA) - Refers to the Department of Education at the state level (Bastche et al., 2008).

Summative Assessment/Evaluation - Designed to provide a final measure to determine if learning goals have been met (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006).

Systemic Data Collection - Planning a time frame for and following through with appropriate assessments to set baselines and monitor student progresses.

Systemic Reform - Change that occurs in all aspects and levels of the educational process and that impacts all stakeholders within the process (students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members) with implications for all components— including curriculum, assessment, professional development, instruction, and compensation.

Tertiary Levels of Intervention - Interventions that relate directly to an area of need; are supplementary to and different from primary and secondary interventions; are usually implemented individually or in very small group settings; may be individualized; and are often connected to the narrowest tier of a tiered intervention model.

Universal Design for Learning - An educational approach that offers flexible curriculum and learning environments that includes three primary principles: (1) various
methods of presentation of information to all students, (2) various methods of expression by students (e.g., writing, speaking, and drawing), (3) various methods of engagement for students” (Bremer, Clapper, Hitchcock, Hall, & Kachgal, 2002).

Universal Screening - A process of reviewing student performance through formal and/or informal assessment measures to determine progress in relation to student benchmarks; related directly to student learning standards.

Validity - An indication that an assessment instrument consistently measures what it is designed to measure, excluding extraneous features from such measurement.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual framework of systems thinking and will and capacity was utilized to uncover how building level administrators implement the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. The purpose of this study was to investigate three factors regarding the implementation of the RtI model from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year. First, the study ascertained what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Second, the study investigated the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Finally this study examined how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. School district administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Changes mandated by NCLB and IDEA are reflective of federal governmental influences on how students are provided a United States education.
Research Questions

1. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

2. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

3. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

4. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

5. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

6. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

The basis of systems’ thinking is a paradigm shift that looks at interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect links, and understanding the process of change instead of specific events (Senge, 2006). Systems’ thinking incorporates patterns while recognizing the complexities of a system, which uncovers how to make and maintain changes over time (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2007; Senge). Positive will and capacity is established by building level administrators through informed staff decisions, balance (between past
practice and new initiatives), and effective communication (Israel & Kasper, 2004; Popham, 2008; Reeves, 2010; White & Smith, 2010).

Learning organizations, which are made up of interrelated and interdependent parts of a system, need to establish a shared vision, understand the culture and climate (mental models), provide professional development (personal mastery), and establish norms for team learning (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007; Senge, 2006). Senge stated, “The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared ‘pictures of the future’ that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance” (p. 9).

The challenge a building level administrator faces is to use district goals and objectives to create the buy-in needed to make new initiatives and the best practices part of a school’s future vision. Reynolds, Murrrill, and Whitt (2006) indicated that the mental models of teachers can be changed as initiatives are introduced; the paradigm shift occurs when former ideas and past practices are challenged in a productive and collaborative manner.

Professional development, a form of personal mastery for educators, is the opportunity for school districts to provide teachers with the tools needed to effectively implement new initiatives and curriculum resources. “That is, school administrators need to help all personnel fulfill their potential by learning new skills and developing their abilities to the fullest” (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007, p. 593). Additionally, teachers need to be ready and open to the learning process, feel empowered and challenged, and experience a level of safety and trust to participate in the learning processes in a meaningful manner (Reynolds et al., 2006). According to Williams (2003), high-quality
teaching and contentment with one’s work is grounded in a community with collegial relationships where team learning takes place.

Through the perspectives of systems thinking, personal mastery, building shared vision, and team learning, a building level administrator can build will and capacity. Both will and capacity can have negative or positive connotations, which can be reflected in a person’s actions and work ethic. The goal of a building level administrator is to build positive will and positive capacity throughout the school’s faculty (Israel & Kasper, 2004). The three components that facilitate positive will and capacity are:

1. Personnel mobilization.
2. Necessary functions.

Personnel mobilization involves a building level administrator knowing the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and placing them in the best position for them and the school.

Necessary functions involve a building level administrator balancing new initiatives with established practices. Having too many expectations can create a negative will or deplete capacity over time, which can then overwhelm teachers.

Linkages involve a building level administrator creating a system of communication and structure that promotes trust and accountability.

The concepts of systems thinking and will and capacity provide the conceptual framework to understand the complexities of change within the schools as the RtI model is implemented within the expectations of the current laws of the 2001 No Child Left
Behind Act (NCLB), Public Law 107-110, and the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), Public Law 108-446.

**School as a System**

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2007) clearly represent the interactions within the system while recognizing the impact of outside environment. The external environment impact includes the community of the school district such as businesses and the neighborhood members that support schools with funding and practical hands-on support such as volunteering at a school and providing fundraising monies as indicated in Figure 3. The system and the school experience external pressures from the environment, and include social, political, and economic forces that come from local, state, and federal sources. The building level administrator will “find it necessary to manage and develop ‘internal’ operations while concurrently monitoring the environment and anticipating and responding to ‘external’ demands” (Lunenburg & Ornstein, p. 36). Even though external forces such as community expectations or government regulations are out of the building level administrator’s control, their influence on the culture, communication, and decision-making considerations of the school are substantial (Lunenburg & Ornstein). As shown in Figure 3, the internal pressures are part of the feedback that occurs among inputs, transformation, and outputs, which informs the programs, culture, personnel, and leadership (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Lunenburg & Ornstein; O’Connor, 2009).

A building level administrator must consider stakeholders, resources, and outcomes that are directly related to the categories of inputs, transformation and outputs.
A school district encompasses the parts of an open system that allow building level administrators to understand the complexities of a learning organization (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007). For the purpose of this research, the areas of inputs, transformation, and outputs will be illustrated in the interconnected areas of inputs, such as finance, legislation, transformation, such as communication, leadership, decision making, and outputs, such as student achievement, student growth, and teacher performance.

Figure 3 lists these areas of inputs, transformation, and outputs.

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**Figure 3. A Systems View of School Administration**

*From: Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007, p. 38*
Spady and Schwahn (2010) state that to create an effective learning system, a building level administrator must align the structure and people in a manner that establishes an Empowering Learning Community (ELC) comprised of the following:

1. “Structural alignment: intentionally creating organizational structures, functions, processes, practices to accomplish the organization’s purpose and vision” (Spady & Schwahn, 2010, p. 139).

2. “People alignment: focusing the attitudes, energy, expertise, and efforts of all staff members on the organization’s purpose and vision” (Spady & Schwahn, 2010, p. 139).

The systemic impact of NCLB and IDEA are far reaching and impact the entirety of a school district, the district level administration, the building level administration, and the teachers who need to implement the necessary changes that ultimately improve student test scores. When implementing the mandated legislation requirements, the leader of the system, the building level principal, must effectively communicate and provide resources for the implementation of change (professional development and curriculum) that occurs within the culture of an existing system.

**Inputs**

NCLB and IDEA both provide the language that each state incorporates or adopts into each of its own laws and initiatives involving state testing, goals, and standards. The *Illinois State Board of Education*, as written in the Illinois Compiled Statutes, governs Illinois schools and includes School Code 105 ILCS 5/—which
provides rules and expectations for the State Board of Education and all Illinois school districts.

The Illinois State Constitution, adopted at a special election on December 15, 1970, provides a free education by supporting a public school system. This is indicated in Article X: Education.

Section 1—Free Schools

A fundamental goal of the People of the State is the educational development of all persons to the limits to their capacities.

The State shall provide for an efficient system of high-quality public educational institutions and services. Education in public schools through secondary level shall be free. There may be such other free education as the General Assembly provides by law.

The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education.

Section 2—State Board Education—Chief State Educational

There is created a State Board of Education to be elected or selected on a regional basis. The number of members, their qualifications, terms of office and manner of election or selection shall be provided by law. The Board, except as limited by law, may establish goals, determine policies, provide for planning and evaluating education programs, and recommend financing. The Board shall have such other duties and powers as provided by law. The State Board of Education shall appoint a chief state officer.
Section 3—Public Funds for Sectarian Purposes Forbidden

Neither the General Assembly nor any county, city, town, township, school district, or other public corporation, shall ever make any appropriation or pay from any public fund whatever, anything in aid of any church or sectarian purpose, or to help support or sustain any school, academy, seminary, college, university or other literary or scientific institution, controlled by any church or sectarian denomination whatever; nor shall any grant or donation of land, money or other personal property ever be made by the State, or any such public corporation, to any church, or for any sectarian purpose.

The legislation of NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004), the Illinois State Constitution, and the guidelines established by the State Board of Education has provided school districts more flexibility in utilizing monies for early intervening services within historically rigid budgets. The changes in IDEA allow school districts to use 15% of the monies given by the federal government for special education to be used for early intervening services for all children. Therefore, the focus of the early intervening services and resources should be on the K-3 students who need extra support to meet academic and behavioral expectations and who do not receive special education services to prevent the need for special education services in the future.

Title I funds, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (34 CFR § 200), are intended to support state and local school improvement efforts connected to the demanding state academic standards to support and strengthen efforts to improve teaching and learning for students least likely to meet state standards. Title I monies
provide financial support for schools with high-poverty rates, but as with special educations funds, schools can also use these funds for early intervening services. Title III funds, Limited English Proficient Learners, are also to be used for early intervening services such as progress monitoring. Therefore, a school district could use a portion of the 15% of the IDEA Part B funds in grades K-3 for scientifically based literacy instruction to ensure student success and proactively address possible student difficulties in the future.

**Legislation and Response to Intervention (RtI)**


The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. [20 U. S. C. § 6301]

NCLB assists states, districts, and schools in student achievement by providing requirements, resources, incentives, and sanctions (Norlin, 2005). States are expected to implement an accountability system for all public school students connected to new standards for reading and mathematics, annual assessments, and progress objectives that are intended to make certain that all groups of students reach academic competency by the 2013-14 school year. Sanctions are imposed against schools and districts that do not meet its state goals for adequate yearly progress, AYP.
In 1975, the original legislation for students with disabilities was created and named the Education for All Handicapped Children’s Act (Public Law 94-142). This legislation recognized that students with disabilities (and their families) were not being given access to appropriate educational services (Richards & Martin, 2005). Even though this legislation dramatically improved access to public schools and services by providing a Free Appropriate Public Education, or FAPE, Congress realized that more work was needed especially when it came to expectations and access to regular curriculum for students with disabilities (Richards & Martin, 2005).

Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible IDEA, 2004 Section 601(c) (5) (A).

These elevated expectations and increased participation in the general education curriculum is expected to help students with disabilities meet their developmental goals. Richards and Martin (2005) identified additional Congress established requirements for improving IDEA:

1. Coordination of IDEA (2004) with NCLB (2001) so students with disabilities from NCLB efforts and “special education can become a service for such children rather than a place where such children are sent” IDEA, 2004 Section 601(c)(5)(b)-(G).
2. Provide special education and related services and supports in the regular classroom when appropriate.

3. “Supporting high-quality, intensive” preservice training and professional development, including, to the maximum extent possible, training in scientifically-based instructional practices for personnel who serve students with disabilities, to provide the tools necessary to improve student achievement and performance (IDEA, 2004, Section 601(c)(5)(b)-(G).

4. Provide incentives for interventions for all students including scientifically-based early reading programs, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and early intervening services “to reduce the need to label children as disabled in order to address the learning and behavioral needs of such children” (IDEA, 2004, Section 601(c)(5)(b)-(G).

5. Focus resources on teaching and learning by reducing paperwork and other requirements that do not improve educational results.

6. Support the development and use of technology to maximize accessibility for students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004) Section 601(c)(5)(b)-(G).

These two pieces of legislation, and the requirement for the use of the RtI model in the state of Illinois, have been catalyst for the RtI model’s complete adoption in Illinois since 2010. IDEA legislation no longer allows for sole use of a Severe Discrepancy model for determining eligibility for special education services while requiring the use of scientific, research-based interventions as part of the process of eligibility determination.
NCLB and IDEA are aligned in their shared expectations of enhanced communication with parents, implementation of scientifically-based curriculum and instruction, effective use of resources based on student performance and student needs and accountability for improved educational results of all students. (p. 33)

The alignment of federal legislation with the expectation that all students will reach the same standard of achievement has made our schools, administrators, and teachers reflect upon current practice in new ways. “The law not only allows us to change our practice, but also expects us to change” (Prasse, 2006, p. 14).

Legislation does not directly endorse the RtI model, but the core principals of the RtI model are linked to NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) expectations. There are eight core RtI principles that are key for the State Education Agency (SEA) to know in order to assist in the RtI implementation at the district level. Specifically, can a district:

1. Effectively teach all children.
2. Intervene early.
4. Use a problem-solving method to make decisions within a multi-tier model.
5. Use research-based, scientifically validated interventions and instruction to the extent available.
6. Monitor student progress to inform instruction.
7. Use data to make decisions. (A data-based decision regarding student response to intervention is central to RtI practices.)

8. Use assessment for three different purposes: screening, diagnostics, and progress monitoring. (Batsche et al., 2008, p. 19)

The implications of this legislation for building level administration are far reaching within the culture of its school.

**Funding Sources**

Changes in NCLB budgetary requirements have funding implications for programs and administrators (Fritts, 2008). Schools that receive federal funds are required to meet the NCLB expectations (Fritts, 2008).

As provided by NCLB (2001), funding sources are Title I, Title II, and Title III. Each has a specific purpose that supports student achievement, directly or indirectly, especially students with disadvantages, as compared to their peers. For example, Title II funds are given to school districts for professional development that can support RtI initiatives.

According to NCLB (2001), the purpose statements of Title I, Title II, and Title III are:

**Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged**

Section 1001 Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a
minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academics assessments.

Title II—Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals Part A—Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund

Section 2102 Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this title is to provide grants to State educational agencies, local education agencies, State agencies for higher education, and eligible partnerships in order to:

- increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly-qualified teachers in the classroom and highly-qualified principals in schools; and
- hold local education agencies and schools accountable for improvement in student academic achievement.

Title III—Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students

Part A—English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act

Section 3102 Purposes of Statement:

The purpose of this title is to:

- help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high
levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet;

- to assist all limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects so that those children can meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet, consistent with section 1111(b)(1);

- develop high-quality language instruction educational programs designed to assist State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools in teaching limited English proficient children and serving immigrant children and youth;

- assist State educational agencies and local educational agencies to develop and enhance their capacity to provide high-quality instructional programs designed to prepare limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to enter all-English instruction settings;

- assist State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to build their capacity to establish, implement, and sustain language instruction educational programs and programs of English language development for limited English proficient children;
• promote parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs for the parents and communities of limited English proficient children;

• streamline language instruction educational programs into a program carried out through formula grants to State educational agencies and local educational agencies to help limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, develop proficiency in English, while meeting challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards;

• hold State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools accountable for increases in English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of limited English proficient children by requiring:
  — demonstrated improvements in the English proficiency of limited English proficient children each fiscal year; and
  — AYP for limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, as described in section 1111(b)(2)(B)

• provide State educational agencies and local educational agencies with the flexibility to implement language instruction educational programs, based on scientifically-based research on teaching limited English
proficient children that the agencies believe to be the most effective for teaching English. (34 CFR § 300)

Given the purposes for Titles I, II, and III as integral supports and expectations for schools districts, it is vital that districts understand and utilize any available funds—especially when implementing a new initiative such as RtI. If a school has a student population of disadvantaged students of 40 percent or more that are at the poverty level, then the school can use Title I funds to support school wide programs to increase student achievement (§ 1114 of NCLB, 2001). Another use for Title I funds can occur when a school has targeted assistance programs for specific students (§ 1115 of NCLB, 2001). These students must have been identified as at risk or failing, and the targeted program is implemented to improve academic achievement. Local Education Agencies (LEA) must use Title III funds to provide high-quality, language instruction educational programs and high-quality professional development for classroom teachers (NCLB, 2001—§§ 3111 & 3115(c)).

Part B of IDEA (2004) requires that 5% of Part B funds be used for professional development; and 15% of special education funds can be used to support RtI implementation in order to develop and implement scientific, research-based interventions for grade K-12 students who are not identified as needing special education services or related services, but need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education setting (Hoff, 2007; Lose, 2007; Samuels, 2008b). The IDEA funds are intended to provide Early Intervening Services (EIS) for K-12. School districts that have an overrepresentation of minority students (as based on a district’s
population) must use 15% of federal IDEA monies to supply academic and behavioral support to general education students K-3 (Cahill, 2007).

EIS is also known as Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) are designated for students not receiving special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to be successful in general education (NCLB, 2001 34 CFR § 300.226(a); IDEA, 2004 § 613(f)). Along with services aligned with activities supported by NCLB these funds can be used for professional development so teachers and staff can effectively execute scientifically-based academic and behavioral interventions, and direct interventions for educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and support can be provided (NCLB, 34 CFR § 300.226(b); IDEA, § 613(f)).

Usually, Title I, Title III, and CEIS resources are used to fund progress monitoring when the progress monitoring is used to determine if a student has responded to an intervention. On the other hand, when a screening or other data show that a student requires additional support, a scientific, researched-based intervention for a particular problem is provided for an allotted time and the intensity of instruction is increased to improve the student’s achievement. The Title I, Title III, or CEIS resources may, at times, be used to support these interventions. Finally, federal funds are to be used to supplement, not supplant, services that student would otherwise receive.
The multiple areas that are to be reviewed reflect the intricacy of a school district. The transformation areas of leadership, professional development, culture, change, and curriculum implementation are directly related to adopting the RtI model (Batsche et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2006). An initiative that is mandated by legislation has to be supported by the leadership.

One leadership responsibility, initiated at the district and building levels, ensures the efficient and successful allocation of the necessary resources, curriculum, and professional development opportunities. According to Batsche et al. (2008), the rationale for the RtI model components are:

1. Multiple tiers of intervention service delivery.
3. An integrated data collection and assessment system to inform decisions at each tier of service delivery. (p. 21)

Both NCLB and IDEA refer to a scientifically, research-based reading program for classroom and assessment use. This directive is clearly a new concept. Therefore, the district must provide this program to prove students are being given an equal opportunity to learn.

Another leadership responsibility is to provide meaningful, results-focused professional development. As one of its purposes, NCLB states, “significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development” (2001, 1001[10]). It is imperative for leaders to build will and capacity by effectively utilizing personnel. Policy and procedures must be streamlined to work with the initiative; new policies and procedures must be communicated by means of meetings (small and large group), email, and professional development (Israel & Kasper, 2004).

Culture can be defined as the way we do things in a given setting that can be difficult to change especially if the new way of doing things appears as a top down initiative. According to Reeves (2007), there are four essentials that are needed to change school culture:

1. Define what you will not change.
2. Recognize the importance of actions.
3. Use the right change tools for your school or district.
4. Be willing to do the “scut work.” (p. 94)
These four essentials provided by Reeves (2007) allow a leader to establish a clear picture of those things that must be changed while protecting those things that do not. The building level administrator and staff must identify values, traditions, and associations that will be sustained (Danielson, 2008; Reeves, 2007; Senge, 2006). These essentials also reflect the importance of providing resources or tools that allow teachers to do good work. The final point states that leadership should not ask teachers to do things they themselves would not do, as well as to lead by example.

Establishing a professional culture allows educators to embrace a vision of empowerment. Professionals are collegial, dedicated to practice, passionate, lifelong learners, self-aware, and embrace a code of ethics (Spady & Schwahn, 2010). Spady and Schwahn state that, “In an Empowering Learning Community, professionalism is the role you play, not the position you hold, that makes you a leader and a professional, and positively shapes your organization’s culture” (p. 41). Furthermore, building level administrators can create collegial professional cultures by determining what they will model, what they will honor, what they will accept, and what they will reward (Spady & Schwahn, 2010).

The building level administrator is accountable for building a culture of trust and community within and among its staff (Danielson, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Building level administrators can accomplish this by practicing confidentiality and protecting vulnerable staff (Danielson, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005). Furthermore, to build trust, an administrator must have professional competence, provide consistency by being predictable and stable, and make decisions and provide resources grounded in the
School vision (Danielson, 2008). Schools are complex systems. So, when hiring personnel, it may be difficult to determine if a staff member will work for a particular building as each has its own culture. The building level administrator must build the staff knowing this culture and make hiring decisions grounded in the school’s vision (Danielson, 2008; Elmore, 2004; O’Connor, 2009). Elmore (2004) provides five principals for leaders to follow that want to make comprehensive improvements:

1. The improvement of instructional practices and performances, regardless of roles.
2. Instructional improvement that requires a continuous learning environment.
3. Learning that requires modeling.
4. Leadership roles and activities emerge from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the official directives of the organization.
5. “The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity.” (pp. 66-68)

Leaders must build and implement a clear and consistent vision, conduct a needs assessment (or data analysis) to determine the starting point for every school year, and a system of focused professional development activities that systematically move teachers toward effective instruction (O’Connor, 2009; White & Smith, 2010). Another aspect of leadership is to advance a culture of professionalism that establishes a continuous learning environment—which is fundamental to the work and is not seen as an additional task (Danielson, 2008). Senge (2006) says, “A culture that integrates action and reflection arrives at better decisions to which people can genuinely commit, and its
people have a more prepared mental state” (p. 289). Building level administrators are responsible for creating and sustaining a culture of professionalism (of inquiry) within a school by providing both time and support (Danielson, 2002).

Leadership

Hargreaves and Shirley (2008) discuss the evolution of change in education since the 1960s. The First Way of Change focused on policies that provided unprecedented levels of support for the poor. During this time, educators had a great deal of freedom that led to variations of quality in education. As happens often in education, the pendulum swung in the opposite direction during the leadership of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Britain’s first Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. The Second Way of Change “manifested itself in increased regulation by the market and the state leading to a collapse of professional motivation and crises of teacher retention and leadership renewal” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008, p. 57). Next, U.S. President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister to the United Kingdom, Tony Blair, provided an approach that was between the first and second way of change called the Third Way of Change.

The Third Way of Change “proposed a mixed economy of diverse providers, leading to the increasing prominence of charter schools in the United States and specialist schools in the United Kingdom” that exchange information and assist each other to promote a professional education system (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008, p. 58).

The Third Way of Change highlights the importance of improvements within professional communities where educators and schools work together and experience a community of collaboration (Fullan, 2006). While schools were building professional
communities, the enforcement of government mandates grew—such as NCLB where the expectation of AYP was established.

The *Fourth Way of Change* is built upon five pillars of purpose:

1. An inspired and inclusive vision.
2. Connected and interactive connection with community.
3. Deepened public engagement.
4. A shared social responsibility for the investment of education facilities and services.
5. Creation of corporate and community partners to promote a connected responsibility for education and allow students to be partners in change.

(Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008)

The work of *Raising Achievement, Transforming Learning* (RATL) provides specific insights into the aspects needed to establish the *Fourth Way of Change*. The RATL network in England is comprised of 300 low-performing, secondary schools. The network “articulated short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies that education leaders could deploy to meet their goals” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008, p. 58). RATL increased achievements in more than 200 of the schools at twice the average annual rate by establishing “a system of mentor schools, peer coaching, and reciprocal observation and feedback, as well as a careful study of data to inform but not to drive instruction” (p. 58).

Furthermore, Hargreaves and Shirley (2008) identify principles of professionalism that promote sustainable change. These include high-quality teachers
who experience supportive working conditions, are given adequate pay, and are given professional autonomy. Another aspect of professionalism is the support of teachers unions that advocate for systemic change that directly and positively impact students. Additionally, teachers should participate in a learning environment that establishes trust and responsibility amongst all teachers.

According to Hargreaves and Shirley (2008), for change to occur and sustain, there needs to be the following catalysts for coherence:

1. Sustainable leadership.
2. Networks of mutual learning (such as the RATL project).
3. Professional responsibility before accountability.
4. Building from the bottom, steering from the top.

It is well recognized that the characteristic of instructional leadership and school successes are connected (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Spanneut, 2010). The Fourth Way of Change and instructional leadership are established by putting different types and groups of people together to work competently and efficiently for a universal purpose that elevates all stakeholders and drives them on the similar course (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008). Given this understanding of change and leadership, building level administrators realize that maximizing instructional potentials and outcomes, teacher leadership (along with collaborative culture among teams) needs to be utilized (DuFour et al., 2006; Spanneut, 2010). Spanneut states that in order for a building level administrator to create a professional learning community, there needs to be a culture of open sharing, skill development, and resource identification. A
conversation between the building level administrator and teachers must occur in a manner that builds trust, and provides time for collegial conversations that form mutual understanding among teachers. The building level administrator sets the tone for the communication and collaboration of colleagues. As building level administrators create a collaborative culture, they foster teacher leadership and understand the different strengths and leadership styles of teachers (Spanneut, 2010).

Building level administrators working with both veteran and novice staff members can require different opportunities for professional development and support—especially when seeking to retain new staff members over time. Watkins (2005) recommends three strategies that will provide the foundation for retaining new staff. These strategies include:

1. Strong mentoring and coaching.
2. Action research.
3. Study groups.

Some mentor programs are based on the mentor providing directives and making sure the novice teacher meets the expectations of the building level administrator and district (Danielson, 2008; Fullan, 2001; Watkins, 2005). The mentor relationship should be mutual in that the mentor or coach works with the novice teacher (Danielson, 2008; Fullan, 2001; Watkins, 2005). The mentor and coach approach allows both teachers to discover solutions and reflect upon teaching in a non-threatening manner. The building level administrator must then provide time for the mentor to observe the novice teacher
classroom, while providing the novice teacher access to the mentor’s classroom for observation (Watkins, 2005; Zepeda, 2003).

For action research to become a school norm, the building level administrator must create an environment where the balance between autonomy and contributions to the greater school community are encouraged through professional exploration (Danielson, 2002; Watkins, 2005).

Watkins (2005) recommends that building level administrators show a connection and passion for issues and problems that staff members experience. Just as important, a building level administrator should support staff that are participating in action research and study groups; therefore, recognize and utilize outcomes resulting from research or study groups (Fullan, 2001; Watkins, 2005). The National Forum on Education Statistics (2004) suggests that good data, which is supported by data-based decision making, is an integral part of teaching and learning.

**Data-based Decision Making**

The *Illinois Professional School Leader Standards* refer to the use of data as an indicator of professional responsibility.

Standard 1—Facilitating a Vision of Learning: Performance Indicator 1N

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that data related to student learning are used to develop the school mission and goals. The application of data in decision making promotes a level of professionalism that fosters confidence and trust in decisions and the initiatives that support them. (Armstrong & Anthes, 2001; Messelt, 2004; Park & Datnow, 2009)
According to Poynton and Carey (2006), “Standards based educational reform seeks to improve education through (a) clear specification of desired student outcomes, (b) the measurement of student performance, and (c) the evaluation of the impact of educational practices on actual student performance” (p. 121). Furthermore, Poynton and Carey say that using data in school counseling is not a new practice. Typically, school counselors have utilized tools for identifying interventions using needs assessments and evaluating each intervention and program using evaluation data. The IDEAS model is recommended. IDEAS represent:

I—Identify a question
D—Develop a plan
E—Execute plan
A—Answer question
S—Share results

This model is easily folded into the expectations of RtI and includes a problem-solving process that provides a structure for implementing student interventions.

Given NCLB expectations, using a data-driven, decision making model, schools can continue improving student achievements (Messelt, 2004; Park & Datnow, 2009). According to Messelt (2004), data are a strong tool for districts. Messelt identified that school districts can improve achievement by using data to analyze performance. School districts can also do the following:

1. Use data to identify areas of professional development and curriculum development that need support and improvement.
2. Disaggregate data. By doing this, districts can find where problems are occurring, which can provide insight into areas of concern that may not have been previously visible.

3. Use data. Teachers can share best practices across and within schools by recognizing areas of strengths and weaknesses and learning from each other.

4. Communicate with all stakeholders using data. This can allow for specific information to be shared that provides insight into strength areas while acknowledging concern areas. This can motivate students and provide parents with the information they need to be active participants.

Park and Datnow (2009) identified key points that can assist a building level administrator in effectively establishing a learning environment for all educators:

1. Create a culture that uses data.

2. Create a culture of continuous investigation and learning.

3. Create clear norms and expectations regarding the use of data.

4. Have district and school administrators use data-driven, decision-making as standard practice.

5. Build a culture of trust around the data use.

6. Provide data-driven, decision-making professional development.

The National Forum on Education Statistics (2004) states, “A culture of quality data is the belief that good data are an integral part of teaching, learning, and managing the school enterprise” (p. 3). In the end, the building level administrator is responsible for these data and ensuring that they are properly stored and reported (National Forum on
Education Statistics). It is also important that educators have the necessary tools and professional development opportunities to learn the necessary skills to use data on a daily basis to inform instruction reported (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2004).

**Professional Development**

Effective continuous learning requires not only that individuals and organizations focus, but that they focus on the correct things such as teaching, curriculum, assessment, and leadership (Reeves, 2010). “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn” (Senge, 2006, p. 129). A school district has the challenge of providing the professional development needed to promote growth in the areas that are valued. According to Senge, the foundation of personal mastery is the ability to do something well and to be proficient, but it reaches beyond this to a place where an individual’s work is creative and becomes part of a person’s life. This requires reflection on what is important and to understand the current reality. The ability to understand *what is* and then take action to make changes as needed is integral to personal mastery.

Understanding how others learn does not provide instructions on how to make someone learn. Making someone learn or establishing external expectations for learning does not effectively create life-long learners. When looking at a school, the building level administrator needs to create a culture that values learning and ensure that it happens on a continuous basis. Senge (2006) says, an organization can promote personal mastery by valuing personal growth and providing job-embedded learning opportunities that are connected to what is valued explicitly and implicitly.
Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) state that skilled teaching is essential for students to master the multifaceted critical skills needed for the 21st Century, education systems must offer more effective professional learning than has traditionally been available. This is accomplished by providing professional development that can promote the necessary growth for teachers. Darling-Hammond and Richardson identified three areas that professional development opportunities should be based upon in order to build a valuable learning opportunity for certified faculty.

First, content should be centered on student learning. The most useful professional development emphasizes active teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection rather than abstract discussions (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Professional development needs to focus on student learning and help teachers develop pedagogical skills to teach a specific kind of content that has strong positive effects on practice (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2007; Wenglinsky, 2000).

Second, context should be connected to school improvement. Professional development is more effective when schools approach it not in isolation, as in the traditional one-shot workshop, but rather as a coherent part of a school reform effort. To avoid inequalities among what teachers learn in professional development opportunities and what they can actually implement in their classrooms, schools should seamlessly link to curriculum, assessment, standards, and professional learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Third, the design should be active, as well as be sustained learning. Professional development learning opportunities allow teachers to transform their teaching and not
simply layer new strategies on top of the old (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005). Teaching practices and student learning are more likely to be transformed by professional development that is sustained, coherent, and intense (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Supovitz, Mayer, & Kahle, 2000; Weiss & Pasley, 2006). Time is not the only variable that matters it is often the prerequisite for effective learning. Two evaluations found that teachers who had 80 hours or more of professional development in inquiry-based science during the previous year were significantly more likely to use this type of science instruction than teachers who had fewer hours (Corcorna, McVay, & Riordan, 2003; Supovitz & Turner, 2000). Increased student achievement was associated with a teacher’s more intense participation in the professional development and a student’s greater exposure to the resulting reform-based instruction (Banilower, 2002).

DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2008) recommend that a shift from traditional professional development to a learning community that provides the following is required to make the paradigm shift to professional learning communities (PLC) and impact student achievement:

2. Learning that is ongoing and happens as part of the routine work practice.
3. Team-based action research.
4. Learning by doing.
5. Learning collectively by working together.
6. Assess impact on the basis of evidence of improved student learning.
7. Sustained commitment to limited focused initiatives. (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 49)

These attributes constitute the new paradigm for professional development through professional learning communities. According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), “In the US, efforts to develop Professional Learning communities bump up against individualistic norms and school structures that sharply limit time for collaborative planning” (p. 49). Furthermore, research supports professional development that:

1. Deepens teachers’ knowledge of content and how to teach it to students.
2. Helps teachers understand how students learn specific content.
3. Provides opportunities for active, hands-on learning.
4. Enables teachers to acquire new knowledge, apply it to practice, and reflect on the results with colleagues.
5. Links curriculum, assessment, and standards to professional learning.
6. Is collaborative and collegial.
7. Is intensive and sustained over time. (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 49)

Teachers that participate in a PLC openly discuss the lessons, students, and outcomes data with their colleagues, based in inquiry with the purpose of informing practice and improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Mahon (2003) supports the practice of peer observation, study groups, and analysis of student work and student data. Teachers who do not receive professional development
can experience burnout and without the support of professional development initiatives, do not become part of the culture and are abandoned (Mahon, 2003). Ultimately, students make gains when teachers are empowered to learn and grow with each other. As indicated by Mahon, whole-faculty study groups are a catalyst for continuous, job-embedded professional development, which establishes a culture that allows building level administrators to support their teachers.

Professional development is a learning opportunity for adults and is most effective when a safe and positive environment is created where cooperation, communication, and the examination of practice can occur (Danielson, 2002; Fullan, 2006; Reeves, 2010). “Professional development that is embedded within a system-change perspective that is focused on the issues of adoption and implementation will help to create an environment that can help sustain a given practice” (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007, p. 633). Another aspect of implementing change such as RtI is a building level administrator’s ability to build capacity, which is connected directly to useful professional development along with effective implementation strategies.

Building level administrators who are instructional leaders build capacity by modeling best practices and providing continuous professional development (Park & Datnow, 2009; Schmoker, 2006). For leaders, the critical pillars of change are purpose, vision, ownership, capacity, and support (Spady & Schwahn, 2010). According to Spady and Schwahn, “capacity is having the knowledge, skills, abilities, and tools to get the job done well—with expertise, facility, and quality” (p. 5). Along with building capacity, a building level administer can encourage and create positive will among staff members by
providing other critical pillars, and by providing purpose, vision, ownership, and support (Israel & Kasper, 2004; Popham, 2008; Spady & Schwahn, 2010). According to Popham (2008), another aspect of capacity building is establishing Teacher Learning Communities (TLC). Popham says a TLC, is made up of teachers (based on grade level or content area) working together with a common goal to build their own “individual capacities” (p. 117). This requires a building level administrator to provide up to date and pertinent information and resources (DuFour et al., 2006).

**Outputs**

In the spirit of NCLB, teacher performance is directly linked to student achievement. As districts revamp their school improvements plans and create goals correlated with NCLB, teachers will increasingly be evaluated according to these expectations.

There are two types of assessments used to determine if students have learned: *formative assessments* to test student understanding in smaller chunks; and *summative assessments*, such as the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), to test general knowledge over time. The ISAT measures individual student achievement based on the Illinois Learning Standards. There are expectations that students demonstrate achievements on summative assessments for NCLB because such achievement requires that a certain percentage of students *meets* or *exceeds* standards in reading and math based on the yearly state targets (see Table 1). Formative assessments are utilized to inform instruction and to assess student understanding after a unit of instruction.
Student Outcomes

The authorization of NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) have led to a narrow focus on student outcomes. These outcomes are frequently referred to as student achievement, which are reflected by a final score on an evaluation, assessment, or test. The assessment may be given for classroom, district, or state data collection, but for purposes of this research study, the focus will be on the state assessment as this is the outcome data used to determine if a school district has Met AYP. The NCLB is “an accountability-focused school improvement law where individual schools were to be evaluated on the basis of student scores on state-selected standardized achievement tests” (Popham, 2008, p. 123).

Table 1

Reading and Math Score Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reading and Math Score Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of NCLB’s main objectives is to strengthen accountability expectations for states, districts, and schools for the education of all students (Norlin, 2005; Richards & Martin, 2005). The AYP yearly goal requires that each state reveal how the achievement gap will be closed and ensure that all students, even disadvantaged students, attain academic proficiency (Norlin, 2005; Richards & Martin, 2005). “NCLB obligated each state to implement a plan to arrive at a single, statewide accountability system by the beginning of 2003 that would determine whether its districts and schools are making AYP toward academic standards” [34 CFR 200.12] (Norlin, 2005, p. 19).

The alignment of IDEA with NCLB was initiated so that students with disabilities benefit from NCLB’s efforts and special education develops into the service (or resources) a student requires not a specific program or classroom (Richards & Martin, 2005). The reauthorization centered on increasing student results and potential for students with disabilities.

Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible. Section 601(c)(5)(A).

Providing increased exposure and increased expectations within the regular curriculum is intended to assist students with disabilities to reach goals along with more demanding expectations created for all students under NCLB, 2001 (Richards & Martin, 2005, p. ix).
Since 1997, Illinois has had learning standards in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical development and health, fine arts, and foreign languages (advisory standards). On June 24, 2010, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted newly written and more demanding learning standards for English language arts and mathematics to effectively prepare students for college and the labor force, which will be fully implemented in the school year 2014-2015. All students, except for English Language Learners (ELL) and students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are assessed in the areas of English language arts (reading and writing), mathematics, and science by taking the ISAT. The ISAT data are shared on district, school, and student levels on the Interactive Illinois Report Card, which indicates if a school has Met AYP requirements.

Each year, school districts are required by NCLB legislation and Illinois School Code (Section 14C-3) to give an English Language Proficiency test (Title III) and determine academic progress (Title I) in the areas of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills for every child of limited English-speaking ability for all grades starting in Kindergarten. English Language Learners participate in the ACCESS test, which is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test intended to determine an English language learners' social and academic ability in English. It measure social and instructional English in addition to the language connected with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school setting throughout the four language areas.
The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) is the measure the state of Illinois uses to measures the knowledge of students with most significant cognitive disabilities (usually correlated with an IQ below 55). It is a performance-based assessment that uses on-demand tasks that are aligned with the *Illinois Learning Standards*.

Originally in 1999, schools in the state of Illinois have been taking the ISAT in grades 3, 5, and 8 for reading and mathematics; but with the correlation between NCLB and IDEA there is more accountability at the district and school levels for academic achievement on standardized tests such as the ISAT. This has led to an increase in the number of times students in Illinois take the ISAT. As of 2005, students in grades 3-8 take the ISAT for reading and mathematics each year. This increase in accountability has brought the responsibility for academic achievement on the ISAT throughout the elementary grades.

The “unaccountable existence for teachers” is over; the field of education is universally feeling the effects of accountability” (Moody & Stricker, 2009, p. 9). Each classroom is now being scrutinized and assessed with the expectation of change and student success (Moody & Stricker, 2009; Reeves, 2010). A building level administrator that has students who meet expectations, such as AYP expectations, creates an environment that builds positive will and capacity of his or her staff, along with an understanding of the complexities of school relationships, while knowing that change is a process not a static event (Israel & Kasper, 2004; Senge, 2006). According to White and Smith (2010),
School improvement has taken many twists and turns to increase student achievement since the early 1980s by focusing on curriculum and classroom interventions, the impact of leadership on teaching and learning, the school as the unit of improvement, and a systems approach that acknowledges the impact of central office actions on school improvements as well as school-level efforts on the central office. (p. 22)

The focus on student outcomes starts with the classroom teacher (Moody & Stricker, 2009; White & Smith, 2010). “Effective instructional design and implementation founded upon content standards will prove to be the great equalizer that standards alone have not achieved” (Moody & Stricker, 2009, p. 8). Moody and Stricker also state that teaching is an art and science and reflected in the following three stage process of Strategic Design:

- Stage 1. To take state standards and determine the critical skills and information, then group them within a content area and across disciplines.
- Stage 2. To ensure proficiency of content standards the alignment of assessments are needed.
- Stage 3. To ensure student achievement daily lessons must be structured to provide essential skills and information.

To focus on student outcomes based on state standards, and relate that with the expectations of AYP, a building level administrator will need to establish a culture that builds on and supplements the expectations of state standards, and uses other means to determine student success (Danielson, 2002; Moody & Stricker, 2009).
As previously stated, there are two types of assessments used in schools for outcome data: formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are used during the learning process to develop instructional practice and to give feedback to students (Fisher & Fry, 2007; Popham, 2008; White & Smith, 2010). Fisher and Fry (2007) believe that closing the achievement gap requires that teachers focus on instruction and regularly check for reading comprehension so that students are learning, thinking, and understanding, comprehending, and processing at high levels. Summative assessments are given at a specific time of year or at the close of the school year. It is generally utilized to assess the efficacy of instructional programs and services. The objective of a summative assessment is to judge student competency at the end of a unit or course (Fisher & Fry, 2007; Popham, 2008; White & Smith, 2010).

Reeves (2010) found that successful schools have a plan that is “measurable” and has a “significant effect” on student growth in the academic areas of reading and mathematics in elementary, middle, and high school (p. 34). The nine characteristics of successful plans include:

1. Comprehensive needs assessment. Building level administrators make decisions that are linked to student needs by effectively using time, assigning staff, and distributing resources.
2. Inquiry process. Student outcomes are connected to teaching and building level administrator practices.
3. Prioritization. Less than six main objectives are clearly formed.
4. Specificity. Each grade level determines objectives for the grade as whole and for individual students that are connected to the educational expectations.

5. Measurability. “The learning community could make an objective statement about the progress or lack of it in their school with regard to the achievement of goals” (Reeves, 2010, p. 35).

6. Achievability. Establish goals that are demanding and achievable (within three to five years).

7. Relevance. Goals are directly connected to the needs-assessment and correspond to growth areas.

8. Timelines. Are specific and aligned with assessments (formative and summative).


According to Moody and Stricker (2009), “a guide for teachers, cannot and will never, be able to ensure student achievement for all students; classroom instruction still remains the most direct and most effective way to impact student achievement” (p. 4).

In summary, a building level administrator has to execute mandated initiatives such as RtI with integrity as well as reach the desired outcome of student achievement by meeting the expectations of AYP each year. With the end in mind the building level administrator must provide the necessary professional development for staff members and financial resources to purchase scientifically, researched-based curriculum to reach the preferred student outcome.
Given these essentials, a successful building level administrator recognizes the significance and function of acquiring knowledge; he or she establishes and reinforces the behaviors needed for a learning organization (Fullan, 2001; Reeves, 2010; White & Smith, 2010). As stated by Fullan (2006), the foundation of internal accountability is needed for external accountability to influence outcomes such as student achievement. A building level administrator creates an environment where “professional development is embedded in the norms and values of the school, and in the priorities for recognition and funding” (Danielson, 2002, p. 9).

Finally, for purpose of this research, building level administrators are making decisions through a lens of student learning (Reeves, 2010). As with all decisions, when student learning is a priority the building level administrator makes decisions related to school operations, which generate expenditures (Danielson, 2002). Since all these decisions are considered part of the budgetary system these choices must be connected to professional development and curriculum that positively affect student outcome data (Danielson, 2002; Fullan, 2006; Reeves, 2010).
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The concept of systems thinking and will and capacity provide the framework to understand the complexities of change within schools as the RtI model was implemented within the expectations of the current laws of the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (IDEA). The overall goal was to understand how building level administrators meet staff needs and budget implications that impact teaching and learning in order to meet the expectations of the law.

The purpose of this study was to investigate three factors regarding the implementation of the RtI model from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year. First, the study revealed what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Second, the study investigated the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Finally this study examined how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. School district administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Changes mandated by NCLB and IDEA are
reflective of federal legislative influences on how students are provided a United States education.

**Research Questions**

1. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
2. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
3. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
4. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?
5. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?
6. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

**Research Method**

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative research method was used due to the open-ended nature of the research questions. These questions require data-rich information from the people on the ground participating in the implementation of a new initiative. The use of open-ended questions allowed the researcher to gather and
understand the perspective of the participants and the impact of the change in practice (Patton, 1987). The ability to create meaning from direct quotes, explanations, and ideas provided the depth of understanding related to the change of practice of the RtI model. This researcher used a qualitative method to understand initiatives and circumstances as a whole (Patton, 1987).

According to Glense (2006), qualitative researchers seek to understand and interpret how various participants in a social setting construct the world around them. This researcher found patterns that emerged from the respondent’s answers to the questionnaire. Also, Glense says that qualitative researchers utilize an assortment of methods to strengthen the trustworthiness of these data, one of which is triangulation. This researcher utilized triangulation using questionnaire data and comparing it to current legislation and public records to determine if expectations of the current legislation were occurring and producing the desired result of improved student academic achievement on a summative assessment.

Another piece of data triangulation was the use of information provided by the Interactive Illinois Report Card located on the Illinois State Board of Education website for each school in the state of Illinois. This resource provided test results from Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) given at each Illinois school in the spring. The site also includes school improvement plan information (which is password protected), and district demographic information. The report card has numerous categories of data including student and staff demographics, test results, and Average Yearly Progress
(AYP) information, which is directly related to the expectations of NCLB and part of the data collected for this research study.

The federal legislation used for this research included NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004). These two key pieces of legislation are directly related to the accountability expectations and its relationship to the RtI model. These data were organized into themes based on key words and phrases, along with specific programming and resources as appropriate. The overall objective of this study was to look at the relationships within a system and determine how systemic change was supported and implemented from the perspective of the building level administrator (Janesick, 2004).

The connections between NCLB and IDEA have increased the expectations and requirements on school districts. This connection creates a clearer picture of what school districts are doing to improve teaching and learning, along with assessing student data. Included in this research were three key areas in both pieces of legislation:

1. Adequate yearly progress and accountability.
2. Assessments.
3. Professional development.

This researcher attempted to gather meaning from the views of the participants. There are two main qualities consistent in this design: (a) a continuous assessment of data with emerging themes or categories, and (b) a representation of various groups to make note of the large variety of similarities and differences of data. From these data, emerging themes and patterns in the areas of professional development, student population demographics, and the outcome data from ISAT were utilized (Miles &
Huberman, 1994). The questionnaires were color coded into two categories: (1) schools that Met AYP, and (2) schools that did not make AYP. The questionnaire for schools that Met AYP was printed on blue paper and the questionnaire for schools that Did Not Meet AYP was printed on green paper. A minimum of 20 questionnaires were needed for the purpose of this research with at least seven in each category. The need for a large group of participants was met by choosing school districts in northern Illinois.

Site Selection

School districts throughout the state of Illinois are embarking on the implementation of the RtI model since expectations from new NCLB legislation and IDEA have been required. Even though this researcher did not want to exclude any potential elementary building level administrators from this research, the member districts of North Shore Special Education District (NSSED) in Lake County, Illinois was not be included because this researcher works in a district that is part of NSSED membership.

The chosen school districts meet the following criteria:

- **Location.** The location is DuPage, McHenry, and Will County in Illinois.

- **Schools.** Elementary schools that have different grade level configurations such as P-K, K-2, K-5, 1-5, 3-8 and K-8 buildings; but not school with 4-5, 5-6, 6-8, 7-8 grade configurations, high schools (9-12), or unit districts (P-12, K-12). The researcher obtained the name of each elementary building level administrators and the address of each school by utilizing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (see Appendix A).
• *Administrators.* Elementary building level administrators who have led their current building for at least three or more years. A total number 168 building level administrators will be sent a questionnaire.

• *Data.* Available data from the *Interactive Illinois Report Card* found on the *Illinois State Board of Education* website (http://www.isbe.net/). Once the researcher determines which schools Met AYP and those that Did Not Meet AYP, questionnaires will be sent be without any information that reveals the specific school district. However, the researcher will send a questionnaire on blue paper to schools that have Met AYP and schools that Did Not Meet AYP will be sent a questionnaire on green paper.

• *Diversity.* A diverse demographic population from a large number of schools. At times, choosing a site that has homogeneous characteristics is needed, but the implementation of the RtI model is expected in all schools for all students regardless of the number of students, student demographics, or available resources in a school district.

**Study Participants**

The implementation of the RtI model has an impact on the entire system of a school district. But when looking through the lens of leadership, the building level administrator is the leader on the ground. The building level administrator not only has to support his or her certified staff learning, but also has to mediate the impact on the budget for professional development and curriculum. In addition, each administrator must ensure his or her own learning for the implementation of the RtI model.
The building level administrator has a leadership role that provides a global view of the change process that provides insights on all aspects of RtI implementation that includes professional development, curriculum, student data, and finances. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a multiple-case sampling adds confidence to findings; therefore, questionnaires were sent to elementary building level administrators with at least three years of experience in his or her current building. A statement was included in the cover letter that clearly stated the expectation of three years of experience in his or her current building to ensure that an elementary building level administrator with less than three years experience in his or her building did not fill out the questionnaire. A building level administrator needs time to build the will and capacity of teachers and cultural patterns and traditions evolve over time, so the expectation of three years provides time for the change process to take place (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Fullan, 2006).

**Questionnaire Design**

The RtI model is a 3-tiered model that has an impact on a school system and is supported by federal law, which requires school districts to implement interventions and use outcome based data. To meet this challenge, a school district must provide professional development opportunities for administrators and certified school personnel. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (see Appendix C): Section 1 has two parts (A and B); Section 2 has three parts (A, B, and C).

- In Section 1, Part A and B questions were used to organize these data into demographic categories. Part A has four questions based on the district and the building level administrator’s school structure. Part B has seven questions
that directly pertain to the building level administrator who completed the questionnaire. These questions included demographic information and the administrator’s experiences in education and administration.

- Section 2, Part A required the building level administrator to reflect on professional development as it applies to the implementation of the RtI model. There were the two sets of questions: three that pertained to administrators; three that pertained to certified faculty.

- Section 2, Part B questions focused on the Early Intervening funds to discover the elementary building level administrator’s knowledge and use of these funds as they pertain to professional development and curriculum for the implementation of the RtI model.

A major part of the RtI model is student data for progress monitoring, which is covered in Section 2, Part C of the questionnaire. One of the questions required the building level administrator to review the progress monitoring data that supports the decisions made throughout the three tiers of the RtI model for interventions. The other question required the building level administrator to document the summative student data used to assess progress and achievement.

**Data Collection**

The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter (see Appendix B). The first part included introductory information about the researcher, research supervisor, and the purpose of the research study. The final part explained the process of the research study and expectations for completing the included questionnaire, along with the return
process. It also included how study participants confidentiality are protected if they choose to participate. The letter concluded with the researcher and supervisor’s contact information. As a convenience, a self-addressed, stamped envelope was included for participants to use when returning the questionnaires. The cover letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed stamped envelope were sent to every elementary building level administrator whose district was located in DuPage, McHenry, and Will County Illinois for schools that Met AYP and for schools that Did Not Meet AYP. To honor the promise of anonymity, there was no identifying information included in the cover letter, questionnaire, or on the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A second mailing of the same questionnaire and a new cover letter (see Appendix D) was sent four weeks after the first initial mailing to all elementary building level administrators whose district is located in DuPage, McHenry, and Will County Illinois outside Lake County, Illinois where NSSED special education cooperative that received one from the original mailing. This mailing was sent as a reminder to those who had not yet mailed in their questionnaire (a questionnaire on blue paper was sent to schools that have Met AYP and schools that Did Not Meet AYP were sent a questionnaire on green paper), or it served as a replacement for lost or misplaced questionnaires, if needed. Since this was the second mailing, the researcher included a statement of thanks to acknowledge those administrators who had already completed the questionnaire.

A final reminder was sent in the form of a post card (see Appendix E) that briefly reviewed the content previously sent and provided another opportunity to thank participants for their contributions to the research study.
All self-addressed, stamped envelopes had a return address that was sent to a post office mailbox rented by the researcher strictly for the purposes of this research. Upon retrieval, all materials were kept in a locked file cabinet in the office of the researcher. After completion of the study, all questionnaires will be shredded.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher used cross-case analysis for multiple individual cases of building level administrators responses. There were two purposes for using cross-case analysis. The first objective was generalizability, where the researcher hoped to apply these data across similar situations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The next objective was to glean multilayered understanding and explanation. For instance, the researcher determined:

1. Where particular sets of experiences were prone to happen or not happen.
2. What conditions in a particular hypothesis were minimized and maximized.
3. The negative cases that could support a theory created by examining the similarities and differences across cases. (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Basically, the purpose of analysis, “was the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what was there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units” (Patton, 1987, p. 144).

There are two different but fundamental purposes for cross-case analysis. They were: *variable-oriented* analysis and *case-oriented* analysis. When using variable-oriented analysis, the researcher chose a variable and then determined the correlation between the variable and an outcome (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Case-oriented analysis was determined by looking at an individual case and the variables, which can complicate
matters as the researcher may need more information to glean effective data from a single case (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Along with these two purposes for cross-case analysis, there are three strategies that could have been applied:

1. First, the replication strategy, which is a theoretical structure that includes focusing thoroughly on one case and then determining if the other cases follow the same pattern (Tellis, 1997). Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that researchers use cross-case comparison by creating, “types or families,” which after inspection, determine if cases, “fall into clusters or groups that share certain patterns” (p. 174).

2. Second, the variable-oriented strategy utilizes pattern clarification; the researcher identifies a key variable and the pattern emerges within each case (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3. Third, there is a mixed strategy where case-oriented and variable-oriented methods are joined together. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this as stacking comparable cases. This is accomplished by:

   - displaying each case using a set variable (more or less), allowing for change as it emerges
   - using matrices and other displays to explore each case fully
   - using systemic comparison. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “After each case is well understood (the cross-cutting variables may evolve and change during this process),” the researcher will “stack the case-level
displays in a meta-matrix, which is then further condensed, permitting systematic comparison” (p. 176).

The decision to use any of these strategies was not to choose the best strategy, but to purposefully choose throughout analysis, changing and combining as necessary (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There are different methods for cross-case analysis, along with supplementary methods that demonstrate how these strategies work and understanding that analysis is a process that evolves (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the initial step to analysis is the use of a partially ordered meta-matrix. This process requires the researcher to organize large amounts of data from each case into common codes, common displays of coded data segments, and reporting formats (Miles & Huberman, 1994). “Meta-matrices are master charts assembling descriptive data from each of several cases in standard format” (p. 178). The most basic form is an arrangement—a stacking-up of each case. Next, the researcher will often divide these data more and then group data so that the contrasts among the cases become more apparent. Finally, these data will be conceptually-ordered, case-ordered, or time-ordered displays.

Conceptually-ordered displays are based on concepts or variables and can be used for a single case or multicases (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher can, without naming specific cases, concentrate on the content of metamatrix. The content-analytic summary table can assist the researcher in determining how many cases have common characteristics, and indicate the number of cases in parenthesis within the display. This supports the analysis process when making contrasts and comparisons. At times, these
data can remain too complex and the researcher can subtract a variable from the data set to reveal a single element or characteristic that is related to the researchers research focus (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher “may have a general idea in advance about the properties of some major variable, but the variables do not usually come clear until real case data have been explored in some depth” (p. 184). A cross-case construct table that includes single case data with multiple variables assists a researcher in understanding the core concept. Another approach that assists a researcher in understanding the process across multiple cases is the decision tree model. A researcher may present individual cases for comparative purposes or the researcher can show a choice (yes or no) across several cases. This approach provides the researcher with information that will reveal ways to develop practice or policy.

Case-ordered displays include:

1. Case-ordered descriptive metamatrix.
2. Two-variable, case-oriented matrix.
3. Contrast table.
4. Utilizing a scatterplot.

The descriptive metamatrix is another tool to document patterns and themes along with comparing and contrasting a variable across multiple cases for specific variable of interests (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The two-variable matrix allows a researcher to use two major variables to assess the connection between the two variables—especially if the variables are considered to be related but the cause and effect among the variables is not clearly understood. The contrast table is a comparison tool for comparison between
variables. The researcher takes a couple of ideal cases “where the variable is present in high or low forms, and contrasts several attributes of the basic variable” (Miles & Huberman, p. 194). The scatterplot takes a different view of the data as the display represents all the cases revealing two or more characteristics of interests that are thought to be related. Once again, the researcher can determine patterns, themes, and reveal relationship between the variables.

Time-ordered displays, “take in account the temporal sequence of the data” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 200). These include:

1. Time-ordered, metamatrix—Data are ordered by time period in columns in a random order, such as alphabetical.
2. Scatterplots over time—Data that occurs in two different time periods is displayed with similar variables.
3. Composite sequence analysis—displays a number of cases that reveal data from narratives and stories without breaking down important series or meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Overall, the use of cross-case analysis met the objective for generalizability and multilayered understanding and explanation. “Looking across cases deepens our understanding and can increase generalizability” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 204). This process requires the researcher to look deeper into these data to reveal the patterns and themes of the variables.

According to Patten (1987), “Building checks and balances into a design through multiple data collection strategies is called triangulation” (p. 60). The methodology of
triangulation is the application of multiple data collection approaches to study a single problem or program (Glense, 2006; Patton, 1987). For research purposes, a questionnaire was sent to building level administrators while the researcher reviewed and applied current legislation that had been the catalyst of a new initiative, RtI model, and reviewed the public record of the school report card that contained the data that revealed if the expectations of the legislation had been met.

The outcome data evolved as questionnaires were received. The suggested data collection tools created were used to organize data and note themes and key words and phrases while the demographic information and student data were part of organizing these data for purposes of grouping similarities. Finally, these data were used to make connections, which the researcher moved from organizing data to gathering meaning (Glense, 2006). The frequency of key words and phrases, and similarities of data such as programs and resources used to implement the RtI model provided thematic analysis. Glense says, “Thematic analysis is the process of coding and then segregating the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis and description” (p. 147).

**Content Validity and Reliability**

On February 1, 2010 a pilot group, who were currently completing coursework in the area of Administration and Supervision, completed the questionnaire. Piloting the questionnaire among administrators in the field of education tested content validity and reliability. The purpose of conducting a pilot was not to gain data but to gain insight on the effectiveness of the demographics and questions given on the questionnaire (Glense, 2006). Having multiple people answer questions provided insight into the content
validity of the questions. To gain the needed data for this research study, participants need to give thorough and complete answers. This researcher was able to determine if the questions needed more description or supportive information to glean useful data for the intended research.

After completing the pilot, this researcher made four changes to the questionnaire:

1. In Section 1, Part A, question 1, the term *consolidated* was changed to *unit* to accurately reflect a commonly used descriptor used by educators.

2. The way the questions were grouped in Section 2, Part A were changed so that all questions referencing administrators are together while all questions referencing certified faculty are together. This way, the building level administrator may focus on one group of stakeholders at a time.

3. The contents of Section 2, Parts B and C were exchanged so that building administrators first respond to the systemic change of professional development and financial implications prior to addressing the outcome of student data.

4. An additional question was added to Section 2, Part C—Student Data. The question requires the building administrator to assess if there has been a positive outcome, as indicated from the student data, as a result of the implementation of the RtI model.

**Limitations**

In all research studies there are limitations and they need to be acknowledged (Glense, 2006). When a researcher recognizes the limitations of the research study the
reader is better able to understand and depend on the truthfulness of the research (Glense, 2006). Limitations of this research study include:

1. The study participant’s writing skills when completing the questionnaire. For example, if an administrator does use complete sentences it may be difficult to determine what information was being provided.

2. The research group consists of elementary schools with different grade configurations such as P-K, K-2, K-5, 1-5, 3-8 and K-8 but not schools with 4-5, 5-6, 6-8, 7-8 grade configurations, high schools (9-12), or unit districts (P-12, K-12).

3. Other administrators and teachers were not directly included.

4. The questionnaire was the only direct connection to the research group.

5. A participant may have his or her own bias about the topic or self-reporting.


In spite of these limitations, this researcher increased the validity of this research study by using triangulation—which included the questionnaire, legislation, and the Interactive Illinois Report Card. These data were also supported by the use of a thorough dense narrative of the findings, as provided by participants (Creswell, 2003).

**Bias Minimization**

As indicated by Glense (2006), trustworthiness of research is improved by clarification of researcher bias. Currently the researcher works in a school district that is located in Lake County, Illinois, so the researcher chose to conduct this study outside of Lake County by choosing Illinois counties of DuPage, McHenry, and Will. As
previously stated in Chapter I, this researcher used a journal to consider and acknowledge reactions, thoughts, and divergent ideas as they occur. The site selected was chosen outside this researcher’s work area to decrease personal reactions and to ensure that any participation in the RtI model implementation is not reflected in this research. As stated by Miles and Huberman (1994), “ethical issues are floating constantly beneath the surface of what we do” (p. 289), which requires this researcher to consistently use a journal to consider and acknowledge reactions, thoughts, and divergent ideas.

The research instrument of journaling can assist a researcher in the process of defining the research (Janesick, 2004). Janesick stated, “The act of journal writing may be incorporated into the research process to provide a data set of the researcher’s reflections on the research act” (p. 143). While the research is in progress, using journaling (or memo writing) assists researchers in refining ideas, beliefs, and their own responses to the research (Glense, 2006; Janesick, 2004). Janesick also stated that through the use of journaling:

1. The researcher’s role can be clarified by reflection and writing.
2. The qualitative researcher can begin to know and understand his or her way of thinking (ideas and patterns) while clarifying the work.
3. Study participants’ answers and inputs can be clarified.

As a tool, a journal can focus the study, set the foundation for analysis and interpretation, and assist the researcher in documenting thoughts, feelings, and facts (Janesick, 2004). For this researcher, the journal was utilized throughout the study to
track ideas and information. It will also provide a venue for noting thoughts as data are received.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations cannot be forgotten even after the completion of the Institutional Review Board (Glense, 2006). One consideration is the worthiness of the project, which requires the researcher to take into account the implication of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This researcher conducted a study on a topic that is not only timely, but also impacts all school districts in the state of Illinois. According to Miles and Huberman, the ethical framework that best applies to this research study reflects the attributes of the *Deontological framework*, which includes:

- **Informed Consent.** Informed consent will be indicated by the study participant completing and returning the questionnaire. Upon receipt of the questionnaire, a study participant can opt out of the research study by choosing not to complete the questionnaire.

- **Reciprocity.** The benefits of research are different for the researcher and the study participant. The researcher may receive payment, enjoyment from the work, and a final product such as a dissertation or journal article. The study participant may feel as though someone has heard him or her, and may acquire new knowledge or insight.

- **Avoidance of Harm (Wrong).** This research study does not require direct interaction with participants due to the nature of the questions. Avoidance of harm is met by providing an anonymous questionnaire.
• **Confidentiality.** Confidentiality is accomplished by using anonymous questionnaires along with a temporary post office mailbox for all returned questionnaires. These two approaches allow participants to answers questions thoroughly and accurately without fear of identification.

**Summary of Research Methodology**

In conclusion, the elementary building level administrators included in this study were located in DuPage, McHenry, and Will County in Illinois. The building level administrators received the qualitative questionnaires that were on blue paper for schools that had Met AYP and on green paper for schools that Did Not Meet AYP to gather data on the implementation of the RtI model. The areas of professional development, finances, and student progress monitoring were the framework of the research study and were reflected in the 11 questions in Section 2, Parts A, B, and C of the questionnaire, while Section 1, Parts A and B had 11 demographic questions about the study participant, along with district and school information.

The purpose of this study was to investigate what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model, to investigate the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds, and to examine how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year. School district administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008).
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to investigate three topics regarding the implementation of the RtI model from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year in DuPage, McHenry, and Will Counties in Illinois. These topics were to investigate the professional development opportunities that were provided to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model, the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds, and how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP.

The research questions posed:

1. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

2. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?

3. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
4. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

5. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

6. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

The research conducted included mailing a questionnaire (see Appendix C), a cover letter (see Appendix B), and a self-addressed stamped envelope to building level administrators in charge of curriculum and program decisions in DuPage, McHenry, and Will Counties in Illinois (n=168). The questionnaires were completed by elementary building level administrators and returned without any identifying information that would reveal specific information about the district or school. The only distinction related to the questionnaire was the color of the questionnaire. Schools that Met AYP in 2010 were sent a questionnaire on blue paper and schools that Did Not Meet AYP in 2010 were sent a questionnaire on green paper. The researcher obtained the name of each elementary building level administrators and the address of each school by utilizing the Freedom of Information Act (see Appendix A). School district AYP information was accessed on the Illinois State Board of Education public website (http://www.isbe.net/).

A second mailing of the same questionnaire (see Appendix C) and a new cover letter (see Appendix D) were sent four weeks after the first initial mailing. This mailing
was a reminder to those who had not yet mailed in their questionnaire or served as a replacement for lost or misplaced questionnaires, if needed.

A third mailing (see Appendices C and D) was completed two weeks after the second mailing as a reminder to those who had not yet mailed in their questionnaire or served as a replacement for lost or misplaced questionnaires, if needed.

A final reminder was sent in the form of a post card (see Appendix E) that briefly reviewed the content of the previously sent documents and provided another opportunity to thank participants for their contributions to the research study.

As shown by the Table 2, the number of questionnaires sent was 168 with a total return rate of 16%. The number of questionnaires received (17%) in the Met AYP category was 21 of 128 that were sent. Seven of the 45 questionnaires sent in the Did Not Meet AYP category were received (15%).

The presentation of data will follow the order of questions on the questionnaire.

Table 2

*Building Level Administrator Responses to Intervention Model Questionnaires*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sent</th>
<th>Total Received</th>
<th>Return Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Both Groups</strong></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Met AYP &amp; Did Not Meet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYP)</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Met AYP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Blue Paper)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did Not Meet AYP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Green Paper)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics for Schools

Schools that Met AYP

For those schools that Met AYP, as shown in Table 3, 13 (62%) of the questionnaires returned were from DuPage County, six (29%) were from Will County, and two (10%) questionnaires were returned from McHenry County for a total of n=21 of schools responding that Met AYP.

As displayed in Table 3, there is a broad range of grade configurations among the schools in the reported schools. There is one (5%) school represented in the following grade configurations: 3, 4, and 5; K-2; PreK-6; K-4; K-8; K-6; 1-3; 2-3. There were two (10%) schools for each the following grade configurations: PreK-5; PreK-2; PreK-4. There were seven (33%) respondents that referenced the grade configuration of K-5 for the Met AYP group.

The number of students in each reported school building, Table 3, is three (14%) buildings with 200+ students, eight (38%) buildings with 300+ students, six (29%) buildings with 400+ students, and four (19%) building with 500+ students.

Among the schools there are various numbers of buildings within each of the districts as displayed in Table 3. For instance, there is one district with one building, one district with eight buildings, one district with nine buildings, and one district with 13 buildings. Also, there are two districts with two buildings, two districts with four buildings, two districts with five buildings, and two districts with 12 buildings. Finally, there are five districts with three buildings and four districts with seven buildings.
As shown in Table 3, the last demographic category is the number of students in a district (n=21). Two (10%) of the school districts have less than 1000 students. There are four (19%) of the school districts that have 2,000+ students along with four (19%) that have 3000 or more students in a district. Four (19%) of the questionnaires did not provide information for this group.

Table 3

Demographics for Schools that Met AYP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th># of Schools</th>
<th># of Student District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>3,4,5</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>PreK-5</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>PreK-6</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>500+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>PreK-5</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>McHenry</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>PreK-2</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>McHenry</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>304</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>PreK-4</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4,925</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Not Provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>PreK-4</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>910</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>PreK-2</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schools that Did Not Meet AYP

For those schools that Did Not Meet AYP, as shown in Table 4, six (85%) of the questionnaires returned were from DuPage County, one (14%) was returned from Will County, and none (0%) were returned from McHenry County.

The grade configurations of the schools in the Did Not Meet AYP category are not as varied. Two different grade configurations, K-5 and K-6, make up six (85%) of the reported schools. One school (14%) has the grade configuration of PreK-4.

The number of students in each reported school building in the Did Not Meet AYP group is as follows, a majority of the schools have 300+ students (43%) while two schools (29%) have 500+ students. Finally, one (14%) school has 400+ students and one school (14%) has 600+ students.

There is a wide range of the number of buildings and the number of students reported for districts in the Did Not Meet AYP group. There is one district with 800 students and two buildings, two districts with 2,119 and 2,800 students that have five buildings each, one district has seven buildings with 3,500 students, one district has eight buildings with 4,200 students, one district with 13 buildings and 5,000 students, and finally one district with 21 buildings have 15,000 students.
Table 4

*Demographics for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Grade Level Building</th>
<th># of Students Building</th>
<th># of Schools District</th>
<th># of Student District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM1</td>
<td>DuPage K-5</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>DuPage K-6</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>DuPage K-6</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>DuPage PreK-4</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>DuPage K-5</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>DuPage K-6</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>Will K-5</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Administrator Demographics**

**Met AYP**

As displayed in Figure 4, there were not any administrators in the less than 26 years of age group. Two (10%) of the administrators are in the 27-35 age range, five (24%) are 36-45 age range, and three (14%) are 56 years of age or older.

*Figure 5. What is your age?*
Did Not Meet AYP

As displayed in Figure 5, no administrators reported being in the age range of less than 26 years old or in the age range of 56 years age or older. One (14%) of the administrators is in the age range of 27-35 and two administrators (29%) are in the age range of 36-45. Lastly, four administrators (57%) are in the 46-55 age range.

![Figure 6. What is your age?](image)

**Met AYP**

As displayed in Figure 6, there were not any administrators that indicated their highest level of education was a Bachelor’s or Post-Doctorate degree. Seventeen (81%) of administrators reported their highest level of education is a Master’s Specialist degree while four (19%) declared their highest level of education was Doctorate degree.
Figure 7. What is your highest level of education?

Did Not Meet AYP

As shown in Figure 7, six (85%) of administrators reported that their highest degree as a Master’s Specialist. There were not any administrators who reported that their highest level of education was a Bachelor’s or Doctorate degree. One (14%) of the administrators indicated earning a Post-Doctorate degree.

Figure 8. What is your highest level of education?
Met AYP

As shown in Figure 8, three (14%) of the administrators are male while 18 (85%) are female.

![Gender Distribution in Met AYP](image)

*Figure 9. What is your gender?*

Did Not Meet AYP

As displayed in Figure 9, two (29%) of administrators are male and five (71%) are female.

![Gender Distribution in Did Not Meet AYP](image)

*Figure 10. What is your gender?*
Met AYP

In the Met AYP group, Figure 10, all administrators reported that they had at least one or more years of experience as a teacher, but not more than 26 years of experience. Two (10%) of the administrators have 1-5 years of experience and a total of nine (43%) of the administrators 6-10 years of teaching experience. In the 11-15 years of experience as a teacher there were two (10%) administrators. There are five (23%) of administrators with 16-20 years of experience as a teacher while four (19%) have 21-25 years of teaching experience.

![Bar Chart: How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?](n=21)

*Figure 11. How many years of experience do you have as teacher?*

Did Not Meet AYP

In the Did Not Meet AYP group, Figure 11, all administrators reported that they had at least six or more years of experience as a teacher. Three (43%) of administrators reported having 6-10 years of teaching experience and three (43%) stated they had 11-15 years of teaching experience. There were not any administrators in the 16-20 and 21-25
range of teaching experience. There was one (14%) administrator that reported 26 years or more of teaching experience.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

**Figure 12.** How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?

**Met AYP**

As displayed in Figure 12, all building level administrators reported at least one year or more of experience as an administrator while there were no administrators with 21 years or more of experience as an administrator. Eight (38%) of the administrators have 1-5 years of experience, while there are six (29%) administrators with 6-10 years of experience as an administrator. In the range of 11-15 years of administrative experience there were four (19%) administrators and in the range of 16-20 years of administrative experience there were three (14%) administrators.

**Did Not Meet AYP**

As shown in Figure 13, the administrators in the Did Not Meet AYP group have at least one or more years of administrator experience while none reported having 11-15, 21-25, or greater than 26 years of experience as an administrator. Three (43%) of the
administrators have 1-5 years of experience as an administrator. Two (28%) of administrators have 6-10 years of experience and two (28%) administrators have 16-20 years of administrative experience.

**Figure 13.** How many years of experience do you have as an administrator?

**Figure 14.** How many years of experience do you have as an administrator?
**Met AYP**

As displayed in Figure 14, 12 (57%) of administrators have worked in their current buildings for at least 3-5 years. Six (29%) of the administrators have 6-10 years of administrative experience in their current building. There is one (5%) administrator with 11-15 years of experience in his or her current building and two administrators (10%) with 16-20 years of experience in their current building. There were no (0%) administrators that reported 21-25 years of experience or 26+ years of experience in their current building.

**Did Not Meet AYP**

As shown in Figure 15, a majority of administrators, five (71%), have 3-5 years of experience in their current building. One (14%) administrator has 6-10 years of administrative experience in his or her current building. Another administrator (14%) has
16-20 years of administrative experience in his or her current building. None (0%) of the administrators reported having 11-15 years, 21-25 years, or greater than 26 years of experience in their current building.

\[\text{Figure 16. How many years of experience do you have as an administrator in your current building?}\]

Met AYP

As shown in Figure 16, 14 (67%) of administrators reported that they had no experience in special education. One (5%) of the administrators has 1-5 years of special education experience, three (14%) have 16-20 years of special education experience, and one (5%) has 21-25 years of special education experience. None (0%) of the building level administrators have 11-15 years of special education experience or greater than 26 years of special education experience.
Did Not Meet AYP

As displayed in Figure 17, five (71%) of the building level administrators do not have any special education experience. There were not any building level administrators who reported 1-5, 6-10, 16-20, or 21-25 years of special education experience. One (14%) of the building level administrators has 11-15 years of special education experience and one (14%) has greater than 26 years of special education experience.

Figure 17. Years of experience in special education?

Figure 18. Years of experience in special education?
Professional Development for Administrators

Met AYP

When planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model were the administrators’ needs assessed? How were these identified needs addressed?

As displayed in Figure 18, the first part of question one, when planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model was the administrator’s needs assessed, 11 (52%) of the respondents provide an affirmative answer. Another eight (38%) of the respondents provided an answer of no. The other five (24%) respondents did not directly answer the first part of the question.

![Administrators' Needs Assessed](image)

*Figure 19. Administrators’ needs assessed*

The second part of the question (see Table 5), how were these identified needs addressed, required respondents to answer beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for the eight respondents that said ‘yes’. Eleven (52%) of the building level administrators provided information
about how the needs of administrators were addressed or provided specific information about how his or her school district was educating or supporting the administrators.

Table 5

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)**

| M1 | “Yes, Monthly meetings members of admin identified their needs and were provided with in house training, site visits and professional workshops.” |
| M2 | “The need of the entire bldg. was assessed with a survey and through the RtI team.” |
| M3 | “Yes - needs assessment survey” |
| M4 | “All of the professional development was given to the teachers and used by the asst. superintendent of curriculum. There was an RTI committee that all of the administrators sat on.” |
| M5 | “No.” |
| M6 | “Yes, survey and discussion.” |
| M7 | “Many presentations and information sessions administrators asked questions, and the questions were answered in training sessions.” |
| M8 | Answer not provided |
| M9 | “No” |
| M10 | “No” |
| M11 | “District Administrators worked with building principals to determine the resources needed (per building) to successfully implement the RtI process developed by our district (personal and materials).” |
| M12 | “No” |
| M13 | “Administration was taught along with staff & professional development provided.” |
| M14 | “The district has not really assessed administration. I personally have sought out training.” |
| M15 | “Yes, discussions” |
| M16 | “No” |
| M17 | “Instruments, Professional development facilitator “ |
| M18 | “Yes and yes” |
| M19 | “No” |
| M20 | “No” |
| M21 | “No” |
For example, an administrator shared that at “monthly meetings members of administration identified their needs and were provided with in house training, site visits and professional workshops.” Also, an administrator shared that administrators attended “many presentations and information sessions” and the “administrators asked questions, and the questions were answered in training sessions.” An administrator articulated that that they their needs were not assessed, but “administration was taught along with staff & professional development provided.”

Other examples provided include, “All of the professional development was given to the teachers and used by the assistant superintendent of curriculum.” “There was an RTI committee that all of the administrators sat on.” While another administrator stated the, “District Administrators worked with building principals to determine the resources needed (per building) to successfully implement the RtI process developed by our district (personal and materials).”

As previously stated, eight (38%) of the respondents provided an answer of no. One of those administrators shared that “The district has not really assessed administration.” and “I personally have sought out training.” Finally, there were four (19%) administrators that stated that needs were assessed. The information shared includes, “The need of the entire building was assessed with a survey and through the RtI team”; “needs assessment survey”; “a survey and discussion”, and “Instruments, Professional development facilitator.”
Did Not Meet AYP

When planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model were the administrator’s needs assessed? How were these identified needs addressed?

As displayed in Table 6, when planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model was the administrators’ needs assessed three (43%) of the respondents provide an affirmative answer. Four (57%) of the respondents provided an answer of no.

![Diagram showing Administrators' Needs Assessed](image)

**Figure 20. Administrators’ needs assessed**

The second part of the question, how were these identified needs addressed, required respondents to answer beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Even though three (43%) of the respondents provided an affirmative answer to first part of the question, one (14%)
building level administrator stated that his or her needs were assessed, but they were “not addressed” and included in the ‘no’ group.

Table 6

*Building Level Administrator Responses for School that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM1</td>
<td>“The school’s needs were assessed. As principal, I have received training through the CEC through attendance at workshops. Our district embraces the PLC concept and continuous improvement.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Yes, not addressed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“No”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“Yes, we looked at what we needed to implement RtI and worked with our local Sped cooperative to plan.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“No”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“Yes, through discussions with the administrative team and the RtI coordinator.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“No”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three (43%) building level administrators shared that they participated in some kind of professional development, but only one stated that “The school’s needs were assessed.” Stating that “as principal, I have received training through the CEC through attendance at workshops.” and “our district embraces the PLC concept and continuous improvement.” The other two (28%) administrators stated “We looked at what we needed to implement RtI and worked with our local Sped cooperative to plan.” and the other stated that “Through discussions with the administrative team and the RtI coordinator” needs were addressed.

**Met AYP**

What professional developmental opportunities have been provided for administrators to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model?
A variety of options were specified when building level administrators were asked to provide examples of professional development opportunities as displayed in Table 7. Several building level administrators reported multiple examples of professional development opportunities and so the percentages total more than 100%. There were a variety of programs or resources specified as an example for training and resources:

1. 2 days of training through CASE
2. PDA (Professional Development Advisors) workshops/training
3. CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) workshops/training
4. ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops
5. 3-day RtI workshop initially
6. RtI Innovations Conference for 3 RtI pilot schools (including my school)
7. SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops
8. Work with Aimsweb creator
9. Illinois Principal Association (2 respondents)

Among the responses there were several references to non-specific workshops and conferences, external coach support, and a site visits outside the district. Ten respondents reported that out of district workshops/conferences were attended. Two respondents received support and/or resources from an external coach support. One respondent specified the use of an RtI external coach. Another respondent replied that site visits were completed.
### Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M1</th>
<th>“Monthly meetings members of admin identified their needs and were provided with in house training, site visits and professional workshops. Individualized to meet the needs of each team member.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>“SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops – RtI external coach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>“Workshops, conferences, book studies, the formation of a direct RtI task force and RtI leadership team”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>“None”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>“A committee was initiated; the “triangle” was shared. As of today there is no clear description of what RtI is supposed to look like at the building.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>“County trainings, I-Aspire, external coaching”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>“Outside conferences, in-house in-services, committee work”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>“In house staff development, IPA (Illinois Principal Association) workshops/training, PDA (Professional Development Advisors) workshops/training, CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) workshops/training”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>“2 days of training through CASE, ASPIRE”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>“None. However, I have worked collaboratively with our District RtI Coordinator”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>“We participated in a 3-day RtI workshop initially and have attended several more since then”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>“Participate in the district’s RtI committee”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>“Videos, Reading material, ASPIRE workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>“I have attended workshops &amp; conferences to learn more specific aspects of the RtI process &amp; model”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>“ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, IPA(Illinois Principal Association) workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>“Local Special Education Co-op workshops, In-district training/in-service, RtI Innovations Conference for 3 RtI pilot schools (including my school)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>“Aspire workshops, Professional Development Opportunities – outside of district, District meetings/workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>“Workshop out of district, in-district articulation, opportunities to observe problem-solving teams”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>“Self-selected outside training, articles and books – self-selected”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>“We are playing catch up, Work with Aimsweb creator”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>“Conferences, workshops, admin meetings”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some building level administrators reported that professional development opportunities were provided within the district. Five respondents reported “in-house in-services/trainings or in-district training/in-service. Three respondents reported that they received professional development through “committee work.” The other professional development opportunities shared were “in-district articulation and “admin meetings” or “monthly meetings.”

Various other examples were given for professional development opportunities or resources. The examples include: “videos,” “the triangle was shared,” “reading material,” “articles and books – self-selected,” and “opportunities to observe problem-solving teams.”

**Did Not Meet AYP**

What professional developmental opportunities have been provided for administrators to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model?

In the Did Not Meet AYP group, Table 8, each respondent provided different types of professional development opportunities to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model.

The administrators shared that there was “training through NDSEC (North DuPage Special Education Cooperative)” provided, “AIMSweb training,” and “Intervention training.” There was an administrator who received a ‘basic intro to RtI.’
Table 8

Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NM1</th>
<th>“Workshops offered by special education cooperative and the CEC”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Same as teachers, originally quite a bit, but not on-going”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“Already had knowledge of this as a result of attendance in workshops/seminars prior to coming to this district”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops, I-Aspire workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“Training through NDSEC (North DuPage Special Education Cooperative)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“AIMSweb training, Intervention training, Basic Intro to RtI”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“None”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another respondent stated the professional development was the “same as teachers” and “originally quite a bit, but not on-going.” An administrator stated that he or she “already had knowledge of this as a result of attendance in workshops/seminars prior to coming to this district.”

As shared by an administrator one district provided three outside resources for professional development. These resources were “ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops,” and “I-Aspire workshops.” Lastly, one administrator stated “none” for professional development opportunities.

Met AYP

What professional development opportunities have been provided for administrators to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention Model?

In the area of professional development to establish a structure of the RtI model, a variety of examples of professional development opportunities for administrators were
shared for the Met AYP group as displayed in Table 9. Since many building level administrators listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than 100%.

There were two instances of external coaches; one specifically stated an “RtI external coach,” along with a reference to a “3-day RtI workshop.” A group of seven responses were non-specific professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model. These references included “county trainings,” “outside conferences,” “self-selected outside training,” “workshops,” “conferences,” and “workshop out of district.”

The following examples were provided by administrators for professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model. They include, “in-district articulation,” “opportunities to observe problem-solving teams,” “a team researched the structures of surrounding districts, then shared that knowledge in workshop format with all members of admin who directly participated in the development of our structure,” and then finally “each building administrator implemented RtI interventions individually.”

Four of the respondents stated “None” for any professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model, while three of the administrators stated that “I-Aspire,” “ASPIRE,” and “Aspire workshops” were utilized for professional development to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model.
Table 9

Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>“A team researched the structures of surrounding districts then shared that knowledge in workshop format with all members of admin who directly participated in the development of our structure.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>“SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops attendance along with RtI team members, RtI external coach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>“Monthly task force meetings, quarterly RtI leadership meetings, contact communication between schools about RtI progress, District led presentation and time devoted during early release days to work on RtI issues”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>“None”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>“None”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>“County trainings, I-Aspire, external coaching”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>“Outside conferences, in-house in-services, committee work”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>“In house staff development, IPA (Illinois Principal Association) workshops/training, PDA (Professional Development Advisors) workshops/training, CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) workshops/training”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>“None”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>“None. Only informational sessions about the process have been provided”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>“We participated in a 3-day RtI workshop initially and have attended several more since then, as well as support by district level coordinators who come to our building to help us solve issues that interfere with our structure or model implementation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>“Participate in the district’s RtI committee”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>“Videos, Reading material, ASPIRE workshops and district committee and conversation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>“Workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>“District meetings, Building meetings, ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>“In-District monthly meetings for RtI during 1st and 2nd year of implementation, District RtI steering committee in years 3+”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>“A number of staff attended Aspire workshops to have contact with district reps who have implemented RtI within our districts prior to our getting on board. Admin workshops to introduce instruments and develop consistency in tools across the district.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>“Workshop out of district, in-district articulation, opportunities to observe problem-solving teams, Each building administrator implemented RtI interventions individually, I have a common 30 minute time slot where the entire building is locked down for RtI strategies”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>“Self-selected outside training, articles and books – self-selected”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>“Working as an admin team, We are doing well now, but it has taken time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>“Conferences, workshops, admin meetings”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another five examples were specific programs and/or resources to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model. They included, “IPA (Illinois Principal
Association) workshops/training,” “PDA (Professional Development Advisors) workshops/training,” “CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) workshops/training,” “ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops,” and “SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops attendance along with RtI team members.”

Committee work was listed four times as professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model such as, “district committee and conversation,” “committee work,” “participate in the district’s RtI committee,” and “district RtI steering committee in years 3+.” Also, two respondents shared that “in-house in-services” and “in house staff development” were provided. There was “contact communication between schools about RtI progress.”

Seven of the items listed were in the area of meetings as an example of professional development to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model. The examples included, “Working as an admin team,” “admin meetings,” “Monthly task force meetings,” “Quarterly RtI leadership meetings,” “District meetings,” “Building meetings,” and “In-District monthly meetings for RtI during 1st and 2nd year of implementation.”

Three respondents provided other examples of professional development to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model were videos, reading material, and articles and books – self-selected. One administrator reported that “District led presentation and time devoted during early release days to work on RtI issues” and “I
have a common 30 minute time slot where the entire building is locked down for RtI strategies.”

**Did Not Meet AYP**

What professional development opportunities have been provided for administrators to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention Model?

As displayed in Table 10, there were a variety of responses for professional development opportunities for administrators to establish the structure of the RtI model. Since many principals listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than 100%.

**Table 10**

*Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)*

| NM1         | “Collaboration between leadership (teachers, sped, principal, district admin)” |
| NM2         | “District wide, Institute Day – George Bautsk” |
| NM3         | “Utilization of admin mtgs to discuss district RtI goals, Informational sessions provided by Asst. Supt, Partnerships with ASPIRE – coaches” |
| NM4         | “ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops, I-Aspire workshops – They provided templates for us to use.” |
| NM5         | “We’ve had to take administrator academies” |
| NM6         | “Internal work with the RtI Coordinator and school psychologist, follow-up discussions with Asst. Supt of instruction” |
| NM7         | “None” |

There were three responses were within district professional development opportunities. The first respondent shared that, “Collaboration between leadership (teachers, sped, principal, district admin).” The next item shared was, “Utilization of
administration meetings to discuss district RtI goal.” Finally, an administrator stated that “Informational sessions” were “provided by Assistant Superintendent.”

There were five specific professional development opportunities examples provided. Two of them were for “Partnerships with ASPIRE – coaches” and “I-Aspire workshops; they provided templates for us to use.” One of the professional development examples was “District-wide Institute Day with George Bautsk” and another was “ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops.” Finally, an administrator stated that professional development was provided by attending “SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops.”

Lastly, one building level administrators shared that “We’ve had to take administrator academies,” and another administrator stated “None” in response to what professional development opportunities had been provided to establish the structure of the RtI model.

**Professional Development for Certified Faculty**

**Met AYP**

When planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model were the certified faculty needs assessed? How were these identified needs addressed?

As shown in Table 11, the first part of question one inquired how the needs of the certified faculty were assessed when planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model. Four (19%) of the respondents did not directly answer the first part of the question. Six (29%) of the respondents
provided an answer of no. Eleven (52%) of the respondents provide an affirmative answer.

Table 11

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M1</th>
<th>“Yes, there were surveys created to identify their perspective on their P.D. needs”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>“Yes, through surveys and interviews”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>“Yes, a needs assessment survey has been completed by the entire staff for the last 3 yrs. The results help district the staff development opportunities for the following year.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>“The assumption was that we were starting at ground zero. The administrators learned with the teachers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>“No”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>“Yes, survey and discussions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>“Needs were not assessed. Staff received in-service and some attended outside conferences”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>“Survey and through ongoing administrator observation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>“No, however, since it was a new concept we knew the certified faculty did not have much knowledge about RtI at all.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>“We have a data day 3x per year. It is at that time that each individual teacher’s class – intervention needs are assessed. At this meeting, all building specialist are included to help problem solve with the teacher as well as assess student’s needs in their specific program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>“No”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>“Education – Introduction – then question/answer the Continuous Improvement of Plan Do Study Act”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>“Yes, through survey and meetings. We have provided workshops and in-service training to those in need.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>“No”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>“Assessment during/after institute days, RtI survey”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>“Yes, Meeting time subbed out, Instruments provided and intro time given for greatest success, planning time provided for grade levels to design schedules with common RtI times to best meet student needs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>“Staff was surveyed to identify needs, training provided by RtI team, reading specialist, school psychologist”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>“Yes, numerous surveys, committee work”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>“Could have done a better job at the district level”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>“Yes, surveys and checklists”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second part of the question asked were these identified needs addressed. This required respondents to answer beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no’. There were seven (33%) building level administrators that shared one response each.

These responses include the “needs were not assessed,” but “staff received in-service and some attended outside conferences.” Another administrator stated that, “We have a data day 3x per year, it is at that time that each individual teacher’s class intervention needs are assessed” and “at this meeting all building specialist are included to help problem solve with the teacher as well as assess student’s needs in their specific program.” An administrator shared “training” was “provided by RtI team, reading specialist, school psychologist,” while another stated, “The administrators learned with the teachers.”

![Certified Faculty Needs Assessed Met MYP (n=21)](image)

*Figure 21. Certified Faculty needs assessed*

Another example is “education – introduction – then question/answer the Continuous Improvement of Plan Do Study Act.” Also, an administrator stated that “the
assumption was that we were starting at ground zero,” while another stated that “could have done a better job at the district level.”

There were four (19%) general resources used to identify needs. These were “interviews,” “discussions,” “through ongoing administrator observations,” and “meetings.”

Lastly, of the ten (48%) respondents that said ‘yes’ a survey was given. Some of the responses include “assessment during/after institute days,” “Staff was surveyed,” “numerous surveys,” “surveys and checklists.”

Did Not Meet AYP

When planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model were the certified faculty needs assessed? How were these identified needs addressed?

As displayed in Figure 21, the first part of question asked if the certified faculty needs were assessed. One (14%) of the respondents provided an answer of no and six (86%) of the respondents provide an affirmative answer.

The second part of the question inquired how the identified needs of the certified faculty were addressed. This required respondents to answer beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ Two (29%) specific items shared were “School needs were assessed with data and feedback in leadership teams” and “principal monitors and shares information with district curriculum director and superintendent.”
Another two (29%) responses were more general examples. These examples were “conversations at faculty meetings” and “informal discussions at faculty meetings.”

There were also three (43%) responses that referred to surveys. For example, “staff surveys (in-house), “we utilized a survey,” and “needs assessment survey.”

Table 12

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)**

| NM1 | “School needs were assessed with data and feedback in leadership teams. Principal monitors and shares info with district curriculum director and superintendent” |
| NM2 | “Yes, but not addressed appropriately” |
| NM3 | “Creation of RtI building committee (and RtI District committee), We utilized a survey at the building level to get started” |
| NM4 | “Yes, this guided our planning to implement the professional development activities, 1) surveys 2) conversations at faculty meetings.” |
| NM5 | “No” |
| NM6 | “Through informal discussions at faculty meeting, through a needs assessment survey” |
| NM7 | “Staff survey (in-house; not district)” |
Met AYP

What professional development opportunities have been provided for certified faculty to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model?

As displayed by Table 13, there were 42 responses were given to show how professional development opportunities were provided for certified faculty to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model.

A building level administrator (3%) stated that there was a “creation of an on line RtI problem solving process along with forms used during PBS meeting,” while another (3%) shared that the “creation of a teacher resource website that includes interventions and progress monitoring tools.”

One (3%) building level administrator stated that “I have provided staff with an overview of the process, articles about RtI, and we have had many follow up discussions about the process.” One (3%) more building level administrator shared, “It has been more a day by day implementation where district level and building level specialist work alongside teachers to implement the RtI model and problem solve student need and intervention program, intensity.”

There were two (5%) programs or resources were given as examples. They were “SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County),” and “ASPIRE.” Two (5%) more examples were provided participation in “district RtI committee,” and a “district committee.” Finally, two (5%) alternate professional development opportunities were shared “books,” and “the triangle” was shared.”
Table 13

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M1</th>
<th>“We have provided in-house training with consultants and administrators and sent staff to other districts and workshops to increase their knowledge.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>“SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County), Release time to work in teams, RtI external coach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>“The creation of an on line RtI problem solving process along with forms used during PBS meeting. The creation of a teacher resource website that includes interventions and progress monitoring tools.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>“We have had a coach who came sporadically to help with data planning”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>“The “triangle” was shared”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>“County trainings, Work with external and internal coaches”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>“Outside conferences, In-house in-services”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>“In-house staff development, Attendance at outside workshop/trainings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>“Staff presentation on RtI, ongoing training and support provided by school psychologist and problem solving team”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>“I have provided staff with an overview of the process, articles about RtI, and we have had many follow up discussions about the process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>“It has been more a day by day implementation where district level and building level specialist work alongside teachers to implement the RtI model and problem solve student need and intervention program, intensity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>“Participation in the districts RtI committee. Several workshop days during the 2010-11 were dedicated to RtI. Teachers were allowed to attend out of district workshops on RtI.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>“ASPIRE, Institute Day Professional Development, Books, District committee and Literacy Coaches”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>“Training on specific interventions and in-service work”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>“Workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>“Local in-service days, Training/faculty meetings at individual buildings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>“Teacher’s Institute Day- devoted time. Faculty meeting introductions to tools”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>“Building level training, Observation of problem-solving teams, School psychologist trained on problem-solving paperwork and process”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>“Self-selected workshops outside of the district, Full –district workshops offered to all teachers, on-site coach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>“Time at grade levels”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>“Workshops, staff meetings, conferences”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, there were four (10%) responses for “training/faculty meetings at individual buildings,” “faculty meeting introductions to tools,” “staff meetings,” and “release time to work in teams.”
Five (12%) building level administrators stated that a coach was provided in the context of an “RtI external coach,” “work with external and internal coaches,” “on-site coach,” “Literacy Coaches,” and “a coach who came sporadically to help with data planning.”

There were eight (19%) references to out of district workshops or conferences. The administrators stated that “sent staff to other districts and workshops,” “county trainings,” “outside conferences,” “attendance at outside workshop/trainings,” “teachers were allowed to attend out of district workshops on RtI,” and “self-selected workshops outside of the district.”

Fourteen (33%) of the responses indicated some type of district professional development. Some of the administrators indicated professional development “Provided in-house training with consultants and administrators,” “In-house in-services,” “In-house staff development,” “Staff presentation on RtI, ongoing training and support provided by school psychologist and problem solving team,” “Several workshop days during the 2010-11 were dedicated to RtI,” “Institute Day Professional Development,” “Training on specific interventions and in-service work,” “Local in-service days,” “Teacher’s Institute Day- devoted time,” “Building level training,” “Observation of problem-solving teams,” “School psychologist trained on problem-solving paperwork and process,” “Full-district workshops offered to all teachers,” “Time at grade levels”

**Did Not Meet AYP**

What professional development opportunities have been provided for certified faculty to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model?
As displayed in Table 14, each administrator shared different professional development opportunities. One (5%) administrator stated that professional development opportunities were provided “some, but not enough.” Also, two (10%) respondents stated that they “utilized school improvement days,” and had “Tier 3 team meetings.” Other administrators shared either general or specific professional development opportunities.

Table 14

Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)

| NM1 | “Outside workshops, Ongoing work together within the building” |
| NM2 | “Some, but not enough” |
| NM3 | “Utilized school improvement days, Had teacher reps from RtI committee provide info to staff, Creation of RtI binder to reference new procedures, faculty meeting Q & A sessions, Guided Benchmarking/progress monitoring grade level meetings, Phases (not everything at once)” |
| NM4 | “SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County), ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, Our own faculty meetings, Tier 3 team meeting” |
| NM5 | “District-level training” |
| NM6 | “AIMSweb Training, Intervention training, Basic Intro to RtI, Faculty meeting discussions, Discussions with RtI Coordinator and school psychologist” |
| NM7 | “Staff meeting information” |

Three (15%) references to RtI were included, “Discussions with RtI Coordinator and school psychologist,” “creation of RtI binder to reference new procedures,” and “teacher reps from RtI committee provided info to staff.” There were three (15%) responses that included specific programs and resources. These were AIMSweb Training, SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County), and ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops.
Five (25%) respondents stated that “guided benchmarking/progress monitoring” and “District-level training”, “outside workshops” “Intervention training,” and “basic intro to RtI were provided. There were six (30%) responses connected to building-based or district-based opportunities, some respondent providing multiple answers. The information provided included, “Our own faculty meetings,” “staff meeting information” “Faculty meeting discussions,” “grade level meetings,” “faculty meeting Q & A sessions,” and “ongoing work together within the building.”

**Met AYP**

What professional development opportunities have been provided for certified faculty to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model?

As displayed by Table 15, a building level administrator (3%) stated that to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty “we have provided time during the day for data and problem-solving meetings,” and “substitutes were paid for.”

It was also stated by a building level administrator (3%) that “I have presented at staff meetings,” and “I have also developed the knowledge base of my five RtI team leaders so they can lead RtI teams of teachers.” Another building level administrator (3%) stated that the “observation of problem-solving teams” was conducted.
### Table 15

**Building Level Administrator Responses for School that Met AYP (n=21)**

| M1   | “Existing staff (administrators) presented to staff to create the concept, structure, and process for RtI. Teacher reps participated in planning and developing this model.” |
| M2   | “SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County), Release time to work in teams, RtI external coach” |
| M3   | “Articulation meetings between regular education staff and special education staff facilitated by the task force members on a monthly basis during early release days.” |
| M4   | “We have provided time during the day for data and problem-solving meetings, substitutes were paid for.” |
| M5   | “None” |
| M6   | “County trainings, Work with external and internal coaches, Specific trainings for intervention programs” |
| M7   | “Outside conferences, In-house in-services” |
| M8   | “During institute days speakers/trainers” |
| M9   | “Staff presentation on RtI, ongoing training and support provided by school psychologist and problem solving team” |
| M10  | “I have presented at staff meetings. I have also developed the knowledge base of my 5 RtI team leaders so they can lead RtI teams of teachers” |
| M11  | “It has been more a day by day implementation where district level and building level specialist work alongside teachers to implement the RtI model and problem solve student need and intervention program, intensity” |
| M12  | “Participation in the districts RtI committee. Several workshop days during the 2010-11 were dedicated to RtI. Teachers were allowed to attend out of district workshops on RtI.” |
| M13  | “Literacy coaches, District Committee” |
| M14  | “In-service work” |
| M15  | “Workshops, building meetings” |
| M16  | “Local in-service days, Training/faculty meetings at individual buildings” |
| M17  | “Faculty meetings, 6 week RtI intervention/collaboration meetings” |
| M18  | “Building level training, Observation of problem-solving teams, School psychologist trained on problem-solving paperwork and process” |
| M19  | “Committee work, in-house presentations” |
| M20  | “We are a better place after 5 years of RtI reading, Still working on math and reading” |
| M21  | “Workshops, staff meetings, conferences” |

Additionally, a building level administrator (3%) disclosed that “It has been more a day by day implementation where district level and building level specialist work alongside teachers to implement the RtI model and problem solve student need and
intervention program, intensity.” Finally, a building level administrator (3%) stated that “We are a better place after five years of RtI reading,” and “still working on math and reading.” One (3%) administrator stated “None” for his or her response.

Two (5%) responses included, “Teachers were allowed to attend out of district workshops on RtI,” “workshops,” and “conferences.” Three (7%) examples of staff supported professional development presentations to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty, such as “existing staff (administrators) presented to staff to create the concept, structure, and process for RtI,” “Teacher reps participated in planning and developing this model,” and “staff presentation on RtI, ongoing training and support provided by school psychologist and problem solving team.”

There were three (7%) responses that indicated professional development to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty in the form of committees. It was stated that “participation in the districts RtI committee,” “district committee,” and “committee work were provided.

There are three (7%) examples of building-based professional development. These examples include, “School psychologist trained on problem-solving paperwork and process,” “staff meetings” and “building level training.” Furthermore, three (7%) building level administrators stated that coaching was provided as professional development to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty. The responses include an “RtI external coach,” “work with external and internal coaches,” and a “literacy coaches.”
It was also stated by five (12%) respondents stated that “release time to work in teams,” “in-house presentations,” “in-house in-services,” “in-service work,” and “local in-service days” were utilized for professional development opportunities for certified faculty to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model.

Ten (24%) administrators provided examples of professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty, which are “During institute days speakers/trainers,” “Specific trainings for intervention programs,” “County trainings,” “Outside conferences,” “Several workshop days during the 2010-11 were dedicated to RtI.

Did Not Meet AYP

What professional development opportunities have been provided for certified faculty to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model?

As displayed by Table 16, each administrator shared different responses, a total of fifteen, to professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty. Since many principals listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than 100%. Two (13%) administrators did not provide an answer. An administrator shared two (13%) different responses for professional development. These were “outside workshops,” and “ongoing work together within the building.”
Table 16

Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NM1</th>
<th>“Outside workshops, Ongoing work together within the building”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Originally quite a bit, but with budget cut-backs, the program changed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“Utilized school improvement days, Had teacher reps from RtI committee provide info to staff, Creation of RtI binder to reference new procedures, faculty meeting Q &amp; A sessions, Guided Benchmarking/progress monitoring grade level meetings, Phases (not everything at once)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“External coach from SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) provided step by step assistance for implementing. We have been working on RtI several years so the leap was not huge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“Participation in grade-level data analysis meetings, District presentations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two other (13%) examples were an “external coach from SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) provided step by step assistance for implementing” and “we have been working on RtI several years so the leap was not huge.”

A building level administrator (7%) shared that “participation in grade-level data analysis meetings” and another (7%) stated that “district presentations” were provided. Also, one (7%) building level administrator stated that “originally quite a bit, but with budget cut-backs, the program changed.”

Lastly, a building level administrator stated that six (40%) professional development opportunities were utilized to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model for certified faculty in “phases (not everything at once),” which “utilized school improvement days, had teacher reps from RtI committee provide info to...”
staff, creation of RtI binder to reference new procedures, faculty meeting Q & A sessions, and guided benchmarking/progress monitoring grade level meetings.”

**Finances**

**Met AYP**

How did you become aware of the Early Intervening funds? (Please circle all that apply)

a. District provided funds as part of the building-based budget.

b. Funds distributed by the district office

c. Not aware of Early Intervening funds

As shown in Figure 22, two (9%) respondents selected both (a) and (b), which indicates that the district provided funds as part of the building-based budget and the funds were distributed by the district office. Three (14%) respondents selected only choice (a), which indicates that the district provided funds as part of the building-based budget. Six (29%) respondents selected only choice (b), which states that funds are distributed by the district office. Nine (43%) respondents circled only choice (c), which indicates that the building level administrator was not aware of Early Intervening funds. One (5%) respondent did not provide an answer.
Figure 23. Awareness of Early Intervening Funds

Did Not Meet AYP

How did you become aware of the Early Intervening funds? (Please circle all that apply)

a. District provided funds as part of the building-based budget.
b. Funds distributed by the district office
c. Not aware of Early Intervening funds

As shown in Figure 23, there were not any respondents (0%) that selected choice (a), which inquires did the district provide Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. There were two respondents (29%) circled choice (b) that indicated that funds were distributed by the district office. Four respondents (57%) selected choice (c), which indicated that the building level administrator was not aware of Early Intervening funds and one respondent (14%) did not provide answer.

Met AYP

How did you use Early Intervening funds under IDEA to implement professional development for Response to Intervention?
As shown in Table 17, there were 24 responses provided by building level administrators that explained how the Early Intervening funds were used to implement professional development for Response to Intervention model. Since many principals listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than 100%. Eleven respondents (46%) replied in the negative; “No idea,” “Not Sure,” “I have not accessed these funds,” “I don’t know,” “Responsibility of Early Childhood (EC) team.” They are not housed in my building,” “Not sure district gave us information,” “Don’t know,” “Unable to respond,” “Not applicable,” “Not applicable,” and “Handler at district level.”
Table 17

Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)

| M1 | “No idea” |
| M2 | “RtI external coach; workshops” |
| M3 | “Book Studies, consultants, Interventions purchased: Reading Plus, Lexia, Compass Learning, pays for RtI leadership team and task force attendance at workshops and conferences” |
| M4 | Answer not provided |
| M5 | “Not sure” |
| M6 | “Internal and external coaching, buying intervention program” |
| M7 | “Purchased researched-based interventions” |
| M8 | “Handled at district level” |
| M9 | “I have not accessed these funds” |
| M10 | “I don’t know” |
| M11 | “Responsibility of Early Childhood (EC) team. They are not housed in my building.” |
| M12 | “Not applicable” |
| M13 | “Not sure district gave us information” |
| M14 | “They provided training on our universal assessment tool” |
| M15 | “Don’t know” |
| M16 | “Unable to respond” |
| M17 | “I am uncertain if you are referring to particular grant or just category of funding available” |
| M18 | Answer not provided |
| M19 | “On-site coach, speakers at SIP meetings, Planning/collaboration pay” |
| M20 | “Not applicable” |
| M21 | “Not applicable” |

Six respondents (25%) provided information on how funds were used; the program and resources included:

1. “RtI external coach; workshops,”

2. “Book Studies,” “consultants,” “Interventions purchased: Reading Plus, Lexia, and Compass Learning, pays for RtI leadership team, and task force attendance at workshops and conferences,”

3. “Internal and external coaching, buying intervention program,”
4. “Purchased researched-based interventions,”

5. “On-site coach, speakers at SIP meetings, Planning/collaboration pay,”

6. “They provided training on our universal assessment tool.”

Four respondents (17%) did not directly answer the question. Two (8%) respondents did not provide an answer to the question and one (4%) administrator responded “Responsibility of Early Childhood (EC) team.” and “They are not housed in my building.”

**Did Not Meet AYP**

How did you use Early Intervening funds under IDEA to implement professional development for Response to Intervention?

As displayed in Table 18, there were eight responses provided by building level administrators that explained how the Early Intervening funds were used to implement professional development for Response to Intervention model. Since many principals listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than one hundred percent. Four respondents (50%) replied “Not applicable.” One respondent (12.5%) provided information on how funds were used: “Funded RtI District coach (that I am aware of).” While one (12.5%) administrator shared that “we did not” and “used for resource materials for interventions.”

Two (25%) respondents did not provide any examples of how the Early Intervening funding was used. The first stated that “Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped cooperative” and “Building principal does not control the funds.”
Table 18

Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NM1</th>
<th>“Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped cooperative. Building principal does not control the funds”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“Funded RtI District coach (that I am aware of)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“We did not- used for resource materials for interventions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Met AYP

How did you use the Early Intervening funding under IDEA in regards to curricular purchases to implement the Response to Intervention model?

As displayed in Table 19, there were 25 responses provided for the question on how the Early Intervening funds were utilized to purchase curricular materials to implement the Response to Intervention Model. Since many principals listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than 100%. Eleven (44%) respondents replied in the negative. Each example given by administrators were, “No idea,” “Did not,” “Not applicable,” “need to ask district,” “Not applicable “Unable to respond,” “Not applicable,” and “Handled at district level.” Whereas two (8%) responded “Not sure” and two (8%) responded “I don’t know.”

Six respondents (24%) provided information on how funds were used. The curricular programs and resources include:
### Table 19

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M1</th>
<th>“No idea”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>“Technology, interventions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>“Book Studies, consultants, Interventions purchased: Reading Plus, Lexia, Compass Learning, pays for RtI leadership team and task force attendance at workshops and conferences”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>“Not sure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>“Internal and external coaching, buying intervention program”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>“Purchased research-based interventions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>“Handled at district level”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>“Did not”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>“I don’t know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>“Responsibility of Early Childhood (EC) team. They are not housed in my building.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>“Not sure, need to ask district”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>“Don’t know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>“Unable to respond”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>“Intervention kits, Materials/books”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>“Purchased technology tools and sensory tools”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. “Technology, interventions”

2. “Book Studies, consultants, Interventions purchased: Reading Plus, Lexia, Compass Learning, pays for RtI leadership team and task force attendance at workshops and conferences”

3. “Internal and external coaching, buying intervention program”

4. “Purchased research-based interventions”

5. “Intervention kits, Materials/books”

6. “Purchased technology tools and sensory tools”
Three respondents (12%) did not provide an answer while one (4%) administrator stated “Responsibility of Early Childhood (EC) team” and “They are not housed in my building.”

**Did Not Meet AYP**

How did you use the Early Intervening funding under IDEA in regards to curricular purchases to implement the Response to Intervention model?

As shown in Table 20, there were eight responses provided for the question on how the Early Intervening funds were utilized to purchase curricular materials to implement the Response to Intervention Model. Since many principals listed multiple professional development opportunities the percentages will total more than 100%.

Three (37.5%) respondents replied “Not applicable.”

**Table 20**

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NM1</th>
<th>“Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped cooperative. Building principal does not control the funds”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Not sure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“Used to purchase certain intervention programs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“We researched best practices and then determined best for our students”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two (25%) respondents provided information on how funds were used. The examples are “Used to purchase certain intervention programs” and “We researched best practices and then determined best for our students.” The two (25%) respondents replied that “Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped
cooperative,” and “building principal does not control the funds.” One (12.5%) administrator replied, “Not sure.”

**Student Data**

**Met AYP**

What student data are utilized for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention model?

As indicated in Table 21, there were 46x examples given by respondents for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention Model. Since many principals listed multiple progress monitoring programs/resources the percentages will total more than 100%. Seventeen (81%) of the respondents stated that Aimsweb utilized for progress monitoring. There were seven (33%) references to “NWEA (MAPS) testing data.” “ISAT” and “ISAT based writing prompt” for progress monitoring was referred to two (4.3%) times by administrators.

There were four (9%) general references to running records,” “student grades/standardized test data,” “local assessment data in math and reading,” “curriculum benchmark tests,” and “word reading/passage reading.”

Furthermore, 14 (30.4%) examples were provided as a progress monitoring purposes. The some examples provided are “Discovery Education – Thinklink,” “Terra Nova,” “STAR,” “Reading Naturally,” “Letter – K,” “Fountas and Prinnell levels,” and “DRA (developmental reading assessment)” The other examples are “Lexia,” “Reading Plus,” “Read Naturally,” “Rocket Math,” “PMM,” “ISEL (Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy),” “Discovery Education Assessment Probes,” and “Easy CBM.”
Table 21

### Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M1</th>
<th>“Aimsweb math and reading, ISAT based writing prompt”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>“Aimsweb (reading and math), DRA (developmental reading assessment)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>“Aimsweb, Lexia, Reading Plus, Read Naturally, Rocket Math, MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), PMM, ISEL( Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>Answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>“NWEA (MAPS) testing data”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>“Aimsweb, MAP NWEA, ISAT, Fountas and Prinnell levels”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>“Aimsweb – MAZE and MIDE”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>“MAP”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>“Fluency – AIMES, Letter – K”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>“AIMSweb for tier 3 RtI students and special education student receiving Resource services”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>“AIMSweb – reading (fluency), math, writing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>“CBM/Dibels, Progress Monitoring”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>“AIMSweb, MAP, Local Assessment Data in math and reading, PBIS behavior data, attention and focus – time on task”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>“AIMSweb progress monitoring and Intervention assessment data”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>“AIMSweb, Reading Naturally, NWEA MAPS”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>“AIMSweb reading only at this time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>“AIMSweb progress monitoring reading and math, 3x a year for writing 2nd and 3rd grade (AIMS), Discovery Education – Thinklink, Terra Nova, STAR, MAZE (AIMS) are used to support data collected through progress monitoring when students are at Tier 3 and not progressing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>“AIMSweb scores in reading/math, progress monitoring data, Student grades/ standardized test data”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>“Easy CBM, Discovery Education Assessment Probes, Curriculum Benchmark Tests, Word Reading/Passage Reading”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20</td>
<td>“AIMSweb”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M21</td>
<td>“CBM – Reading and math, Running records, Map skills checklists”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was one (2%) reference to “PBIS behavior data, attention and focus – time on task,” which is not an academic intervention or tool. One (2%) respondent did not provide an answer.
**Did Not Meet AYP**

What student data are utilized for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention model?

As shown in Table 22, there were 26 examples given by respondents for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention Model. Since many principals listed multiple progress monitoring programs/resources the percentages will total more than one hundred percent. Six (86%) of the respondents stated AIMSweb was utilized for progress monitoring. All seven respondents made references to specific programs and resources. These include, “NWEA,” “ISAT,” “CICO/CAC,” “SWIS (School Wide Information Systems),” “Thinklink – reading/math,” “Jerry Johns’ passages for decoding, comprehension, fluency” and “Easy CBM.” Two (14%) respondents stated that “Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy” was utilized for progress monitoring.

**Table 22**

*Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM1</td>
<td>“NWEA, AIMSweb, ISEL, Reading Benchmark, district essentials, lexile scores, writing scores”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“AIMSweb/Probes, Benchmarks, ISAT”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“Observation, student work samples, Easy CBM, report cards, AIMSweb”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“3 week assessments, Progress monitoring with AIMSweb, CICO/CAC, SWIS (School Wide Information Systems)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“ISEL, Jerry Johns’ passages for decoding, comprehension, fluency”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“AIMSweb, Intervention progress”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“DIBELS, Thinklink – reading/math, AIMSweb – math, classroom data (grades)”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

There were 11 references to general interventions or progress monitoring among the seven respondents. These examples are “intervention progress,” “Benchmarks,”
“Reading Benchmark,” “district essentials,” “lexile scores,” “writing scores,”
“observation,” “student work samples,” “report cards,” “3 week assessments,” and
“classroom data (grades).”

Met AYP

What summative student data from the Response to Intervention model are
utilized to assess student progress/achievement?

As displayed in Table 23, there were 45 responses given among the 21
respondents. Since many principals listed multiple summative assessments the
percentages will total more than 100%. Twelve (27%) of the examples were references
to general summative student data. These include, “Weekly reading tests,” “math
common assessment,” “running record information,” “local assessment data in math and
reading,” “district assessments – benchmark testing (trimesters),” “curriculum
benchmarks,” “math unit tests and post tests, writing samples, “classroom summative
assessments,” “scoring rubric for writing,” “reading theme tests,” and “Grade level data
meetings are held after each benchmarking session to assess how program is working
(September/January/May).”

For purposes of summative student data there were specific examples given in
Table 23. Additionally, two (4%) references were stated for “Fountas and Prinnell
guided reading level” and one (2%) reference for “Word their Way spelling assessment”
and one (2%) reference for “Discovery Benchmarks. The respondents stated specific
summative student data resources or programs. These examples included two (4%)
responses for “Developmental Reading Assessment,” two (4%) responses for “Terra
Nova,” eight (18%) responses for “AIMSweb,” one (2%) indication of STAR reader” and one (2%) “Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy.” Also, there were five (11%) responses for the use of ISAT scores” for summative student data and there were eight (18%) for NWEA-MAP (fall, winter, spring, 3x per year to develop and achieve growth target data, end of the year).

Table 23

**Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Met AYP (n=21)**

| M1 | “Weekly reading tests, DRA, Math Common Assessment, scoring rubric for writing, reading theme tests, Terra Nova, AIMSweb” |
| M2 | “Grade level data meetings are held after each benchmarking session to assess how program is working (September/January/May)” |
| M3 | “MAP data – fall, winter, spring” |
| M4 | Answer not provided |
| M5 | “Not sure” |
| M6 | “Fountas and Prinnell guided reading level” |
| M7 | “Aimsweb – MAZE and MIDE” |
| M8 | “MAP/ISAT/Terra Nova” |
| M9 | “ISAT/NWEA-MAP/DRA” |
| M10 | “Student reading levels (Fountas and Prinnell), Math unit tests and post tests, writing samples, “Word their Way” spelling assessment” |
| M11 | “MAP – 3x per year to develop and achieve growth target data, District Assessments – Benchmark Testing (Trimesters), ISAT (1x per year)” |
| M12 | “CBM/Dibels, progress monitoring graphs” |
| M13 | “AIMSweb, MAP, Local Assessment Data in math and reading, PBIS behavior data, attention and focus – time on task” |
| M14 | “Charting from AIMSweb and data collected throughout the intervention process.” |
| M15 | “AIMSweb, STAR reader, NWEA – MAPS” |
| M16 | “District required assessments, state assessment, grade level assessments” |
| M17 | “AIMSweb” |
| M18 | “AIMSweb, Running record information” |
| M19 | “Discovery Benchmarks, Curriculum Benchmarks, Classroom Summative Assessments” |
| M20 | “MAP, ISEL, AIMSweb – benchmarking” |
| M21 | “MAP – end of the year, ISAT scores” |
One (2%) respondent did not provide an answer, while another indicated “Not sure.” Finally, one (2%) respondent provided information on “PBIS behavior data, attention and focus – time on task,” which is not an academic intervention or tool.

**Did Not Meet AYP**

What summative student data from the Response to Intervention model are utilized to assess student progress/achievement?

As shown in Table 24, there are several references to specific examples of summative student data. Since many principals listed multiple examples of summative assessments the percentages will total more than one hundred percent. For example, three (15%) references were made to “ISAT” and two (10%) for NWEA MAP. Also, four (20%) respondents stated that “AIMSweb (3 x year benchmark),” was used for summative student data. Additionally, one (5%) respondent stated the reading inventory “(Basic Reading Inventory)” was used for summative student data. Another (5%) reference was “Stanford,” along with two (10%) references to “Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy.”

Table 24

**Building Level Administrator Responses for School that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM1</td>
<td>“ISAT, NWEA, AIMSweb, ISEL, Reading Benchmark (primary)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Team data”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“AIMSweb, Stanford, ISAT”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“6 week progress check, 3 x year benchmark on AIMSweb”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“MAP, BRI (Basic Reading Inventory), District math assessments, ISAT, ISEL”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“AIMSweb, Intervention progress, Student progress in the classroom”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“In progress at this point”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Six (30%) respondents provided general summative student data examples. The examples included “district math assessments,” “6 week progress check,” “intervention progress,” “student progress in the classroom” “reading benchmark (primary),” and “Team data.” Finally, one (5%) administrator shared that the district or school is “in progress at this point”

Summary

The presentation of data in Chapter IV was to display participant responses regarding the implementation of the RtI model from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year in DuPage, McHenry, and Will Counties in Illinois. The three factors explored were professional development opportunities, the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds, and how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP.

The questionnaires were completed by elementary building level administrators (n=168) and questionnaires were returned without any information that revealed specific information about school district or school. The total number of questionnaires sent was 168 with a return rate of 16%. The number of questionnaires received in the Met AYP category was 21 of 128 that were sent (17%), while seven of the 45 questionnaires sent in the Did Not Meet category were received (15%).

Chapter V will analyze these data and discover common themes that emerge to answer the primary research questions.
CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The framework of systems’ thinking and will and capacity has been applied to understand the complexities of change within schools as to the RtI model implementation. The implementation of the RtI model needs to be within the expectations of the current laws of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). The overall objective of this study was to understand how building level administrators meet the expectations of the law while implementing the RtI model. The areas of focus were the professional development opportunities that were provided in order to meet the needs of their certified faculty along with understanding the budget implications of the RtI model and to learn what progress monitoring and student outcome data are utilized.

The purpose of this study has been to investigate three factors regarding the implementation of the RtI model. First, the study ascertained what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Second, the study investigated the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds within schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. Finally this study examined how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. School district
administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Changes mandated by NCLB and IDEA should reflect the influence of these federal legislative acts concerning how students are provided a United States education.

**Research Questions**

1. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
2. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
3. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
4. What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?
5. What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?
6. How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative research method was used due to the open-ended nature of the research questions. These questions require data-rich information from the people *on the ground* participating in the implementation of a new
initiative. The use of open-ended questions allowed the researcher to gather and understand the perspective of the participants and the impact of the change in practice (Patton, 1987). The ability to create meaning from direct quotes, explanations, and ideas provided the depth of understanding related to the change of practice of the RtI model. This researcher used a qualitative method to understand initiatives and circumstances as a whole (Patton, 1987). Data were analyzed by reviewing each qualitative questionnaire using cross-case analysis with the objectives of generalization, and multilayered understanding and explanation. From this analysis the following general findings were gleaned.

**General Findings**

**Needs Assessment**

The information gathered from the questionnaires on the use of needs assessment is reflected in general findings one through four.

**General Finding 1:** Fifty-two percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP was given a needs assessment.

**General Finding 2:** Forty-three percent of building level administrators in this study, for that Did Not Meet AYP, were given a needs assessment.

**General Finding 3:** Fifty-two percent of the certified faculty in this study, for schools that Met AYP, were given a needs assessment.

**General Finding 4:** Eighty-six percent of the certified faculty in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, were given a needs assessment.
For the implementation of RtI, as identified by Bergstrom (2008), one of the first year outcomes include a complete self study or needs assessment. Messelt (2004) states that data-driven decision making has five implementation steps, which includes the step of conducting information inventory or audit. The examples provided for conducting an information inventory or audit are surveys and questionnaires, along with interviews or focus groups.

Nearly 50% of the building level administrators in both the Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP were given a needs assessments.

Building Level Administrator M2 stated:

The need of the entire building was assessed with a survey and through the RtI team.

Building Level Administrator M6 shared:

Yes, survey and discussion

Building Level Administrator NM1 stated:

The school’s needs were assessed.

Building Level Administrator NM 6 shared:

Yes, through discussions with the administrative team and the RtI coordinator.

According to the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc. (2008) in the (Response to Intervention: Blueprints for Implementation for the School Building Level) needs assessments are integral part of the process of change,
which consist of consensus building, professional development opportunities, and core program planning.

Fifty-two percent of the certified staff in the Met AYP group were given a needs assessment, while 86% of the certified staff in the Did Not Meet AYP group were given a needs assessment.

Building Level Administrator M1 stated:

Yes, there were surveys created to identify their perspective on their P.D. needs.

Building Level Administrator M3 shared:

Yes, a needs assessment survey has been completed by the entire staff for the last 3 years. The results help the district [determine] the staff development opportunities for the following year.

Building Level Administrator M21 added:

Yes, surveys and checklists.

Building Level Administrator NM4 stated:

Yes, this guided our planning to implement the professional development activities; 1) surveys, 2) conversations at faculty meetings.

Building Level Administrator NM7 shared:

Staff survey (in-house; not district)

Reeves (2010) found that successful planning for professional development included comprehensive needs assessment. This planning requires that school leadership
decisions regard the use of time, assignment of staff, and distribution of resources that are
directly connected to student needs (Reeves, 2010).

“To learn, people must be at certain readiness levels, be open to learning, be
responsive to teaching, feel empowered and appropriately challenged, and know a sense
of safety and trust” (Reynolds, Murrill, & Whitt, 2006 p. 125). Also, a shared vision
fosters commitment and enrollment rather than compliance (Reynolds, Murrill, & Whitt,
2006). Senge (2006) states that tools that promote personal awareness and reflective
skills along with a culture that promotes inquiry and challenges ideas allows for change
and implementation of new initiatives. Overall, a needs assessment can lead to
comprehensive professional development that is focused on areas where the greatest
needs exist (McClelland, 1992). As indicated by the general findings, nearly half of the
administrators and certified faculty from the Met AYP were given a needs assessment. In
contrast, nearly half of the administrators from the Did Not Meet AYP were given a
needs assessment while eighty-seven percent of the certified faculty from the Did Not
Meet AYP group were given a needs assessment.

**Professional Development/Supporting Implementation**

The information gathered from the questionnaires on the use of professional
development to support the implementation and understanding of the RtI model are
reflected in general findings five through seven.

**General Finding 5:** Sixty-seven percent of the building level administrators in this
study, for schools that Met AYP, attended outside workshops and conferences to
implement and understand RtI and seventy percent of the building level administrators in
this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, attended outside workshops and conferences to implement and understand RtI.

**General Finding 6:** The certified faculty in this study for schools that Met AYP attended both outside and in district workshops and conferences to implement and understand RtI.

**General Finding 7:** The certified faculty in this study for schools that Did Not Meet AYP either attended outside workshops and conferences or attended in district workshops and conferences to implement and understand RtI.

Both NCLB, 2001 and IDEA, 2004 support the implementation of high quality professional development to improve student achievement (Bergstrom, 2008). Research substantiates that professional development should deepen teacher knowledge of content and how to teach students, increase a teachers understanding of how students learn, and provides opportunities for active hands-on learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). This enables teachers to acquire new knowledge, apply it to practice, reflect on results with colleagues in a collaborative and collegial manner (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

When implementing a new initiative building level administrators, part of the Local Education Agency (LEA), often attend professional development opportunities that provide them with the knowledge base necessary to support certified staff members. The professional development needed to implement and understand RtI, provided by the LEA, depends on current practice, the extensiveness and variety of interventions
available through general education and skill level of the certified faculty of the district
(Bastche et al., 2008).

Sixty-seven percent of building level administrators for schools that Met AYP
attended outside workshops and conferences. Seventy percent building level
administrators in the Did Not Meet AYP group reported attending outside workshops and
conferences.

Building Level Administrator M1 stated:

Monthly meetings of administrator identified their needs and were
provided with in-house training, site visits and professional workshops.
Individualized to meet the needs team member.

Building Level Administrator M8 shared:

In-house staff development, and IPA (Illinois Principal Association), PDA
(Professional Development Advisors), CEC (Council for Exceptional
Children) workshops/training.

Building Level Administrator M14 added:

I have attended workshops & conferences to learn more specific aspects of
the RtI process & model.

Building Level Administrator NM 1shared:

Workshops offered by special education cooperative and the CEC

Building Level Administrator NM 4 stated:
ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops, I-Aspire workshops.

Building Level Administrator NM5 added:

Training through NDSED (North DuPage Special Education Cooperative).

Certified faculty of both groups attended both outside and in-district workshops and conferences. When certified faculty members learn with each other and are given similar information the probability that members will reach the same conclusion are enhanced (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). Also, there are studies that indicate that professional development lasting 14 or fewer hours showed no effects on student learning, but programs of 30 to 100 hours provided over six to 12 months had the largest effects (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Building Level Administrator M7 stated:

Outside conferences, In-house in-services

Building Level Administrator M12 shared:

Participation in the districts RtI committee. Several workshop days during the 2010-11 were dedicated to RtI. Teachers were allowed to attend out of district workshops on RtI.

Building Level Administrator M19 added:

Self-selected workshops outside of the district, Full-district workshops offered to all teachers, on-site coach.
To implement and understand RtI, the building level administrator for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported that certified faculty either attended outside workshops and conferences or attended in district workshops and conferences.

Building Level Administrator NM5 stated:

District-level training

Building Level Administrator NM6 shared:

AIMSweb training, Intervention training

Sixty-seven percent of the building level administrators in the Met AYP group attended outside workshops and conferences. The certified faculty in the Met AYP schools attended both outside workshops and conferences and in-district workshops. Seventy percent of the building level administrators from schools that Did Not Meet AYP attended outside workshops and conferences. The certified faculty from schools that Did Not Meet AYP attended either outside or in-district workshops or conferences.

Systems’ thinking provides the view that change is a process not a static event (Senge, 2006). Schools are learning organizations that provide staff development connected to established practice while supporting the challenges faced when implementing new initiatives (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000). A building level administrator creates a school that is a learning organization when he or she understands that “personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in these, it means approaching one’s life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint” (Senge, 2006, p.131). Along with personal mastery a building level administrator needs to recognize
that mental models shape how individuals act, so to implement a new initiative like RtI a building level administrator should expect that certified faculty will continually question a change in practice, which can lead to effective change (Senge, 2006).

In order to establish a positive will and capacity a building level administrator needs to effectively position personnel by knowing their certified faculty and assigning them to best position (Israel & Kasper, 2004). To support the implementation of a new initiative a building level administrator has to strategically assign teachers and also provide the time to implement concentrated professional development (Reeves, 2010). Another feature of building positive will and capacity within the implementation process is to balance the new initiative with past practice; personnel readiness and ongoing, effective professional development (Israel & Kasper, 2004; Shores & Chester, 2009). The administrators and the certified faculty from the Met AYP group and the administrators from the Did Not Meet AYP group attended both in-district and out-of-district workshops. This indicates that the implementation of the RtI model for administrators was supported by internal expertise along with being supported by the expertise of professionals outside the district. On the other hand, the certified faculty from the Did Not Meet AYP group either attended in-district or out-of-district professional development opportunities for the implementation of the RtI model. This approach causes the certified faculty to depend on only one source of learning, either internal or external expertise.
Professional Development/Creating Structures for RtI

The information gathered from the questionnaires on the use of professional development opportunities to establish a structure for RtI model are reflected in general findings eight through ten.

**General Finding 8:** The majority of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP and for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, attended professional development opportunities outside and in district workshops and conferences to establish a structure for RtI.

**General Finding 9:** Fifty-two percent of the certified faculty in this study, for schools that Met AYP attended in district workshops and conferences to establish and understand RtI.

**General Finding 10:** Twenty-nine percent of certified faculty, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP attended in district workshops and conferences to establish and understand RtI.

The building level administrators from both groups attended professional development opportunities outside and in-district workshops and conferences to establish a structure for RtI. According to Fullan (2006, p. 85) capacity building is multifaceted because it involves everything, it affects new knowledge, skills, and competencies; enhanced resources; and stronger commitments, which includes ongoing professional development.

Building Level Administrator M2 stated:
SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County),
Release time to work in teams, RtI external coach.

Building Level Administrator M6 shared:
County trainings, work with external and internal coaches, specific
trainings for intervention programs.

Building Level Administrator M17 added:
A number of staff attended Aspire workshops to have contact with district
reps who have implemented RtI within our districts prior to our getting on
board. Admin workshops to introduce instruments and develop
consistency in tools across the district.

Building Level Administrator NM3 stated:
Utilized school improvement days, had teacher reps from RtI committee
provide info to staff, creation of RtI binder to reference new procedures,
faculty meeting Q & A sessions, guided benchmarking/progress
monitoring grade level meetings, phases (not everything at once)

Building Level Administrator NM4 shared:
External coach from SASED (School Association for Special Education in
DuPage County) provided step by step assistance for implementing. We
have been working on RtI several years so the leap was not huge.

In contrast, the certified faculty attended professional development opportunities
outside and in-district workshops and conferences to establish a structure for RtI less
often. Fifty-two percent of the certified faculty in this study, for schools that Met AYP
attended in district workshops and conferences to establish and understand RtI. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of certified faculty, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP attended in district workshops and conferences to establish and understand RtI.

Teaching practices and student learning will be transformed by professional development that is sustained, coherent, and intense (Bergstrom, 2008; Cohen & Hill, 2001). Professional development, when embedded within a system-change perspective that is focused on the issues of adoption and implementation, will help to create an environment that can help sustain a given practice (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007, p. 633).

Building Level Administrator M3 stated:

Articulation meetings between regular education staff and special education staff facilitated by the task force members on a monthly basis during early release days.

Building Level Administrator M15 shared:

Workshops, building meetings

Building Level Administrator M18 added:

Building level training, observation of problem-solving teams, school psychologist trained on problem-solving paperwork and process.

Building Level Administrator NM1 stated:

Outside workshops, ongoing work together within the building

Building Level Administrator NM6 shared:

Participation in grade-level data analysis meetings, district presentations.
When participating in effective professional development teachers experienced a level of personal mastery which translated into student learning (Reynolds, Murrill, & Whitt, 2006). The transformation areas of leadership, professional development, culture, change, and curriculum implementation are directly related to adopting the RtI model (Batsche et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2006). Applying a systems’ view of administration, the building level administrator considers the inputs into the system, such as federal legislation and fiscal realities to make decisions, change, and improve teaching along with providing teacher-centered approach to professional development (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2007; Reynolds, Murrill, & Whitt, 2006).

Creating a structure for the RtI model among the administrators for the Met AYP group and the Did Not Meet AYP group was supported by in-district and out-of-district professional development. The professional development to establish the structure for the RtI model for the certified faculty of the Met AYP and the Did Not AYP group differed. Nearly half of the certified faculty in the Met AYP group attended in-district and out-of-district professional development while only 29% of the certified faculty of the Did Not Meet AYP group attended in-district and out-of-district professional development opportunities. This could indicate that the schools maybe preparing to create the structure for the RtI model through the administration and are only now beginning to include the certified faculty in the process.

**Early Intervening Funds/Awareness**

The information gathered from the questionnaires on Early Intervening funds awareness is reflected in general findings eleven through fourteen.
General Findings 11: Forty-three percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP, were not aware of Early Intervening funds.

General Findings 12: Fifty-seven percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, were not aware of Early Intervening funds.

General Findings 13: Eighty-six percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP, do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget.

General Findings 14: One hundred percent of the building level administrators in this study that provided an answer, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget.

The building level administrators had three choices:

a. District provided funds as part of the building-based budget.
b. Funds distributed by the district office
c. Not aware of Early Intervening funds

Nearly half of the building level administrators in both groups reported that they were not aware of the Early Intervening funds. For schools that Met AYP eighty-six percent (86%) of the building level administrators in this study do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. All of the building level administrators in this study that provided an answer, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget.
An LEA may not use more than 15% of the amount the LEA receives under Part B of the Act for any fiscal year, less any amount reduced by the LEA pursuant to 34 CFR 300.205, if any, in combination with other amounts (which may include amounts other than education funds), to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services, which may include interagency financing structures, for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. [34 CFR 300.226(a)] [20 U.S.C. 1413(f)(1)]

In implementing coordinated, early intervening services under 34 CFR 300.226, an LEA may carry out activities that include:

- Professional development (which may be provided by entities other than LEAs) for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and

- Providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction. [34 CFR 300.226(b)] [20 U.S.C. 1413(f)(2)]

Consistent clarification of what is valued; learning how to see the current reality more clearly assists the building level administrator and the certified faculty in implementing the RtI model (Senge, 2006). *Will* is generally understood to be the
implementer’s positive or negative viewpoint of an educational policy. *Capacity* is understood to be the level of the implementer’s skills, knowledge, networks, and financial resources in order to execute initiatives (Burch, 2007). The three components that facilitate positive *will* and *capacity* are:

1) Personnel mobilization: This involves a building level administrator knowing the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and placing them in the best position for them and the school.

2) Necessary functions: This involves a building level administrator balancing new initiatives with established practices. Having too many expectations can create a negative *will* or deplete *capacity* over time, which can then overwhelm teachers.

3) Linkages: This involves a building level administrator creating a system of communication and structure that promotes trust and accountability (Israel & Kasper, 2004).

A building level administrator must have the view of the entire system of the school, which includes the knowledge of how to utilize the financial resources available such as Title I, Title III, and the special education budget (15%) for a school to support the implementation of a new initiative like RtI (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2009; O’Connor, 2009). It is also important for building level administrators to effectively assign certified faculty and communicate necessary information to support the implementation of a new initiative which is part of the transformation process (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2009; O’Connor, 2009). The effective use of finances and information promotes understanding
and the application of knowledge. In this study nearly half of the building level administrators in the Met AYP group indicated that they were not aware of the Early Intervening funds while 86% of the building level administrators in the Met AYP indicated that were not aware of the Early Intervening funds. On the other hand, 86% of the building level administrators for the Met AYP group did not have Early Intervening funds as part of their building based budgets, while one hundred percent of the building level administrators for the Did Not Meet AYP group reported not having the Early Intervening funds as part of their building based budgets. This indicates that there is more awareness of these funds than there is access and self-directed use of these funds by the building level administrators.

**Early Intervening Funds/Use**

The information gathered from the questionnaires on the use of Early Intervening funds for professional development for RtI is reflected in general findings fifteen through seventeen.

**General Findings 15:** Forty-six percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP did not know how the Early Intervening funds were used for professional development for the Response to Intervention model.

**General Findings 16:** Fifty-seven percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP did not know how the Early Intervening funds were used for professional development for the Response to Intervention model.

**General Findings 17:** Twenty-five percent of building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP utilized funds to secure speakers, purchase books, and to
provide compensation for certified staff to participate in professional development opportunities.

For schools that Met AYP, 46% of the building level administrators did not know how the Early Intervening funds were used for professional development for the Response to Intervention model.

- Building Level Administrator M1 “No idea”
- Building Level Administrator M5 “Not sure”
- Building Level Administrator M9 “I have not accessed these funds”

In this study the building level administrators for schools that Did Not Meet AYP 57% did not know how the Early Intervening funds were used for professional development for the Response to Intervention model.

- Building Level Administrator NM1 stated:
  “Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped cooperative. Building principal does not control the funds.”
- Building Level Administrator NM 2 “Not applicable”
- Building Level Administrator NM 5 “Not applicable”

For schools that Met AYP, 25% of building level administrators in this study utilized funds to secure speakers, purchase books, and to provide compensation for certified staff to participate in professional development opportunities.

- Building Level Administrator M2 “RtI external coach; workshops”
- Building Level Administrator M3 “Book Studies,” “consultants”
- Building Level Administrator M19 “On-site coach, speakers at SIP meetings, Planning/collaboration pay”
According to IDEA 2004, professional development (which may be provided by entities other than LEAs) for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction. [34 CFR 300.226(b)] [20 U.S.C. 1413(f)(2)]

When providing professional development related to the RtI model, it is important that professional development is research-based practice and aligned with an effective multitier intervention model that connects teacher influence and student outcome (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007). The utilization of EIS funds can build will and capacity when certified faculty are given numerous opportunities and purposeful training throughout the school year to solidify school improvement efforts and new initiatives (White & Smith, 2010). Schools that are successful consider professional development as a priority and it builds on the beginning teacher preparation to sustain teachers for the entirety of their careers (Danielson, 2002). A building level administrator will increase the depth of change when managing funding, such as EIS funding, and by providing the time to participate in professional learning opportunities (Reeves, 2010). An integral part of successful implementation of a new initiative is to effectively finance the school to produce preferred outputs such as student growth and achievement (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2007).
Systems theory has been used as a framework for analyzing and solving problems in schools for several decades (Stollar, Poth, Curtis, & Cohen, 2006). Building a shared vision fosters a commitment to the long term and understanding that mental models focuses on the openness needed to reveal the deficiencies in our present ways of seeing the world (Senge, 2006; Stollar, Poth, Curtis, & Cohen, 2006). Team learning develops the skills of groups of people so they may look for the larger picture beyond their own individual perspectives, understanding that personal mastery encourages the personal motivation to continually learn how our actions affect our world (Senge, 2006).

Early Intervening Funds/Curriculum

The information gathered from the questionnaires on the use of Early Intervening funds for curricular purchases for RtI model is reflected in general findings eighteen through twenty.

**General Findings 18:** Forty-four percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP reported they did not have knowledge of the Early Intervening funds or how the funds were utilized.

**General Findings 19:** The building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP identified the curricular purchases as intervention programs and kits.

**General Findings 20:** Seventy-five percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported they did not have knowledge of curricular purchases or reported lack of control of funds.

Forty-four percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP reported they did not have knowledge of the Early Intervening funds or
how the funds were utilized. The changes in IDEA allow school districts to use 15% of
the monies given by the federal government for special education to be used for early
intervening services for all children. Just about half of the building level administrators
were not knowledgeable of the availability of the funds.

Building Level Administrator M10  “I don’t know”
Building Level Administrator M15  “Don’t know”
Building Level Administrator M20  “Not applicable”

General education must deliver a scientifically validated curriculum and provide
differentiated instruction for all students’ learning. Early Intervening Services provides
intensive services to support struggling students in general education so certified faculty
can identify these students in order to provide interventions to improve their rate of
learning (Cahill, 2007).

Building Level Administrator NM1 stated:

Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped
cooperative. Building principal does not control funds.

Building Level Administrator NM2 shared:

“Not sure”

Building Level Administrator NM6 added:

“Not applicable”

When utilizing a three tier intervention model for RtI school must purchase a core
curriculum (scientifically validated) for Tier I. Students who require, approximately
15%, more intensive intervention that is targeted according to student need will be often
participate in an intervention program connected to the core curriculum (Tier II); around 5% of students require a more individualized approach that includes more time and targeted goal areas (Short & Wilkins, 2009).

Building Level Administrator M3 stated:

“Interventions purchased: Reading Plus, Lexia, and Compass Learning”

Building Level Administrator M6 shared:

“Buying intervention program”

Building Level Administrator M7 added:

“Purchased researched-based interventions”

Co-teaching and collaboration offer a strong means of achieving the goals of RtI, allowing teachers and other professionals to interact in structured ways that allows for flexibility of instructional practice; it also provides intensive instruction for students at the time they need it (Murawski & Hughes, 2009). Knowledge of systems change, appropriate application of finances, and having a vast understanding of the most recent federal and state legislation is essential for building a positive will and capacity of certified faculty (Stollar, Roth, Curtis, & Cohen, 2006). It is important for a building level administrator to follow-up with the questions and concerns of the certified faculty along with providing ongoing professional development to enhance teacher effectiveness and increase their understanding of RtI model in order to improve student achievement (Reutebuch, 2008).

A building level administrator must create a system of communication and structure that promotes trust and accountability when implementing a new initiative
Effective leaders focus on equity of educational opportunity through common curriculum and assessments and communicate what success looks like by providing accurate information concerning student work and outcomes (Reeves, 2010; Stiggins, 2007). The transformation process includes curriculum that refers to and is connected to the expectations for student learning based on the school district’s learning objectives that are related to state standards (Danielson, 2002). Nearly half of the building level administrators in the Met AYP reported knowledge of how the Early Intervening funds were utilized to purchase curricular programs and interventions. Additionally, 75% of the building level administrators in the Did Not Meet group were not aware of how the Early Intervening funds were utilized.

### Student Data/Progressing Monitoring

The information gathered from the questionnaires on student data used for progress monitoring of each tier of RtI is reflected in general findings twenty-one through twenty-five.

**General Findings 21:** Eighty-one percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP, reported that AIMSweb®, a progress monitoring program, was used for progress monitoring.

**General Findings 22:** Eighty-six percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, reported that AIMSweb®, a progress monitoring program, was used for progress monitoring.

**General Findings 23:** Thirty-three percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP, reported that MAP (Measure of Academic
Progress) was used for progress monitoring, while 14% of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, reported that MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) was used for progress monitoring.

**General Findings 24:** Sixty-seven percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP reported multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.

**General Findings 25:** All of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.

A majority of the building level administrators in this study reported using AIMSweb, a progress monitoring program; 81% of schools that Met AYP and 86% of schools that Did Not Meet AYP.

The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) was utilized for progress monitoring 33% of the time reported by the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP, while 14% of the building level administrators in this study reported using MAP, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP.

Sixty-seven percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP reported multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.

Building Level Administrator M3 stated:

“AIMSweb, Lexia, Reading Plus, Read Naturally, Rocket Math, MAP, PMM, ISEL (Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy.
Building Level Administrator M6 shared:

AIMSweb, MAP NWEA, ISAT, Fountas and Prinnell levels.

Building Level Administrator M15 added:

AIMSweb, Reading Naturally, NWEA MAPS

In contrast, all (100%) of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.

Building Level Administrator NM1 stated:

NWEA, AIMSweb, ISEL, Reading Benchmark, district essentials, lexile scores, writing scores.

Building Level Administrator NM5 shared:

ISEL, Jerry Johns, passages for decoding, comprehension, fluency

Building Level Administrator NM7 added:

DIBELS, Thinklink – reading/math, AIMSweb – math, classroom data (grades)

Progress monitoring is defined as a scientifically-based practice that routinely assesses students’ academic performances to determine whether they are responding adequately to the instructional programs (http://www.rti4success.org/). Progress monitoring can be used to monitor implementation of specific interventions (Johnson et al., 2009).

Progress monitoring measurements should attend to the skills that are being targeted for the intervention and should show improvement in the targeted areas of the
intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2008; Mesmer & Mesmer, 2008). According to Walker (2008), RtI offers an opportunity for a reduction of students referred for special education services by providing rigorous, research-based practices and monitoring the student’s response to the intervention.

A building level administrator uses the inputs from the external environment, transforms them through administrative activities such as providing a structure, developing a culture, motivating, leading, decision making, communicating, implementing change, developing curriculum, administering personnel, and financing the school to produce outputs such as student growth and achievement (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2007).

Formative assessments are assessments of learning that measure a few concepts frequently. The more discrepant the student need is the more frequent the progress monitoring should occur (Batsche et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2006). The systematic analysis of student data from the RtI process is a self-correcting process that potentially improves student growth, which helps students meet the requirements of AYP especially for disaggregated subgroups like special education students (Batsche et al., 2008). Students need to exhibit “longitudinal knowledge; the basic capability for acting effectively over time, in way that leads to ongoing improvement, effectiveness, and innovation” (Senge et al., 2000, p. 187). When reporting resources used for progress monitoring there was consistency in the resource used by both groups, Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP, as over 80% in each group indicated using AIMSweb® for progress monitoring.
Student Data/Achievement

The information gathered from the questionnaires on summative student data used to assess student progress/achievement is reflected in general findings twenty-six through twenty-nine.

General Findings 26: Fifty-seven percent building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP indicated multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.

General Findings 27: Forty-two percent building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP indicated multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative test.

General Findings 28: Twenty-nine percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP indicated only progress monitoring programs or resources.

General Findings 29: Forty-two percent of the building level administrators in this study, for school that Did Not Meet AYP indicated only progress monitoring programs or resources.

Nearly half of each group indicated using multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests. Fifty-seven percent building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP and 42% building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP.

Building Level Administrator M1 stated:
Weekly reading tests, DRA, Math common assessment, scoring rubric for writing, reading theme tests, Terra Nova, AIMSweb

Building Level Administrator M10 shared:

Student reading levels (Fountas and Prinnell), Math unit tests and post tests, writing samples, “Word their Way” spelling assessment.

Building Level Administrator M15 added:

AIMSweb, STAR reader, NWEA - MAPS

Building Level Administrator NM1 stated:

ISAT, NWEA, AIMSweb, ISEL, Reading benchmark (primary)

Building Level Administrator NM3 shared:

AIMSweb, Stanford, ISAT

Building Level Administrator NM5 added:

MAP, BRI (Basic Reading Inventory), District math assessments, ISAT, ISEL

For schools that Met AYP, 29% of the building level administrators in this study indicated only progress monitoring programs or resources.

Building Level Administrator M3 stated:

MAP data – fall, winter, spring

Building Level Administrator M7 shared:

AIMSweb – MAZE and MIDE

Building Level Administrator M12 added:

CBM/Dibles, progress monitoring graphs
In comparison, 42% of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP indicated only progress monitoring programs or resources.

Building Level Administrator NM4 stated:

Six week progress check, 3x year benchmark on AIMSweb

Building Level Administrator NM6 shared:

AIMSweb, Intervention progress, student progress in the classroom

Summative assessments are designed to provide a final measure to determine if learning goals have been met (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006). A goal of progress monitoring is to promote success on summative assessments (Moody & Stricker, 2009). A typical use of summative assessments is to determine if a student has met the standards of a unit after a student has been given formative assessments throughout the unit to determine if instructional change or interventions are needed (Danielson, 2002; Moody & Stricker, 2009; Shores & Chester, 2009).

The difference between unit summative assessments and standards-based (state) assessments is the timing and the ability for the teacher to intervene and make changes to instructional practice in a timely manner. This is due to the fact that state scores are often reported the next school year. Typically instructional practice dictates that certified faculty adjusts their teaching and support students on a consistent basis (Moody & Stricker, 2009; Shores & Chester, 2009). The purpose of the ISAT (summative) assessment is to measure annual student achievement to demonstrate student progress towards a state standard (Fisher & Fry, 2007). A student’s academic performance on a standardized achievement assessment, like ISAT (a summative assessment), is used to
compare a student to a group of same aged peers who previously took the assessment under comparable conditions (Armstrong, 2006).

The RtI model is applied to decisions for general, at-risk, and special education students, by establishing a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by student performance data (Elliott, 2008). State tests, like the ISAT, attempt to determine if student has met the intended standards by a specific deadline (DuFour et al., 2006). As stated previously, another focus of the assessments such as ISAT is to evaluate the effectiveness of a school, which is connected to meeting AYP (Moody & Stricker, 2009). A small number of building level administrators in both the Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP groups indicated that NWEA MAP tests were utilized as a summative assessment even though it can project if a student will meet or exceeds standards on the ISAT. Even though ISAT is required for all schools in Illinois and is the indicator for meeting or not meeting AYP only small number of building level administrators in both the Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP groups indicated that ISAT was used as a summative assessment.

Research Questions

In order to answer to research questions the literature must be revisited. The research questions addressed three topics: (1) professional development, (2) finances, and (3) student data for schools that Met AYP and for schools Did Not Meet AYP.

Question 1: What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that made AYP?
Question 4: What professional development opportunities for building level administrators and certified faculty have been provided to establish a system for the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?

Professional development, as defined by Reeves (2010) includes a focus on student learning, evaluation of the effectiveness and vigor of adult decisions, and a focus on people and practice, not programs. Personal mastery becomes a discipline that is characterized by two fundamental actions (Senge, 2006). The first fundamental action is to frequently clarify what is valued and the next is to continuously learn to see present reality more clearly (Senge, 2006).

Faculty study groups provide a means for recurrent, job-embedded professional development and establish a culture that facilitates support teachers (Mahon, 2003). Also, Polka (2007), identified six professional needs that is comprised of:

1. Communication,
2. Empowerment,
3. Assistance in decision-making,
4. Leadership,
5. Opportunity for professional growth, and
6. Time

Teaching practices and student learning will be transformed by professional development that is sustained, coherent, and intense (Bergstrom, 2008; Cohen & Hill, 2001). Professional development, when embedded within a system-change perspective that is focused on the issues of adoption and implementation, will help to create an
environment that can help sustain a given practice (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007, p. 633).

The building level administrators in this study for the Met AYP group stated:

Building Level Administrator M1:

“Yes, Monthly meetings members of admin identified their needs and were provided with in house training, site visits and professional workshops.”

Building Level Administrator M12:

“Administration was taught along with staff & professional development provided.

For the implementation of RtI, as identified by Bergstrom (2008), one of the first year outcomes includes a complete self study or needs assessment. As indicated by Figure 25, 52% of the building level administrators completed a needs assessment for the Met AYP group (n=21) while 38% of the building level administrators did not complete the needs assessments and 24% did not directly answer the question.

Messelt (2004) states that data-driven decision making has five implementation steps, which includes the step of conducting an information inventory or audit. The examples provided for conducting an information inventory or audit are surveys and questionnaires, along with interviews or focus groups.

Building Level Administrator NM1:
“The school’s needs were assessed. As principal, I have received training through the CEC through attendance at workshop. Our district embraces the PLC concept and continuous improvement.”

Building Level Administrator NM4:

“Yes, we looked at what we needed to implement RtI and worked with our local Sped cooperative to plan.”

![Administrators' Needs Assessed](image)

*Figure 25. Professional Development Administrators’ Needs Assessment*

As indicated by Figure 26, 57% of the building level administrators completed a needs assessment for the Did Not AYP group (n=7) while 43% of the building level administrators did not complete the needs assessments.

As indicated by Figure 27, 86% of the certified faculty were given a needs assessment for the Met AYP group (n=21) while 29% of the certified faculty did not complete the needs assessments. Nineteen percent of the building level administrators did not directly answer the question.
Building Level Administrator M14:

“Yes, through survey and meetings. We have provided workshops and in-service training to those in need.”

Building Level Administrator M17:

“Yes, Meeting time subbed out, Instruments provided and intro time given for greatest success, planning time provided for grade levels to design schedules with common RtI times to best meet student needs.”
Figure 27. Certified Faculty Needs Assessment

As shown by Figure 28, 86% of the certified faculty were given a needs assessment for the Did Not AYP group (n=7) while 14% of the certified faculty did not complete the needs assessments.

Building Level Administrator NM1:

“School needs were assessed with data and feedback in leadership teams. Principal monitors and shares info with district curriculum director and superintendent”

Building Level Administrator NM3:

“Creation of RtI building committee (and RtI District committee), we utilized a survey at the building level to get started.”
Professional development, when embedded within a systemic change point of view that is attentive to the details of adoption and implementation, will help to establish conditions that will maintain a given practice (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007). The mark of a true professional is a continuous development of their pedagogy and content knowledge (Danielson, 2007). A teacher rated as distinguished for Professional Responsibilities, according to Danielson’s *A Framework for Teaching* (2007), will find opportunities for professional development and will endeavor to conduct action research. There were a variety of programs or resources specified by the building level administrators in the Met AYP group. The examples for training and resources provided:

1. Two days of training through CASE
2. PDA (Professional Development Advisors) workshops/training
3. CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) workshops/training
4. ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops
5. 3-day RtI workshop initially

6. RtI Innovations Conference for 3 RtI pilot schools (including my school)

7. SASED (*School Association for Special Education in DuPage County*) workshops

8. Work with Aimsweb creator

9. Illinois Principal Association (2 respondents)

Specifically, the building level administrators that Met AYP shared the following are examples of the professional development provided to support the implementation process.

Building Level Administrator M1:

“Our have provided in-house training with consultants and administrators and sent staff to other districts and workshops to increase their knowledge.”

Building Level Administrator M10:

“It has been more a day by day implementation where district level and building level specialist work alongside teachers to implement the RtI model and problem solve student need and intervention program, intensity”

As indicated by the building level administrators that Did Not Meet AYP the following are examples of the professional development and provided to support the implementation process.

Building Level Administrator NM3:
“Already had knowledge of this as a result of attendance in workshops/seminars prior to coming to this district.”

Building Level Administrator NM6:

“AIMSweb training, Intervention training, Basic Intro to RtI”

Building Level Administrator NM3:

“Utilized school improvement days, had teacher reps from RtI committee provide info to staff, Creation of RtI binder to reference new procedures, faculty meeting Q & A sessions, Guided Benchmarking/progress monitoring grade level meetings, Phases (not everything at once)”

Building Level Administrator NM4:

“SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County), ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops, our own faculty meetings, Tier 3 team meeting”

Sparks and Hirsch (2000, p. 5) explain that successful professional development is comprised of the following elements:

- Results-driven and job embedded,
- Focused on helping teachers become deeply immersed in subject matter and teaching methods,
- Curriculum-centered and standards based,
- Sustained, rigorous, and cumulative, and
- Directly linked to what teachers do in their classroom
In order to establish the structure or the framework of RtI the building level administration for schools that Met AYP shared examples of professional development provided along with building based and district level committees/meetings.

The following examples were provided by building level administrators for professional development opportunities to establish the structure of the RtI model. They consist of:

- In-district articulation,
- Opportunities to observe problem-solving teams,
- A team researched the structures of surrounding districts,
- Then shared that knowledge in workshop format with all members of admin who directly participated in the development of our structure,
- Each building administrator implemented RtI interventions individually.

Building Level Administrator M3:

“Monthly task force meetings, quarterly RtI leadership meetings, contact communication between schools about RtI progress, District led presentation and time devoted during early release days to work on RtI issues”

Building Level Administrator M13:

“Videos, Reading material, ASPIRE workshops and district committee and conversation”

One of the purposes of the NCLB Act, 2001 is “significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing staff substantial opportunities for professional development”
(NCLB 1001[10]). To establish the structure or the framework of RtI the building level administration for schools that Did Not Meet AYP there were five specific professional development opportunities examples provided. Two of them were for “Partnerships with ASPIRE – coaches” and “I-Aspire workshops; they provided templates for us to use.” One of the professional development examples was “District-wide Institute Day with George Bautsk” and another was “ROE (Regional Office of Education) workshops.” Finally, an administrator stated that professional development was provided by attending “SASED (School Association for Special Education in DuPage County) workshops.”

Also, building based and district committees/meetings were provided by the building level administrators for schools that Did Not Meet AYP.

Building Level Administrator NM1:

“Collaboration between leadership (teachers, sped, principal, district admin)”

Building Level Administration NM6:

“Internal work with the RtI Coordinator and school psychologist, follow-up discussions with Asst. Supt of instruction”

We can glean from the information provided by the building level administrators for both the Met AYP (n=21) and Did Not Meet AYP (n=7) that nearly 50% of the administrators were given a needs assessment. In contrast, more of the certified faculty (86%) from the Did Not Meet AYP group were given a needs assessment while 52% of the certified faculty of the Meet AYP group were given a needs assessments.
The use of a needs assessment measures skill and knowledge that can lead to supporting the defined areas of need (McClelland, 1992). Another aspect of the information shared focused on the in-district versus out-of-district professional development opportunities provided by both groups. The administrators from the Met AYP group had a variety of professional development opportunities, 52% offered in-district and 33% reported both in-district and out-of-district professional development opportunities. In comparison, the administrators from the Did Not Meet AYP group reported that 29% provided in-district professional development opportunities and only 14% provided both in-district and out-of-district professional development opportunities.

**Question 2: What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that made AYP?**

**Question 5: What is the awareness of and utilization of the early intervening funding for the implementation of the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) supplies about 100 billion dollars to save and create jobs and to reform education through a variety of funding streams, including: Part B of IDEA, 2004, Title I, Part A (www.ideadata.org).

Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) is a set of coordinated services for students in Kindergarten through grade 12 with a particular emphasis on students in K-3, who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment [§ 613(f) of IDEA; 34 CFR § 300.226(a)].
CEIS funds may be used for professional development for teachers and other school staff to support the delivery of scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions; direct interventions, such as educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports; and services aligned with activities funded under NCLB, 2001 [§ 613 (f) of IDEA; 34 CFR § 300.226 (b)].

As indicated by Figure 29, the building level administrators in this study from schools that Met AYP had a variety of responses to the multiple choice question regarding awareness of the Early Intervening funds. Forty-three percent answered ‘C’ stating they were not aware of the Early Intervening funds, 29% answered ‘B’ indicated funds distributed by the district office, 14% answered ‘A’ stating the district provided funds as part of the building-based budget, and 9% chose both ‘A’ the district provided funds as part of the building-based budget and ‘B’ indicated funds distributed by the district office. Lastly, 5% of the building level administrators did not provide an answer.

![Figure 29. Awareness of Early Intervening Funds](image)
Six respondents (24%) in the Met AYP in this study provided information on how funds were used. The curricular programs and resources include:

1. Technology, interventions
2. Book Studies, consultants, Interventions purchased: Reading Plus, Lexia, Compass Learning, pays for RtI leadership team and task force attendance at workshops and conferences
3. Internal and external coaching, buying intervention program
4. Purchased research-based interventions
5. Intervention kits, Materials/books
6. Purchased technology tools and sensory tools

As shown in Figure 30, there were not any respondents (0%) of the Did Not Meet AYP group that selected choice (a), which inquires did the district provide Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents circled choice (b) that indicated that funds were distributed by the district office. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents selected choice (c), which indicated that the building level administrator was not aware of Early Intervening funds and 14% of the respondents did not provide answer.

As indicated by Table 25, the building level administrators in schools that Did Not Meet AYP in this study did not provide much information on how funds were used for the program and resources. One of the building level administrators stated that an RtI coach was supported by the funds. Also, another building level administrator shared that the funds were used to purchase resource materials for interventions. The building level
administrators did not provide any information in reference to curricular programs and resources.

![Awareness of Early Intervening Funds](image)

*Figure 30. Awareness of Early Intervening Funds*

### Table 25

*Building Level Administrator Responses for Schools that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NM1</th>
<th>“Any funding comes from a combo of district resources and/or the sped cooperative. Building principal does not control the funds”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM2</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM3</td>
<td>“Funded RtI District coach (that I am aware of)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM4</td>
<td>“We did not- used for resource materials for interventions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM5</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM6</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM7</td>
<td>“Not applicable”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously stated, CEIS funds may be used for professional development for teachers and other school staff to support the delivery of scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions; direct interventions, such as educational and behavioral evaluations, services, progress monitoring, and supports; and services aligned with activities funded under NCLB, 2001 [§ 613 (f) of IDEA; 34 CFR § 300.226 (b)].
Given the ability for school districts to use CEIS funds to support the features of the RtI model, a majority of the Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP administrators in this study were either not aware of the Early Intervening funds or the funds were not part of the building-based budgets. Forty-three percent of the Did Not Meet AYP building level administrators indicated not being aware of Early Intervening funds, while 57% of the Met AYP level administrators indicated not being aware of Early Intervening funds. Twenty-nine percent of both the Met AYP and the Did Not AYP building level administrators reported that the funds are distributed by the district office.

Also, 46% of the building level administrators in the Met AYP and 57% of the Did Not Meet AYP group reported not knowing how the funds were used to provide professional development for the RtI model. Furthermore, 44% of the building level administrators for schools that Met AYP and 38% of the building level administrators for schools that Did Not Meet AYP were unaware of how Early Intervening funds were used to purchase curricular resources and programs to implement the RtI model.

A majority of the building level administrators in this study did not utilize these funds at building level even though the CEIS funds are used as a supplement to ensure that services supplied with Federal funds are in addition to, and do not substitute or supplant services.

**Question 3: How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that made AYP?**

**Question 6: How has student progress been monitored within the RtI model in schools that did not make AYP?**
Progress Monitoring is a scientifically-based practice that routinely assesses students’ academic performances to determine whether they are responding adequately to the instructional programs (Johnson et al., 2009; http://www.rtinetwork.org). Progress monitoring can be put into practice with an individual students or an entire class (Johnson et al., 2009; http://www.rtinetwork.org). Also, progress monitoring can be used to monitor implementation of specific interventions (Johnson et al., 2009; http://www.rtinetwork.org).

There were forty-six examples given by respondents for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention Model for the Met AYP group (n=21), but 17 (81%) of the respondents stated that AIMSweb® utilized for progress monitoring.

There were twenty-six examples given by respondents for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention Model for the Did Not Meet group (n=7) and six (86%) of the respondents stated AIMSweb® was utilized for progress monitoring.

According to the AIMSweb®, assessment and data management for RtI, is a benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment. The results are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system to determine response to intervention (http://www.aimsweb.com/).

A summative assessment is designed to provide a final measure to determine if learning goals have been met (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006). Final exams, unit assessments, and state standards tests are examples of summative assessments (Fisher &
Frey, 2007). Summative assessments are given periodically and evaluate numerous learning objectives on an infrequent basis (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).

The building level administrators in this study for the Met AYP group listed five (11%) responses for the use of ISAT scores” for summative student data and there were eight (18%) for NWEA MAP (fall, winter, spring, 3x per year) in order to develop and achieve growth target data by the end of the year. The building level administrators in this study for the Did Not Meet AYP group listed three (15%) references were made to “ISAT” and two (10%) for NWEA MAP.

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) endeavors to provide accurate, detailed information and provides measurable growth for data-driven instruction and decision making (http://www.nwea.org/). The students’ complete tests on the computer, these tests are called Measures of Academic Progress for math, reading, language use, and science (http://www.nwea.org/).

Interestingly, over 80% of the building level administrators for both groups report using AIMSweb for progress monitoring. According to National Center on Response to Intervention there are 13 other options for progress monitoring (www.rti4success.org) such as: Vanderbilt RTI Monitor for math and reading, Yearly Progress for math, reading language arts, and reading maze fluency.

Also, 11% of the Met AYP building level administrators reported ISAT as a summative assessment and 15% of the Did Not Meet AYP building level administrators reported ISAT as a summative assessment. Even though ISAT is a required yearly assessment that measures the achievement of students in reading and mathematics in
grades three through eight and science in grades four and seven, the number of building level administrators in both groups that reported ISAT as a summative assessment is below 20%.

Eight of the 21 (38%) building level administrators from schools that Met AYP and two of the seven (29%) of the building level administrators from schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported that NWEA MAP testing was utilized as a summative assessment. This type of summative assessment, unlike the once a year ISAT, is given in the fall, winter, and spring. This testing cycle allows districts to monitor growth over the year. This indicator can help schools determine if a student will meet standards on ISAT and it provides an opportunity for interventions.

**Limitations of the Study**

There were two limitations in the questionnaire design and questions proposed:

1. There were a limited number of questionnaires returned for the Did Not Meet AYP group. The minimum of questionnaires were returned for the Did Not meet AYP group (n=7) and even though there were more questionnaires returned in the Met AYP group (n=21) the overall amount was minimal.

2. The building level administrators in both the Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP respondents provided a limited amount of information on many of the open-ended questions within the returned questionnaires. There were also many instances of repeated answers.
**Recommendations for Further Study**

The subsequent recommendations are presented from these data in this study for further research concerning the systemic implementation of the RtI model.

1. Potential research could include interviewing the administrators from schools that Met AYP and from schools that Did Not Meet AYP to further investigate the professional development opportunities provided, the knowledge of Early Intervening funds, and the resources used for progress monitoring for the implementation of the RtI model.

2. A follow up study could focus on interviewing teachers from schools that Met AYP and from schools that Did Not Meet AYP to discover the professional development opportunities that were provided, specifically the type and the duration of the professional development opportunities made available for implementation of the RtI model.

3. Lastly, another study could include an interview with the assistant superintendent of finance for school districts that have schools that Meet AYP and for school districts that have schools that Did Not Meet AYP to determine the resources that were provided to support the implementation of the RtI model.

**Implications for Leadership Preparation**

Building level administrators are the change agents of their building by establishing a vision, determining the needs of the school, and implementing the desirable change (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009). In order to effectively implement change
that is needed to execute the interventions for the RtI model building level administrators need have knowledge and/or access to the Early Intervening funds. The effectiveness of programs is influenced by the funding strategies employed by the administrators at the building and district level (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007).

Forty-three percent of the building level administrators that Met AYP (n=21) and 57% of the building level administrators that Did Not Meet AYP (n=7) indicated they were not aware of the Early Intervening funds. Also, 44% of the building level administrators that Met AYP and 38% of the building level administrators that Did Not Meet AYP were not aware of how the Early Intervening funds were used to purchase curricular resources and programs. Early Intervening services provide concentrated services to support at-risk or struggling students in the general education (Cahill & Chandler, 2007).

Quality professional development that is aligned with a school’s purpose can raise student achievement (Bergstrom, 2008; Mahon, 2003; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000). Also, when professional development is focused on helping teachers become authentically immersed in their content area and teaching methods, student achievement can increase (Bergstrom, 2008; Mahon, 2003; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000). Student achievement can improve when curriculum centered and standards-based, sustained, rigorous and cumulative (Bergstrom, 2008; Mahon, 2003; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000). Implementation of RtI requires comprehensive, school wide systems reform in order to develop and sustain the use of the data and instructional practices (Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007). Professional development has three components of skill development: beliefs/attitudes,
knowledge, and skill (Batsche et al., 2008). Professional development is more effective when schools approach it not in isolation but rather as a coherent part of school reform effort (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2008).

Therefore leadership preparation should include teaching a comprehensive understanding of how the systems of schools interrelate. As indicated by Lunenberg and Ornstein (2009) to effect change, a building level administrator needs to understand the system of a school, which requires the awareness of the inputs, transformation process, and the outputs. For the purpose of this study the inputs, transformation process, and outputs discussed include:

- **Inputs:** Federal and State law; Financing
- **Transformation process:** curriculum; communication; improving teaching (professional development)
- **Outputs:** student achievement; student and employee growth

Fifty-two percent of the certified faculty in this study, for schools that Met AYP attended in district workshops and conferences to establish and understand RtI. Twenty-nine percent of certified faculty, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP attended in-district workshops and conferences to establish and understand RtI.

As indicated by National Center on Response to Intervention there are thirteen different options for progress monitoring (www.rti4success.org). The Center describes progress monitoring as a recurring measurements of academic performance that informs instruction of individual students in general and special education in grades K-8.
Progress monitoring also generates diagnostic information that helps practitioners make classification and program placement decisions (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Eighty-one percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Met AYP, reported that AIMSweb®, a progress monitoring program, was used for progress monitoring. Eighty-six percent of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP, reported that AIMSweb®, a progress monitoring program, was used for progress monitoring.

Consequently, the administrative preparation programs should include extensive training on data-based decision making to assist building level administrators determine appropriate areas of change, what teacher professional development are needed, and what curriculum resources and programming are needed in order to implement a new initiative. Furthermore, the administrative preparation programs should include a thorough education on the systems’ view of schools. The systems’ view would provide a comprehensive understanding on how fiscal resources, an input, can be allocated to purchase of necessary curriculum and program materials, a transformation that impact student growth, an output.

The areas of leadership preparation that have been covered thus far are:

- Knowledge of finances such as Early Intervening funds.
- Professional development is a coherent part of school reform and is aligned with the school’s purpose.
- Comprehensive understanding of the systems of schools.
- Curriculum is standards-based and aligned with the school’s purpose.
• Data-based decision making should be utilized.

Given these areas of leadership preparation and considering the consistency of data between the Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP group in this study other areas of preparation are needed for a leadership program. For example, this *sameness* of data among the two groups (Met AYP and Did Not Meet AYP) are reflected in the number of building level administrators who were given a needs assessment and the number of building level administrators that were aware of the Early Intervening funds. This indicates there is another layer of understanding that building level administrators need in order to build a bridge between current legislation and the change process while having a complete understanding of the culture of their buildings. It is important for a building level administrator to provide internal accountability that is based in the external accountability of state and federal law.

In order to create a culture of ownership when state and federal law requires specific change a building level administrator must be able to align the change process with the implementation intent and timeline required by the state and federal law for a new initiative such as RtI. Overall this alignment requires the building level administrators to have a greater understanding of implementing a new mandate within the change process and marrying it to the culture of his or her buildings.

The effective implementation of a new initiative must also include a building level administrator knowing and applying the purpose and procedures that are valued by his or her building. This application of purpose and procedures to a new initiative, like
RtI, will provide for a better outcome concerning the integration and ownership of a new initiative within the culture of the building.

**Conclusion**

The intention of this study was to examine three factors regarding the implementation of the RtI model. First, the study explored what professional development opportunities were afforded to administrators and certified faculty to support the implementation of the RtI model within schools that make AYP and those that did not make AYP. Second, the study investigated the awareness and utilization of Early Intervening funds within schools that make AYP and those that did not make AYP. Lastly, this study examined how schools monitor student progress within the RtI model for schools that made AYP and those that did not make AYP. School district administrators are expected to implement the expectations of change, improvement, and reform as federal and state legislation dictates (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008).

Both NCLB and IDEA established continuity within law and education policy. The connection between NCLB and IDEA exists in a number of areas such as eligibility and evaluations, AYP and accountability, assessments, studies, and research (Norlin, 2005; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). The relationship between the NCLB and IDEA upholds all students are supported by all stakeholders, regardless of academic ability or disability has caused a paradigm shift in education.

A qualitative research method was used due to the open-ended nature of the research questions. These questions require data-rich information from the people on the ground participating in the implementation of a new initiative. The use of open-ended
questions allows the researcher to gather and understand the perspective of the participants and the impact of the change in practice (Patton, 1987). This researcher utilized triangulation using questionnaire data and comparing it to current legislation and public records to determine if expectations of the current legislation occurred and produced the desired result of improved student academic achievement on a summative assessment.

Nearly half of the building level administrators in both groups reported that they were not aware of the Early Intervening funds. For schools that Met AYP, 86% of the building level administrators in this study do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. Of those that provided an answer, one-hundred percent of the building level administrators for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported that they do not have Early Intervening funds as part of the building-based budget. A majority of the building level administrators in this study reported using AIMSweb®, a progress monitoring program; 81% of schools that Met AYP and 86% of schools that Did Not Meet AYP. In contrast, all (100%) of the building level administrators in this study, for schools that Did Not Meet AYP reported multiple types of programs or resources that included progress monitoring, intervention materials, and summative tests.

The building level administrators in this study reported having limited knowledge and ability to apply Early Intervening funds, which indicates that the building level administrators might have been more effective in implementing a new initiative if they had a working knowledge of, and input on how, the Early Intervening funds should be used. Access and use of Early Intervening funds could provide building level
administrators the ability to streamline and provide appropriate professional development directly related to the needs of their certified faculty.

Also, the building level administrators reported a lack of variety with progress monitoring programs, in that most reported the use of AIMSweb®. Therefore, the investigation of other progress monitoring programs may offer schools a different set of data that will support interventions for students.

Reflecting upon these data and the information gathered for this study it has become apparent to this researcher that building level administrators need a strong foundation in systems’ thinking and know how to establish positive will and capacity. Given this understanding, a building level administrator can utilize finances to implement a new initiative with integrity while remaining supportive and in alignment with federal and state laws.

Furthermore, the building level administrator must make decisions that effect change in order to become part of the culture of the building. The change process must be supported by decisions that use finances effectively and includes a deep understanding of the state and federal law. This researcher learned that decisions based in data gathered from the correct source can promote effective change. For example, a building level administrator who collects data using needs assessments can provide certified faculty professional development opportunities that will support successful and sustained change.

A major component of the RtI model is progress monitoring which uses data to make decisions about student needs. A knowledgeable building level administrator makes use of all finances available and student data to purchase the appropriate curricular
interventions and programs that supports the progress monitoring process and impacts student growth and achievement. Overall, building level administrators must have a comprehensive understanding and ability to apply data-based decision making to utilize finances and to purchase appropriate curriculum.

Given systems’ thinking a building level administrator can ‘see’ how the inputs of personnel, legislation, and finances should be used effectively to implement change through the use data-based decision making. When decisions are informed by data and built on the foundation of a school’s vision and goals building level administrators are able to provide certified faculty and students with what they need. The use of data informs the progression of change and focuses the work of the building level administrator and certified faculty. An objective of the RtI model is to ultimately increase student growth and achievement, which is accomplished by the work of the building level administrator and certified faculty. The improvement of student growth and achievement is also supported by a building level administrator who utilizes systems’ thinking and who builds positive will and capacity within his or her school building.

After considering systems’ thinking and building will and capacity in this study it is important to recognize other aspects that may have impacted the outcome of these data. The two areas of consequence to consider are the number of questionnaires returned and the implementation timeline of NCLB and IDEA.

The amount of total questionnaires received (n=28) could have made it difficult to glean a true understanding of the implementation of the RtI model in the schools included this study. For example, data provided by the questionnaires for this study indicated that
there were limited resources available for progress monitoring. Approximately 80% of both groups (Met AYP and Not Met AYP) indicated utilizing AIMSweb® for progress monitoring. This result may be due to limited number of questionnaires returned, but it could also indicate that more exploration is needed to discover researched-based progress monitoring resources that are available for schools to use.

It is the responsibility of building level administrators to connect the development of will and capacity among certified faculty to the incremental requirements of NCLB and IDEA. Upon reflection, the timeline of implementing the expectations of NCLB and IDEA, specifically RtI model in the state of Illinois, resulted in an implementation gap in the change process. This may have impacted data between the two groups. The sameness of these data may reflect that schools regardless, of their ability to meet the expectations of AYP, were following the same training and implementation process as provided by NCLB and IDEA timelines set in the State of Illinois.

The overall purpose of NCLB is to have all students meet AYP expectations by 2013-2014 school year. Districts were expected to report reading and math scores for students within eight subgroups by the 2005-2006 school year. These subgroups include race (American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Black, and White), Limited English Proficient, students with Individual Education Plans, and economically disadvantage students. In addition, all teachers had to be highly qualified by the 2005-2006 school year, which required schools and districts to use resources to ensure all teachers met this highly qualified teaching certificate standard. These resources included professional development on the expectations of being a highly qualified teacher. District and out- of-
district professional development opportunities were provided to ensure that all certified faculty became highly qualified teachers. The term RtI is not part of the NCLB Act, but its expectation that all students experience improved academic success by using scientifically based research interventions is directly related to and supports the requirements of the RtI model.

The first three years of implementation of NCLB concerning Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were to ensure that these students were able to take state tests in their native language or were provided accommodations to participate in the English version of the state test. After 2005-2006 school year there were no exceptions for LEP students and this change required that all students must take the English version of the state test. This gap of implementation could have halted interventions or programs needed to support LEP students to meet standards on the English version of the state test. The RtI model ensures that all students are given high-quality instruction and requires progress monitoring to determine if interventions are needed. As the LEP student is now required to take the English version of the state test the RtI model provides early intervention, which gives the LEP students the opportunity to receive needed instruction and interventions without having to wait for special education services. Also, if a LEP student requires special education services the components of the RtI model have provided high-quality instruction and interventions throughout the student’s educational career prior to the special education eligibility determination.

Even though the schools in this study reported that they participated in learning opportunities and purchased materials to implement the RtI model there was a long-term
gap between the implementation of NCLB and the complete implementation of the RtI model within schools in Illinois. Not until January 1, 2009 were all school districts required to have an RtI plan in place. Given this information schools are likely to be in early stages of the implementation of the RtI model while trying to bridge the past practices of their schools and the new practices adopted for NCLB.

In this study the framework of systems’ thinking and will and capacity allowed this researcher to recognize the link between Early Intervening funds, professional development, and curricular purchases for programs and interventions. When considering the information provided by the building level administrators in this study will and capacity seems to be the foundation that a building level administrator needs to effectively support implementation of a new initiative like the RtI model. Also needed are the knowledge of and the application of funds such as Early Intervening funds so a building level administrator may provide the professional development and curricular needs of his or her faculty. Finally, this study shows that beyond the understanding of the change process and knowing how to sustain a new practice a building level administrator must be able to effectively integrate the timelines of legislation along with past and new practice.

The ability for a building level administrator to effectively implement a new initiative directly impacts educational leadership. This study points to the need in educational leadership programs that provide a greater understanding and application of current legislation and the change process. It also requires a greater knowledge of internal accountability of a school balanced with external accountability required by
legislation such as NCLB. There is a need to effectively impact the change process in order to create a new practice within a school’s culture.

Future leaders in education are not only required to consider the inputs such as including all stakeholders, but they are required to integrate state and federal legislation and funding sources while meeting the needs of certified faculty. These inputs directly impact the professional development opportunities and core curriculum that is provided to reach the ultimate goal of student achievement. These complexities are best served through the lens of systems’ thinking and building positive will and capacity.
APPENDIX A

FOIA LETTER
January 4, 2011

Matt Vanover
Director of Public Information

Dear Mr. Vanover:

I request under the Freedom of Information Act a list of names for the elementary schools and the elementary school principals in DuPage, McHenry, and Will County.

Sincerely,

Annette Cronin
Loyola University Chicago
Doctoral Candidate
Dear Principal,

If you have been a principal in your current building for three or more years, please read this letter carefully before deciding whether or not to participate.

My name is Annette Cronin and I am the researcher of this study. I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel in the School of Education. As you are part of the administrative group responsible for implementing the Response to Intervention model at the building level, I am requesting your participation in this study.

The purpose of my study is to discover the administrative implementation of the Response to Intervention model.

By participating and replying to each comprehensive question in the enclosed questionnaire, you will be assisting me in conducting my research study there is no risk in participating. This questionnaire should take no longer than twenty minutes to complete. Once completed, please return the questionnaire using the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope that is addressed to a temporary U.S. Post Office mailbox.

All records connected to this research study will be kept anonymous and secured by the researcher. All participant identity will be unknown to this researcher. There will be no identifying information included in published reports. Please be aware that by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire, your consent to participate is implied.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free to skip answer any question/questions, and to withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice. Please be aware that by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire, your consent to participate is implied.

If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me or my advisor using the below information:
If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Loyola’s Office of Research Services at 773.508.2689.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this questionnaire about Response to Intervention and its impact on professional development, assessments, and school finances. Your thoughtful responses are greatly appreciated and will help toward the development of this project.

Sincerely,

Annette Cronin
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University Chicago
QUESTIONNAIRE

Building Level Administrator’s Response to Intervention Model Questionnaire

Section 1
Part A

1. County (Please check) DuPage _____ McHenry _____ Will _____

2. Grade levels of your building? ____________________ (i.e., P-K, K-2, K-5, K-8, 1-5, 3-8)

3. Total number of students in your building _______________

4. Number of schools in your district _____________________

5. Total number of students in your district ________________

Part B

1. What is your age?
   <26  27–35  36–45  46–55  56>-

2. What is your highest level of education?
   Bachelor’s  Master’s  Specialist  Doctorate  Post-Doctorate

3. What is your gender?  M  F

4. How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?
   0  1–5  6–10  11–15  16–20  21–25  26>-

5. How many years of experience do you have as an administrator?
   0  1–5  6–10  11–15  16–20  21–25  26>-
6. How many years of experience do you have as an administrator in your current building?

7. Years of experience in special education?
   0  1–5  6–10  11–15  16–20  21–25  26>

Section 2
Part A

Professional Development

1. When planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model were the administrator’s needs assessed? How were these identified needs addressed?

2. What professional development opportunities have been provided for administrators to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model?
3. What professional development opportunities have been provided for administrators to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model?

4. When planning professional development for the implementation of the Response to Intervention model were the certified faculty needs assessed? How were these identified needs addressed?

5. What professional development opportunities have been provided for certified faculty to implement and understand the Response to Intervention model?
6. What professional development opportunities have been provided for certified faculty to establish the structure of the Response to Intervention model?

Section 2
Part B

Finances

1. How did you become aware of the Early Intervening funds? (Please circle all that apply)
   a. District provided funds as part of the building-based budget.
   b. Funds distributed by the district office
   c. Not aware of Early intervening funds

2. How did you use Early Intervening funding under IDEA to implement professional development for Response to Intervention?

3. How did you use the Early Intervening funding under IDEA in regards to curricular purchases to implement the Response to Intervention model?
Section 2
Part C:

Student Data

1. What student data are utilized for progress monitoring at each tier of the Response to Intervention model?

2. What summative student data from the Response to Intervention model are utilized to assess student progress/achievement?
APPENDIX D
SECOND COVER LETTER
Dear Principal,

If you have been a principal in your current building for three or more years, please read this letter carefully before deciding whether or not to participate.

My name is Annette Cronin and I am the researcher of this study. I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel in the School of Education. As you are part of the administrative group responsible for implementing the Response to Intervention model at the building level, I am requesting your participation in this study.

The purpose of my study is to discover the administrative implementation of the Response to Intervention model.

If you have already completed this questionnaire, I offer my sincere thanks. If you have not and still plan to participate, please take the twenty minutes to do so. You are free to skip any question/questions and to withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice as participation is voluntary. Once completed, please return the questionnaire using the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope that is addressed to a temporary U.S. Post Office mailbox. If you do not want to be in this study whatsoever, please disregard this follow-up letter.

By participating and replying to each comprehensive question in the enclosed questionnaire, you will be assisting me in conducting my research study there is no risk in participating. All records connected to this research study will be kept anonymous and secured by the researcher. All participant identity will be unknown to this researcher. There will be no identifying information included in published reports. Please be aware that by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire, your consent to participate is implied.

If you have any questions now or in the future, you may contact me or my advisor using the below information:
If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Loyola’s Office of Research Services at 773.508.2689.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this questionnaire about Response to Intervention and its impact on professional development, assessments, and school finances. Your thoughtful responses are greatly appreciated and will help me in the development of this project.

Sincerely,

Annette Cronin
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University Chicago
APPENDIX E

REMEMBER POST CARD
Reminder Post Card

The purpose of my study is to discover the impact of the implementation of the Response to Intervention model resulting from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) and the No Child Left Behind Act (2001).

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, thank you. If not, please complete the questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that was originally provided.

Sincerely,

Annette Cronin
Doctoral Candidate
Loyola University Chicago
REFERENCES


Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act (Public Law 85-926).


The National Defense Education Act (Public Law 85-926).


VITA

Annette R. Cronin is the daughter of James Peters and JoAnn Melcher. She was born in Waukegan, Illinois. She currently resides in a far northern suburb of Chicago, Illinois with her husband and daughter.

Annette attended public schools in the far northern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. After completing high school she attended Barat College for three semesters. For the next eight years she started a family and stayed home to raise her daughter. At the age of 27, she returned to higher education and attended Lake County College and earned her Associates Arts Degree. She then attended Barat College and completed her Bachelor’s of Arts Degree in Special Education. After which she began her career in education in a public therapeutic day school for three years while earning her Masters’ Degree in Technology in Education. After leaving the public therapeutic day school she began working in a public school with students with learning and behavior disabilities. After working at the public school for one year she began the Administration and Supervision doctorate program at Loyola University Chicago. Upon completion of three years of coursework she obtained a Type 75 certification in administration and started her dissertation work.

Throughout her career as an educator she has participated in many leadership roles. These experiences included special education administration, mentoring, and participating in school improvement teams at the building and district level. She has also
provided professional development opportunities for colleagues in the area of special education and differentiation.
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Annette R. Cronin has been read and approved by the following committee:

Marla Israel, Ed.D., Director
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Loyola University Chicago

Janis Fine, Ph.D.
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