Planning and First Step for RTI – Webinar Transcript September 29, 2009

Good afternoon. My name is Whitney Donaldson and I am pleased to welcome you to the webinar "Planning and First Step for RTI." This webinar is presented on behalf of the National Center on Response to Intervention. The National Center on Response to Intervention is a technical assistance and dissemination center funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. The Center's mission is to build the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in implementing proven and promising frameworks for RTI. We are pleased you could join us today.

We are fortunate to have Dr. Alexandra Hilt-Panahon and Deborah Gould Stover with us today.

Dr. Hilt-Panahon is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Special Education at Minnesota State University. Previously, she worked as a Project Coordinator for the Model Demonstration Project or MP3 in Pennsylvania. In this role she monitored and assisted schools with the implementation of RTI.

Ms. Gould Stover is currently an Elementary Principal at Central Dauphin School District in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She has been an educator for over twenty five years and served as a teacher, counselor, and Principal. She has been involved with the MP3 Project for the past four years to plan and implement RTI in Phillips Elementary School.

So now I will turn the presentation over them.

Slide 1: Planning and First Steps for RTI
Hello everyone. Welcome to "Planning and First Steps for RTI." As you can see from the first slide, this was definitely a collaborative effort in putting this webinar together. As we just heard that I'm currently at Minnesota state university. Debbie is the principal at Phillips Elementary, one of the schools where we conducted a model demonstration project that was funded through OSEP, Monitoring Progress of Pennsylvania Pupils, otherwise known as MP3. We planned and implemented response to intervention in three elementary schools in the Central Dauphin School District. So most examples we provide today come from that work. We were excited to do this webinar because we learned through our process and through implementing in the schools in Central Dauphin how important the planning and those initial activities that are done prior to implementation and then as you are beginning those initial steps of implementation they are so important to the success and long-term sustainability of an RTI model in any school.

Slide 2: Today's Agenda
Today we'll be talking about, first of all, the initial planning process. What needs to happen, when that needs to happen, and how. We're going to talk about how to introduce a model within a school or a district. Providing examples with how we did that in Central Dauphin and specifically at Phillips Elementary. We're then going to talk about key components to response to intervention models and means of making those most effective. First of all looking at the people

within the building and how to organize teams and align staff to maximize productivity, maximize resources and time. We are also going to spend some time today talking about schedules. Scheduling as we know is one of the most complex and important aspects of implementing an RTI model. We'll talk about how we did that and suggestions for how to do that effectively. We are then going to talk about professional development and what needs to occur in that area. And then finally we'll wrap up with some conclusions and some lessons that we learned through this process.

Polling Slide (as seen in the webinar recording)

Before we get started with the content, we did just want to quickly poll everyone to get an idea of where you are in your school or in your district within the RTI process. If you could take a moment and just answer the following question, "At what stage is your school/district in the RTI process?" Thank you.

It looks like the majority of people have either just begun implementation or are in the planning stages, so that's great. Thank you for sharing that information with us.

Slide 3: Initial Planning Stage

Particularly for those of you in the planning stages, through our work we saw just how important that pre-planning is for success and long term sustainability. There are a lot of things that need to be considered when beginning to consider implementing RTI. One thing that we have to really consider and think about as we are planning is that implementation requires change on the part of all staff and school personnel. Implementing RTI model means we need to rethink how instructional decisions are made. That change can be difficult for staff so we really need to leave ample time to prepare for planning of the model as well as time for staff and teachers to adjust to those changes that need to be made. Comprehensive planning is critical to the success of an RTI model. It is not something that we want to decide on Monday and implement on Thursday. We need to really think ahead and think about issues and problems that may occur, troubleshoot, and really prepare our staff as well as possible prior to implementing. Based on that, we recommend that preparation begin several months prior to actually implementing a model. This will give you enough time to troubleshoot and plan appropriately.

Slide 4: Assessing Readiness for Change

The first thing you want to do in those initial planning stages is to really assess your school or district's readiness for change. You want to think about the answer to the question, is our school ready for RTI? One key factor in whether or it not a school is ready as a whole is looking at the phenomenon of creative tension, which was identified by Ethridge. This refers to not only a pervasive dissatisfaction of how things may be. Staff and administration may not be happy with the way things are going instructionally for students. Not only that there is a dissatisfaction but also that people within the school see that there is a vision for a better way to do things. You really need both components. Not only that, people are unhappy with the way things currently are. But also that people understand that can be a different way to do things and we can make a change to improve the situation. If you have that in place we are more likely to see long-term success.

Another thing you want to consider when thinking about whether or not you are ready to begin implementing RTI is do you have the support and resources needed to put a model into place - an effective model into place? Do you have the personnel? Do you have the materials? Do you have interventions? Do you have the knowledge and the training necessary? For many schools they may not have that on their own. However, with proper support from outside sources such as local universities, your state department of education, there are lots of places where outside support can be gained by accessing that you can not only make the change but have the supports necessary to make it successful.

Slide 5: Assessing Readiness in District/School

This is Debbie Stover, the principal at Phillips Elementary. This is an important part of the process because after you have assessed the readiness for your district to do this you really have to look at your individual school and see where you are in that process. The first thing that we felt very good about and fortunate about was we knew we needed district support and this is our fourth year of implementing response intervention at our elementary school. It is very interesting because in those four years we have had three different superintendents but regardless of the changes at the administrative level we have had that unanimous support and that has been excellent. Then also the academic need of your school and obviously that will vary. Our particular school, I felt, and others shared my concern, had a considerable academic need. A medium-sized school, 300 or so students I have approximately 30-40% turnover of students over the summer. I have a high ELL population. Currently we have 16 languages and students from 16 countries so we were seeing a decline in our academic achievement and knew we had concerns. The readiness of the principal to chart that RTI path obviously is important and very critical. I was a great believer in the use of data many years prior to this implementation and I knew that we needed a better frame work to help our students find success. Then you have to really consider how to phase in and implement this because you have obviously implications for core instructions for intervention groups - which we'll get into later - and guided reading groups. You have to look at the time frame for implementation. A first big step is to take time to train the staff, we were trained in the five big ideas of reading. Even though we had information and a lot of skills in regard to reading, we needed to have even more in-depth knowledge. Then of course the strategy training for the actual interventions that we would be doing, we had to think about how we would be doing that.

Slide 6: Initial Planning Meeting

When first planning for RTI, again this is likely to happen several months prior to the actual implementation time. The first thing that we would recommend would be to hold an initial meeting or series of meetings to answer several questions that we'll talk about in the upcoming slides. First, when do we want to do this? As we said previously, we want enough time to prepare for a rollout and for implementation making sure that teachers have all the information they need and have the training they need prior to actually starting. We would recommend you allow at least several months to plan and problem-solve. Who should be involved in these initial planning meetings? Representatives of all stakeholders that will be involved in the process. From administration to teachers within the school, parents - anyone who would have a vested interest in the RTI model. There should be representatives from each of those groups involved in the initial stages of planning. What are you thinking about or talking about at this very early stage?

First, we want to talk about discussing the structure of the model. So what is RTI going to look like in our school specifically? Outline that thoroughly as well as look at time lines for not only when with we going to start this and roll this out? But also what will it look like during the school year? When will restart universal screenings? When will we start intervention groups? Those should be thought before you start to implement not as on-going. What do we need to do or think about and problem-solve before we start RTI in our school?

Slide 7: MP3 Initial Planning Meeting

Through the MP3 project, we held our initial planning meeting eight months prior to starting implementation in the schools. We started implementing in September of 2006. Our initial planning meeting -- the very first one was held in late January early February of the year of 2006. So the school year prior. We had key administrators from the district who were instrumental in moving RTI forward within the district and our particular schools we were working with. We had a Department of Education liaison who was also part of the planning and initial implementation of the project providing professional development and support for the staff. Our project staff from Lehigh University were also involved. During the initial meetings we talked about an overview of the model. What would it look like in our schools? What would RTI look like on a daily basis? We proposed time lines for how we would introduce this to the individual schools and the staff, when we would begin, and the timeline throughout the following school year when we started implementation. Since we were doing this at a district level we identified schools that would actually participate. As I said we decided to work with three schools within the district. There are 13 elementary schools in that district and we worked with three. We looked at the readiness areas that I had talked about earlier looking at the school level need, academic need within the school, looking at whether those schools had that creative tension and whether there was that readiness for change. Also, looking at the building leadership and the principals of the three schools and seeing that the principals were ready to chart the path as Debbie had alluded to earlier. Then we talked about how we would present this to the school staff.

Slide 8: Introduction of Model

When we did this, when we introduced the model, we began with administrators and key members of the school teams to first provide them an overview, answer any questions that they may have and then discuss the professional development needs and time lines for the school and for the district.

Slide 9: MP3 Staff Meetings

At the building level, when we met with teachers in each building to explain. We went through the same process providing overview, answering questions and then related to professional development, we asked teachers to complete a staff development survey that allowed us to identify areas of need for teachers related to training and professional development. We used those - the areas that most teachers felt they needed more support and professional development - we used those to plan our professional development throughout that first year as well as throughout the entire course of the implementation. We found that question and answer component of these initial meetings was vital for our success. It was really important, not only for staff to be able to ask questions and get answers, but also it was important that we listened to

what they were saying and we reacted to the concerns that they had. We found that was important initially, prior to implementation at the very beginning and even still today. We need to be reactive and hear what the staff are saying and respond to that appropriately.

Debbie, you were going to talk about the staff reactions to the model initially and how you worked with your teachers.

Right. The teacher perceptions are important. Early on in the process, I had conversations with the whole staff about the fact that we were in a large school district and if you had certain concerns or misgivings about venturing forth in this path that there were opportunities and other buildings to work in a more traditional classroom setting. Having said that, once we would be in the planning stages and starting that first school year, we took it as a sign that you were on board with this plan and you would be working with us to help figure that out. I thought that was a good, frank conversation that I had with everyone. Truthfully, I did not have any people really jump ship. But certainly you have some people who are more skeptical of what this is going to be about than others, but that is okay, that is a good thing. I think it reflects on that type of tension that you need to ask those hard questions. My staff was not opposed to it or negative about it. It was more concern about how are we going do this? I kept saying we'll figure it out together. We had excellent leadership and model and ideas given to us. Ultimately it was our job to make it happen and make it work. That's exactly what happened. My role was changing constantly but initially I had to really understand the response intervention model. I had to train with the staff, which I did. I went to all of the meetings and all of the trainings and I worked with them because I felt that they needed to know that I was at their side and trying to understand their frustrations and concerns. Obviously the fact that two years prior to this we had done a lot with inclusion and co-teaching in my school. This was, in my opinion, a great path to flow into the RTI model. It wasn't a change from what we were doing.

Slide10: Data Team

The next important component to the successful implementation of RTI would be the people and your staff and how those resources you have available to you are utilized. Doing that in a way that maximizes the resources that you have within your school. One recommendation that we would make would be to identify a core group of teachers or staff who can facilitate that implementation within your school. In our MP3 schools we called them data team or core leadership team. These teams were made up of administrators, principals, the grade level representation, teachers from either all grades or specific grades within the building. Your specialist teachers, reading specialist, special education teacher, the school psychologist. As I said earlier, special education teachers. At Phillips the librarian was involved in part of our data team. Really, anyone can be involved as long as they have a vested interest in the implementation of RTI. Debbie, did you want to talk more about that?

Yes, the role of the data team is critical because that is the guiding light who is learning and planning. We meet on a monthly basis officially, but behind the scenes we are talking and communicating a lot. We start off our year by setting up our data calendar for the whole school year. That would include all of the times that we are going to be doing our benchmark testing. We do that in the beginning, middle and end of the year. We use DIBELS for that. We also set

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up all of the calendars for our grade-level meetings for all of our training so everything that flows out of that is very well planned and orchestrated because we have a whole year pretty much planned on our calendars ahead of time.

Slide 11: Staff Alignment

That really leads us into the next area to talk about which is our staff alignment. We had to get away from the traditional model of faculty meeting or two month and really think about how we should align our people in terms of horizontal teams and vertical teams. Our horizontal teams, I think, are obvious. That would be our grade level. Our teacher at a common grade level have to meet for planning on a regular basis and they do that daily, they do that weekly. In terms of analyzing data we do that on a monthly basis. That's one of our horizontal teams. Our vertical teams are extremely critical because those are teams of people that represent different areas of expertise. We already talked about the data team, our child study team meets on a weekly basis to coordinate different agencies and activities that our students might need in order to be successful. The next team on there might seem strange to come of you, a POC team. That is something we didn't start doing right away. We found we had to become better at communicating. Our POC is a "Point Of Communication." We have one specialist at every grade level who attends all of the grade level meetings. For example, our reading specialist might be the POC person for second grade. They would make sure that they understood all of the concerns and needs that the second grade teachers might have in regard to anything in regard to RTI. Our staff development team is a broad representation. Some teachers who have volunteered and I also coerced so people to be on that team so that they would think about any staff development needs that our whole staff has. They would plan for them, they would, at times, present or they would be the ones to obtain presenters to come into the school. Every month we have a staff development time. How you get on the teams? Some people volunteered. Other people, I asked key players to be on specific teams. I really wanted interested and committed people who were willing to do that. As we started this process most clearly I had some very supportive people. We also had people who were skeptical with a lot of questions. I did want to put some of those people on the data team or on a staff development team because I felt that as they understood the model they would be advocates and also help explain it to the rest of the staff. That worked out for us very well. We had the opportunity to work together one whole week in the summer prior – actually we did it for three summers in a row. That was excellent. I felt if teachers were giving all week of their summer time and were willing to work with us on the plan, I felt they were showing by their time they were committed to it. That helped us enormously. This is how we did it. Obviously you would want to set up your vertical teams based on the need of your students and design those as you see fit. I believe Alex will go on.

Break for Questions

Yes, actually I think before we move on there are a lot of great questions coming in. We'll stop for a minute and take a few of those questions. I have been trying to read through a few of these. A lot are related to: are there readiness survey or check lists available to guide that dialog as you are looking at whether or not you are ready to begin implementation of RTI? The answer to that question is yes, there are. I believe there are some on the RTI website. We can post ones we used and looked at. That is a yes. We can get those out there for you. In addition there were questions related to specific professional development survey that we used for the MP3 Project and would

we be able to make that available? That was a survey that was developed specifically by the district. I would have to get permission to post that. But I would think that it shouldn't be a problem to have that posted.

We have another question. Debbie, if you could - there seems to be a lot of interest in the POC teams and what that looks like. If you could provide a little more description for everyone related to what they do and how that's structured.

Sure. Every month at our grade level monthly horizontal team time when we are analyzing the data and making decisions about how students are doing, we are check their progress monitoring charts, we are having good conversations about what we should do. Should they remain in an intervention? Do they need another layer? The POC person is their point of communication. For example, I said reading specialist, she might sit with the second grade team at the monthly meeting and be up-to-date on what their concerns are right down to the children and how we group them. The first year we did not do this. What happened was we were all telling each other everything about everything. It just got too confusing. That way we have one specific specialist that works where the grade level team. Perhaps the ESL teacher works with fifth grade. They stay with that group all year. They are the liaison for their communication needs whole year, and that really helped us enormously.

Thanks Debbie. Another question, just to clarify a question that came in. Is the data team similar to a problem-solving team? Yes, it is that core group of individuals who are facilitating, answering questions, planning and identifying interventions for students. We may call it different things. We called it data teams in Central Dauphin. They are responsible for pulling together data and organizing that in a way that it is meaningful for teachers. As far as when these meetings occurred they occurred primarily before school. So teachers were required to attend two meetings a month and Debbie had these meetings and data meetings before school in place of a traditional faculty meeting. Is there anything you would like to add to that Debbie?

That is correct, we no longer have traditional faculty meetings I email any sources of information that they would need. Our school district, teachers are responsible for two extra meetings a month. We designed them around, one is the grade level meeting time to analyze data and the other would be for a staff development need. That has worked out very well. That has served our needs very well.

Great. There are a lot of questions coming in. We are going to save time at the end to continue to answer those. But I think we want to move forward so that we can get through everything before our time is up.

Slide 12: Schedules

We are going to move on and talk now a little about schedules and scheduling. For those of you who are in the initial implementation stages of RTI or for those of you that have been through the process you know coming up with an effective and complete schedule is one of the most important parts of planning. It can really make the difference between the success or failure of your program. When coming up with a schedule you really need to think about several different

things. First of all the people who are available and the people who will be involved teachers, students, other professionals in the building. Places in the building. Where are we going to have an intervention group? Where do we have enough space to fit the number of students that we need? The time. Time is always an issue and a concern. When it comes down to it that's one of the trickiest parts to creating an effective schedule because there is only so many hours in a school day and so many things you have to fit in. Then lastly, what are the specific activities that need to be scheduled? We are going to talk today about the three major components to a model that need to be scheduled into your day. First, your instructional blocks. When is reading instruction going to occur? When is math instruction going to occur? Etcetera . The specific intervention and skill groups. When are those specific interventions going to be scheduled? How are they going to be scheduled? And finally we will talk about progress monitoring and how do we schedule for that, as well.

Slide 13: Instructional Block Schedules

As we look it at the instructional blocks and we will go into detail about these in a moment or two. But, we also have to take into consideration what needs of our ELL students or students with IEPs are. Those students, while they are most definitely included, while they are part of the core instruction and of course they are in a guided reading group, then they have an intervention time, as well. They also might need additional layers. That can take different forms. If we go on to the next slide we take a look at our tiered intervention blocks.

Slide 14: Tiered Intervention Blocks

This really gives you an idea of how we did it. This is where our plan started. The first year we tried to - it was much more chaotic - we tried to base everything around our Art, Music, Gym schedules and that was much too confusing. So, after we learned that that was not the way to do it, we came up with our tiered intervention block times. Those are sacred time. We combined kindergarten and first grade. We simply gave more time to the first grade students because our Kindergarten is a half-day program so students are only there morning or afternoon. We combined second and third grade and fourth and fifth grade. Those time slots are built into our schedule. Then, I worried about Art, Music, Gym figuring all those things out. It really does work. You also have to then determine the number of staff available to work with those students. What you would do, for example, with second and third grade you could look to see how many regular education teachers you have. Let's say I have three second grade teacher and three third grade teachers. I also then would look at my reading specialist and intervention specialist and ELL instructor. I would look at all the people potentially available at that time. It is very possible that I would have maybe ten or eleven people available. Then the awesome thing is that you then have all those time slots and people available so you can offer interventions for the students. They are based on their needs. These are all of our students K-5. Every child in the building has an intervention time. As I said before, ELL students or students with IEPs might need additional layers. That might mean that our ELL students, perhaps they need an additional push in or pullout time. Maybe during Math or perhaps if they are a beginner in language skills they would need some basic vocabulary instruction. We also offer vocabulary previewing to all of our at-risk students once a week. We put them in small groups - that's in addition to what we do for our tiered intervention. It might seem a little confusing because in the old days you would start the first week of school and everyone knew their schedule. The way we do it now, yes the students

are in their classroom, these schedules are set but the RTI schedules are evolving. We are strategically using our specialist as we did our first benchmark testing and as we set up our intervention groups then we deploy our specialist to work with teachers. Their schedules evolve. Within the first month of school they are busy getting things rolling. But then their schedules are more solidified. Because it is RTI and based on student needs things are changing. We have to go with the flow on that. We change to meet the needs of the students.

Slide 15: Intervention Schedules

As Debbie had said, when we are looking at scheduling, we start by scheduling those core instructional blocks. At Phillips the students got 90 minutes of core reading instruction that were scheduled first. Then we scheduled intervention time. The RTI skill group intervention times around those an additional 30 to 45 minutes that students received of specific intervention time. Then all of those other things are scheduled after that. We are really making the academics the priority within the schedule. Specifically related to the intervention schedules, when we are going to conduct skill group. When we are going to provide students with specific intervention, we need to again, think about multiple things in looking at that. How much time are we going to give to interventions? How many days per week will we have intervention groups? How much time during each day is that going -- is going to be allotted for skill groups? As I said at Phillips we allotted – we actually started with 30 minutes a day at each grade level. Then the teachers said, at some grade levels, said we need more time. We then adjusted the schedule so they would have more time during the day to do interventions. We also need to think about what interventions are we going to use? We have to look at what's available within the school or within the district. We have to look at what's most effective and what is going to be evidence-based practice. At Central Dauphin every school made a list of the intervention strategies, programs that they had in their school. That was sent around to the district so if there was something you wanted that you didn't have in your building you could swap with different schools which worked out nicely. Some schools liked one program, other schools preferred a different program. As long as we knew they were evidence-based we used whatever worked best for the particular school. You want to think about what is teaching the intervention. Who is available at the time the intervention group occurs? Who is qualified? Who has had the training to implement that intervention? How can we maximize resources to make sure that we get the most instructional time to the most students possible?

Slide 16: Intervention Schedules

As Debbie talked about earlier, in Phillips and at the other schools in the MP3 project, our skill groups were conducted by grade levels. Each grade level had a specific time during the day where skill groups occurred. Again, this is in addition to their regular core instruction time in reading. All available teachers and support teachers were assigned to a skill group. This would allow for anywhere from nine to twelve skill groups being implemented at any time.

Slide 17: (Chart)

Here is an example of one of our intervention scheduled for - this is kindergarten and first grade in the fall of our second year of implementation. If I can walk you quickly through this. As you see the top three boxes here, this tells you the activity - what type of activity is happening. The teacher who will implement the intervention and then the type of group that it is. Then under

here we have all of the students that are in that group. As Debbie mentioned earlier, we provided intervention or instructional time for every student in the building. Even students who were at benchmark were provided with some additional instruction enrichment activities to continue them to make progress. As well as the students at tier three or tier two who were struggling. Every student in the building had intervention at some point in time during the day. As you can see we had, for kindergarten and first grade there were three benchmark groups. One at kindergarten and two at first grade. We also had strategic groups. The activity that was being conducted, the teacher and the level and the number of students. As you can see benchmark groups are larger than the strategic groups - the tier two groups. Our tier three groups are even smaller so we have a smaller ratio of students to teacher allowing for more instructional time and more opportunities to respond for those students. Initially, again this is an example of second year of implementation. We began by having teachers, when we were deciding which teachers would teach which skill groups we looked at the skill of the individual teachers. In our initial implementation in our second year, we saw that the classroom teachers themselves felt more comfortable and were more prepared to teach the higher groups. So the benchmark groups or those tier two groups. As you can see here, those three benchmark groups, those teachers were classroom teachers. The intensive groups were initially conducted and lead by teachers that were more trained to work with students with more intensive needs. This teacher who was working with an intensive group was our special education teacher. This was our English second language teacher, our intervention specialist and our reading specialist working with the most intensive students. We tried to group our ESL teacher with ESL students to provide additional support for them. We grouped by needs rather than label. Often we could group the ESL students together with the teacher to provide extra layer of support for the students. At grades K and one we mostly kept the grade levels separated. At the upper grades, particularly fourth and fifth grade we were able to combine groups. So you may have a skill group with fourth and fifth graders in it with grouping based on needs and skill deficit rather than the grade or the teacher. As a teacher you would have students from anyone else's home room class in your skill group. You would be assigned to that group of students until the next benchmarking period occurred.

Slide 18: Progress Monitoring

The next thing we want to think about related to schedules would be progress monitoring. We need to schedule this and ensure it is scheduled in order make sure that it get done. If it is not scheduled there are so many things going on when you are implementing an RTI model. So many things are new and can easily fall through the cracks. We felt it was important to actually have progress monitoring built into your schedule in order to ensure that it is done and done within integrity. The things that we want to think about is, first of all how often do we want to done? Who is going to do it? And how do we manage to fit that into our day with all the other things that we need to think about?

Slide 19: Progress Monitoring at Phillips

As we looked at the progress monitoring at Phillips, this is what we felt you should be aware of. Because our interventions are conducted four days a week, we took that time spot on the fifth day and used that for progress monitoring. That was how we started out. Now, the way we did that was, if a teacher, let's say, had six or seven students in their classrooms who were at tier two or three, which meant they were either strategic or intensive, they might have a number of

students. It would not be fair to have the classroom teacher have to do all the progress monitoring for their students since our students are heterogeneously placed. What we did was we assign a person to progress monitor and work with that classroom teacher. So that, between the two of them or perhaps the specialist would do the progress monitoring, but that support person works together with them. Since progress monitoring does go quickly. We are using DIBELS so it only takes a minute or two. I know most of the time it is just pulling the child aside and getting the child ready for the progress monitoring. The actual test is very short. We have them programmed into our schedule. That has evolved each year and has changed. Interestingly enough, this year the data team, every year we talk about how should we do it? This year we came up with an idea based on our overall schedule, we are now doing that on a time slot on day three. We are not interfering with our intervention time. We found another way to buy us a few minutes of time that we did not have to change the intervention schedule. This year we are doing intervention five days a week. We feel that that best meets the needs of our children.

Slide 20: (Photo)

I wanted to also let you know, pictorially and visually what this looks like. We do all this work for progress monitoring and then we need to relay that information to our students, to our parent, to each other, to really see what's happening. So we do that by creating data walls. We started doing the data walls, we got into this big time last year with our third year. This is an example of what our first grade teachers came up with this. We can "bearly" believe how well we are reading. They put a bear to represent a percentage – what was actually each child I believe. We had a percentage at benchmark, strategic and intensive. We put that up in the first grade hallway. That was just a great way. That's one quick way to show you how you can pictorially and visually show the progress you are making. We have made enormous progress each year that we have done this.

Slide 21: Professional Development

We are quickly running out of time. We are going to talk very briefly about professional development. We joked as we were preparing this we could probably do a webinar on professional development in and of itself because of the amount we did. What we want to stress is that professional development really needs to be on-going. We are talking a lot about the things that you need do before you ever implement RTI in your school and a lot of the professional development has to occur before that happens. But, it is still an on-going process. We continually need to learn new things and progress and get refreshers on things that we have already done. It is a never-ending process. Having said that, we want to provide as much training as possible before we actually implement. The professional developments we conducted and that we would recommend would focus on building capacity and understanding the model, and understanding how to conduct progress monitoring, and then how to use those data and that information to make sound instructional decisions. We want to make sure that our teachers have a firm understanding of instruction in reading or whatever other academic area you may be targeting. Then, also making sure that teachers have adequate training related to the specific interventions that you will be using.

Slide 22: MP3 Professional Development

We started out in the year prior. So we started our planning in late January early February of the year before we started implementing. We actually held four 45-minute sessions in the spring of that year prior to implementation to begin that training process. We also had additional time over the summer where we provided training. Debbie is going to talk a little about that.

Slide 23: MP3 Additional Professional Development

We had a week-long training in the summer for our entire data team. That was composed of specialist and regular ed teachers. I think that was a terrific time to really get steeped in the particulars of reading instructions. Then, we had to bring that information back to Phillips. So our data team members came back to present some of that through staff development. Then each year we find that we have topics that need to be worked on and have to be on-going. In fact, this year we have a number of refreshers that we are working on in regard to progress monitoring and working with our AIMSweb, which is the tool that we use for pulling off of our data together. It is a continue learning process because we are here to retain our response to intervention. It is how we do business. It is how our kids learn at our school. It is a way to give us a framework for the way we do things. Not too long ago someone said to me, is this just another thing we are doing? How long you think it will last? No it is not another thing we are just doing. It is the way we think and pull together data. This is the way we will continue do business. It just has given an enormous framework and structure to make sure that we are providing the best instruction possible for our students.

Slide 24: Conclusions

That leads us into our conclusions, which we have listed here. I'm not going to read through them because I think it is probably obvious what our challenges are. The schedule, the training, the time. Collaboration is a topic we talked a lot about and while we think we are very good at it we think we need to get better at it. Our benefits have been enormous. We are looking now – we started at 50-something percent. We are proficient or state test. We are now at 65 percent. That is increasing. We know that this coming year we'll be higher than that. Our gross model scores have increased and shown tremendous growth. The collaboration for our students, for our staff, because of the needs of our students has been just enormous. This year for the first time we moved more students in our ELL groups to higher levels when we did our case reviews. I think the teachers, especially are loving the fact that they have push in. A teacher is no longer out the on their own at all. We give them assistance for guided reading groups every day. They get help for math. We are working together with them as we serve the needs of the kids because that is ultimately what we are about. When you focus on what you know the needs of your kids are this RTI system just works out beautifully. It is a lot of work. It is not easy. But I think the benefits have just been enormous to our kids. And really for our staff, too. We look at things differently. We work together more as a professional learning community than you could ever imagine.

We are just about out of time. I want to thank everyone. There are a lot of questions that came in. We will definitely address those at a later time. One question that I did want to address to end, there was a question about common planning time being used - if it is used for RTI planning when are teachers doing all the other planning that needs to be done? The way that I can address that is that for the teachers at Phillips and the other schools in our project they really didn't see

RTI separate from the rest of their instructional day and instructional time. They really saw everything as inner related and inner connected. When we talk about using the planning time for RTI we are talking about using planning time to provide the best instruction possible. That included, how do we instruct for math? How do we instruct for our content areas? All of those things were planning to improve instruction. That is all we have today. Again we'll try to answer these questions after the webinar. Thank you.

Thank you so much. As they mentioned, we were not able to answer all of your questions during our time today. But we will answer all the questions and post the replies on our website.

If you have additional questions about planning or beginning RTI please email them to us at rtiwebinars@air.org.

If you would like to print a copy of the PowerPoint slides from today's presentation, you may do so by clicking on the small printer icon at the bottom right-hand side of your screen. This will allow you to print to PDF. The slides are also available on the National Center on Response to Intervention's website, that is www.rti4success.org.

We would appreciate your feedback about today's session. Please take a few minutes to complete the webinar evaluation that you see on the screen. We value your feedback, and ultimately your suggestions will assist us in making decisions for our future webinars.

Once again, thank you for participating today.