Middle school teacher satisfaction with response to intervention (RtI) : an assessment between inception and implementation

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MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER SATISFACTION WITH
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI):
AN ASSESSMENT BETWEEN INCEPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

by

Karynn Jensen Zahedi

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Middle School Teacher Satisfaction

with

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An Assessment between Inception and Implementation

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Abstract

Response to intervention (RtI) is a multi-tiered process of monitoring student responses to remediation that is designed to help struggling learners succeed within the purview of regular education. Under the RtI model, students are referred to special education only after a series of documented interventions have been attempted. This study involved analysis of a teacher satisfaction survey on the implementation process, combined with interviews of principals of five focus schools in the study.

This two part study was comprised of quantitative and qualitative queries into teacher satisfaction levels in the early implementation of RtI. The first part, The Teacher Survey, utilized quantitative measures to gain information and conduct analysis on the areas of job change that impact teacher job satisfaction. The second part, The Principal Interview, consisted of interviews of principals of five of the twelve schools involved in the teacher survey and compared teacher responses about their satisfaction with the comments of the principals from those schools.

Results indicate that overall, teachers are neutral to slightly positive about RtI on all areas assessed. The only significant difference that was revealed between types of teachers was found between regular and special education teachers in satisfaction with the balance of work under RtI. Specifically, regular education teachers were significantly less satisfied than special education teachers with the impact of RtI on the distribution of work between types of teachers involved in the RtI model.

Correlations were found between satisfaction with RtI and all five dimensions of The Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman and Oldham 1976). That is, the more positive that teachers said they felt toward RtI, the more they agreed with positive statements on each
of the five JDS dimensions. Teachers were relatively more satisfied with impact on 1) task significance and 2) task variety, they were neutral on 3) task identity and 4) task completion and relatively less satisfied with the impact of the Rt model on 5) autonomy.

Further correlations were found between satisfaction with RtI and some of the composite variables made up of questions about impact of RtI on the balance of work, consultation, and the perceived benefit of RtI for students. No correlation was found between satisfaction with RtI and the composite variable made up of questions about time use. As such, even though teachers reported that RtI took more of their time than the previous model, this finding did not correlate with the reported satisfaction with the RtI model.

Findings of the Principal Survey showed no significant difference between schools, but did reveal similar concerns about teacher satisfaction with RtI and mandated reform, in general. Senior principals, concerned about teacher satisfaction with changes, were more taciturn in the early stages. Since notable differences were not found between schools, the interview of the leaders of the focus schools provided interesting themes common to the schools and resonant with the questions of the study. The Principal Interview comments were also viewed in relation to the responses of the school’s teachers on the teacher survey.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many amazing people have contributed to my decision to study education resulting in this dissertation. If it wasn’t for my late, dear friend Suhaila Ahmad Mohammad Al-Samhan, I would not have as fully understood the power embedded in the gentle role of an educator to transform the lives of students. She travelled back and forth from Kuwait to the USA to study new theories of education that would help her provide the best opportunities for her special needs students in Kuwait. Watching her, I realized the value of the patient and steady efforts of a good educator and fair administrator in improving the outcomes for students.

My doctoral studies at SUNY Albany were essential to my understanding of the critical difference between teaching and administration. Dr. Heinz-Dieter Meyer commented that administrators, in contrast to teachers, must be comfortable with a great deal of ambiguity. As he acknowledged, I learned on the job, that the order and control, typical of a good classroom, are lost in the halls somewhere on the way to the Main Office. For school administrators, each day presents complex situations that serve as opportunities to create new and better solutions to problems than were available the day before. Dr. Meyer was a good host to the complexity for which he was preparing us. The first time I spoke with him, I knew that if I managed to carve out the time to complete my dissertation that I would seek to work under his wise counsel. I was grateful that he agreed to chair my dissertation committee.

Dr. Jan Hammond was the first teacher for the first New Paltz Cohort of the Albany EAPS program and she welcomed us, infusing us with her vision. Any time that I sought her advice she found time to assist me, but more than that, she deeply inspired me. She has made herself available to all of us. I am sure that she did not have time to
meet me in a small bakery in Albany on her way from a conference to another meeting, but she did. While always on the run, she is also always “present” to the opportunity to use each moment to make a positive contribution to others. She has greatly assisted me through her advice and her wisdom. I have decided to take on her tradition of giving and investing in others in the ways that she invested in me.

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My first appointment in administration was as an assistant principal in Red Hook, New York. It has been my great pleasure to work with a principal, Steve Chaikin who immediately took me on as a trusted confidant. He taught me everything that I know about building leadership. Now working as co-principals, we have been in the same middle school, for eight years, to date. There has been a lecture/lab relationship between my study and my work. While I studied leadership themes, such as personalizing the culture, mentoring and leading with heart at SUNY Albany, I practiced them with Steve in the lab of Linden Avenue Middle School. I am grateful to him for his support of my study and for his example as an outstanding and sincere practitioner.

Viewing the workplace as an extension of the classroom, I learned so much from my colleagues in Red Hook. This study, on teacher satisfaction with RtI was inspired by my experience of introducing the reform in my middle school. Like the principals in the study, Steve and I knew that we had to introduce RtI to the faculty with more care than
the mandate was declared on SED stationary. As we explained the new reform, I saw
written across the faces of fifty committed teachers, questions and worries that I wanted
to better understand. Not only was I curious about the simple reluctance to change but
the variables involved in teacher dissatisfaction with change. Fortunate to work with the
best teachers any administrator will ever encounter, I decided I would study teacher
satisfaction with the Response to Intervention reform when a couple of teachers reacted
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I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the “New Paltz Cohort”. We
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Dedicated to

Kobra Ghooshchi
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

During the late 20th century, it became clear that the number of students being referred to receive special education services was beginning to weigh on school districts because of a deluge of state and federal regulations which were nearly impossible to implement. Legal battles ensued, putting more pressure on districts. District funds that had gone toward mainstream education were now being siphoned off into the coffers of special education (Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006; Fuchs et al. 2003). Public outcry demanded a change to balance the distribution of funds back to the general education classroom. State officials, special education advocates, attorneys, and professionals debated options that would force school districts to minimize the number of classified students, leading to a new set of criteria for determining learning disabilities through the RtI model of intervention (Fuchs and Vaughn 2003).

A proliferation of legislation directed at school accountability for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) confuses teachers and administrators alike (Donnell-Kay Foundation 2004). RtI implementation in Tiers I and II is making instructional changes to the regular education classroom and is also redesigning the work of teachers. If teachers are not satisfied they may minimally comply and wait until the reversion to the previous model. Less aggressive mandates than RtI have fallen by the wayside when teachers were not satisfied with the purpose or implementation process of initiatives. For this reason, understanding issues related to teacher satisfaction during times of change is essential (Wartgow 2008). Teacher satisfaction with RtI, as a dual diagnosis/intervention model in Tiers I and II, was the focus of this study.
RtI, which was originally designed as a model to monitor student response to intervention in the elementary setting, caught the eye of policymakers and was prescribed as the solution for both remedial education and for slowing the deluge of special education referrals K-12 (Kavale, Holdnack and Mostert 2005). Problems related to high numbers of designated students became a "focusing event" and as a result a "policy window" opened for the RtI initiative. RtI was created to improve remedial instruction and as such, was coupled with a system to reverse Committee of Special Education (CSE) referrals (Kingdon 1995). Policy makers determined that one way to slow the trend would be to institute RtI as a solution to meet the needs of all students and thereby delay or prevent referral to the CSE (Fletcher et al. 2004).

This study examined middle school teacher satisfaction with RtI. The middle school setting differs from elementary school in supervision and scheduling while many of the students’ needs are similar (Hines and Johnston 1997). RtI, as a dual diagnosis/intervention model, may be more manageable in the elementary classroom than in the secondary school setting, in which students move through many classrooms each day requiring teachers to make extra efforts to communicate with colleagues across subject areas to collaborate on remedial issues (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2005). This study was done in order to shed light on teacher satisfaction with the model in the middle school environment in which students are monitored differently and across multiple classroom settings.

Given the importance of teacher buy-in, this study investigated teacher satisfaction during the early stages of implementation. Attention to teacher satisfaction during implementation is appropriate in that the amount of time needed for any reform to
take root and begin to thrive is often greater than the attention span and the professional
tenure of the very policy advocates/reformers who initiate the reform (Fullan 2001; Wartgow 2008). Given the expanded timeline, initiatives may not be sustainable or they may simply run out of support and lay inactive until the next policy initiative is mandated (Hess 1998).

In summary, while the RtI model dovetails the dual goals of reducing the number of students identified under special education with the goal of serving all struggling learners within regular education, questions remain about teacher buy-in. This concern is tied to a lack of clarity about how the new model will work for students as well as how it will affect teacher roles and the redesign of workload shared between regular and special education teachers (Fletcher et al. 2004; Lance and Butt 2005).

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

Many studies, such as the NYS review of RtI done by Kileen and Sipple (2004), appraise student performance on state assessments to evaluate the success of the RtI policy initiative. This study seeks information directly from teachers about their satisfaction with the RtI model in the early stage. The state assessments administered are considered the measure for success of the model in NYS, yet they are blunt measures (four category rubrics) that miss the common sense analysis of adults working with children. State assessments take months to score and so reports are generally useful at the program, rather than student level.
Gerber (2003) suggests that teachers often have a sense of whether a program or initiative is working before the data on effectiveness is analyzed. Gerber goes on to state that "teachers are the test" in the sense that it will be the teacher's level of tolerance and ability to instruct that will determine which type of students can succeed in an instructional model. If Gerber is correct, then information on teacher satisfaction provides a useful lens through which to view the RtI reform. For these reasons, a survey of teachers that purposively focused on teachers involved in the early stages of RtI implementation was conducted to gauge the ability of schools in meeting the needs of all struggling students through RtI from the perspective of teachers.

This study highlighted teacher satisfaction with RtI as it influenced their work and also with how shifts in the delivery model influence, or don’t influence student outcomes. While improved students performance was not directly assessed in this study, it is probably the most important concern of teachers, even beyond concerns about the impact of the RtI initiative on their work. Concern for what works best for students was represented in teacher responses about their satisfaction with RtI. That is why both core dimensions of job satisfaction and teachers perceptions of RtI meeting student needs were studied together.

Teachers surveyed expressed their individual satisfaction with the model as it impacts their defined, and usually independent, instructional space. This information may be generalized in analyzing how teachers will respond to other cooperative professional models. Many teachers are unaccustomed to working closely with other professionals in their classrooms or meeting and planning with others on a regular basis (Batsche et al. 2005). In the survey they reported on their satisfaction with the RtI model in meeting the
needs of struggling students, while simultaneously meeting the full range of educational needs in the regular classroom (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2005). Then teachers reported on their levels of job satisfaction as correlated with Hackman and Oldham's (1976) core dimensions of job satisfaction.

In that teacher satisfaction may prove vital to the longevity of RtI, this study involved a front line assessment of the RtI model as it influences teacher satisfaction with their work. Hopefully, it will contribute to a better understanding of the impact of change reforms on teachers, in general. This study focused specifically on teacher satisfaction with RtI implementation in the early stages. Specifically, it analyzed of the degree of satisfaction expressed by middle school teachers with the RtI model in four areas: 1) the perceived benefit to students, 2) support from administration in terms of, e.g., training, and consultation; 3) the balance of work based on teacher type and 4) the impact of RtI on time spent in meeting, co-planning and record keeping. Understanding teacher satisfaction at inception of a reform is essential in gaining the building level support to fully implement this or any other education policy (Whetton 1997).

As has been demonstrated with other initiatives, teachers will respond to RtI with either buy-in or, if dissatisfied with the reform model will begin a reverse policy backlash that will eventually dissemble the initiative (Wartgow 2008; Tomlinson 1988). This is why surveying teachers in their programmatic and implementation concerns as well as with their satisfaction with job redesign may produce information useful regarding school change reforms, in general. (Deal and Peterson 2002; Perie and Baker 1997; Johnston and Hines 1997).
Public values and the policy entrepreneurship that underlie and surround the class heterogeneity issue, are noted, but not made the focus of the study. Anticipating the implication of the tracking/de-tracking policy controversy, I mention its potential influence. Changes in this area will influence time use and balance of work between teachers, especially regular and special education teachers. The issue of how the needs of different types of students are to be met is important in understanding teacher perspectives on change reform, when faced with what Cohen and March (1974) refer to as the "issues carousel". The underlying values and the classic debates of value prioritization schemes resting on excellence vs. equity discussed by Sergiovanni and others (1999) that influence views on heterogeneity of classes were apparent in the extended teachers’ responses in Parts II and III of the survey. The changes involved RtI implementation resonate with the issues involved in the tracking debate.

As an important factor, these values may have influence on the degree of teacher satisfaction with the RtI model and its impact on the core dimensions of job satisfaction, in general. With this in mind, this study sought information on teacher reactions to this change without inquiring into their values or politics. The Survey featured questions which allowed teachers to comment on the heterogeneity of classes along their overall satisfaction with RtI implementation. Apparent in the open ended questions of the survey, a profile of these comments further generalize the study.
LIMITATIONS

Because this survey was given to teachers during the early stages of RtI implementation, it is probable that some of the teachers involved in implementation are more flexible and are involved because they volunteered to pilot some of the RtI activities in their building. Perhaps they were more likely to complete the survey than teachers who were not involved. It is reasonable to expect that teachers volunteering to pilot RtI already had some level of comfort working with other teachers in the same room. If more involved teachers responded to the survey, it is likely that these teachers may have been more favorable to inclusion and change reform, in general, than may be the norm in their buildings.

Teachers who are inclined to volunteer during the implementation stage of any initiative have been identified by Guskey (1988) as both more willing and more capable of professional growth in new educational strategies. Although more resistant teachers may not be involved during the introduction of the RtI model in schools, teachers involved in early implementation are the appropriate population. Had uninvolved teachers responded, their answers would have been uninformed as regards satisfaction issues during implementation.

This study was aimed at an understanding of teacher satisfaction with the RtI model during the early stages of implementation, with the primary foci being: teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of this model in remediating learning needs and teacher
satisfaction with the impact on their work and school culture. As such, this study does not provide actual information on changes in student outcomes resulting from RtI.

THE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI) MODEL

"RtI is a multi-tiered, approach to helping struggling learners. Student progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based teaching intervention and/or intervention within general education, in special education or both” (rtinetwork.org.).

The primary goals of RtI are to identify at-risk students and to monitor student response to interventions in order offer remediation aimed at closing the learning gap. RtI was originally proposed as a model for elementary remedial services but is now being introduced and recommended as a model for K-12 remediation (Fuchs, D and Fuchs, L. 2006). RtI was also identified as a pre-CSE referral strategy for determination of learning disabilities of underperforming students while in the regular classroom (Batsche et al. 2005). RtI became the assessment and remediation framework for Academic Intervention Services (AIS).

RtI entails application of research-based strategies and observation of student response through a multi-tiered support system. In this way, many students who previously would have been assessed as disabled under the IQ/performance discrepancy model, are either brought up to benchmarks through remediation or receive continuous support via this tiered system. A difference in ability and achievement is no longer sufficient for CSE designation. Special education law has changed to prescribe the uses of psychometric test results combined with a documented effort to meet learning needs through RtI in identifying a learning disability. In fact, extensive RtI efforts must be presented before a teacher can submit a referral to special education for evaluation.
Hence, many students who previously would have been classified as learning disabled are no longer being designated under special education (Batsche et al. 2005; Kavale, Holdnack and Mostert 2005).

RtI is offered in a multi-tiered, usually a three-tiered, model. Regardless of the number of tiers used, the first two steps in the process involve regular education teachers monitoring and introducing alternative strategies within the regular education classroom (roughly Tier I) and next, intensive small group instruction for students who do not respond to the general instruction provided in the classroom (roughly Tier II). Tiers I and II are the focus of this study. When students do not make adequate progress in Tiers I and II, Tier III is the new threshold for further testing and often entrance into special education:

- Tier I serves as a universal provision to help all students, includes any changes or modification to instruction, or environment that can be done within the regular classroom. Tier I instruction and assessment is to be done in the regular classroom, however use of specialized strategies and monitoring of individual student responses by regular education teachers in the classroom is new.

- Tier II involves intensive instruction, such as remedial reading, math or writing in small groups. Other forms of remedial support previously available only through special education, now occur within Tier II of RtI. Tier II is comprised of small intensive reading, writing, math and study skills services that closely resemble the least restrictive special education setting, the resource room.
 Tier III provides services beyond regular education and includes any strategies or placements that are recommended after students show minimal progress with Tier I and Tier II. It is often the threshold to special education.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

POLICY, HISTORY AND RTI AS A DUAL-DIAGNOSIS MODEL

RtI, introduced as a method for monitoring student responses to academic intervention, was coupled with a system for slowing down and averting referrals to special education (Fletcher et al 2004: Fletcher 2009). RtI brings regular, special education and AIS teachers into cooperative units to provide services for struggling students within the regular classroom, thereby averting the disabled designation (Boyer 2009). RtI includes all, and more of the support components that were available through the previous system within the special education resource room only to disabled students.

Previous to RtI, many more students were identified as disabled, and struggling students who were not found eligible for special education did not have access to a formal system of monitored interventions (Klotz 2007). As a system for identifying disabled students after inadequate response to interventions is demonstrated in Tiers I and II, RtI introduces a new level of monitoring and assessment into the domain of regular education.

The change from the teacher perspective is that rather than designate students as disabled, RtI requires teachers to meet the needs of all students in the regular classroom, only referring students to the CSE after numerous, documented strategies have been
attempted and students fail to respond to interventions (Hehir 2006). This change redesigns the tasks of teachers. The goal for fuller inclusion of all types of learners within the regular classroom is continuously challenged by concerns for prescriptive teaching. Martin, Martin and Terman (1996) warn that specialized instruction for disabled students may be eclipsed by goals for inclusion: "...greater inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms raise concerns in some quarters about whether students with disabilities will continue to have full access to the special services they need." (Martin, Martin and Terman 1996).

The problem-solving component of the RTI model has not demonstrated effectiveness in large schools, which may put additional stresses on teachers when student difficulties cannot be managed in regular education (Fuchs et al. 2003; Kovaleski, Gickling, Morrow and Swank 1999; Marston 2005; Tilly 2003). Early insight from teachers will provide a close up perspective on how well Rt is working and how satisfied and committed teacher's are to the success of this reform model.

RTI as a Delivery Model for Academic Intervention

The needs of struggling students may be addressed through any number of models. The most basic systems are 1) separate instruction of students who struggle by identifying them as disabled, and 2) meeting the needs of more students within the general education setting by providing additional support services both in and beyond the regular classroom. This model seems to cover the basic components of remedial instruction and as such is as likely to work as other models. The question will be whether teachers adopt the model and are satisfied that it provides enough academic support for
their students and that it works for them in terms of their work-style and interaction with other professionals (Wartgow 2008).

RtI, as a model for providing remediation for all students, is gradually replacing separate regular and special education settings, for a margin of students previously designated disabled, with regular education teachers supported by AIS and special education teachers. It is still unclear how well regular education teachers will respond to the challenges that more heterogeneous groups present, and so researchers note this challenge as an implementation concern (Gerber 2003; Mastropieri and Scruggs 2005; Batsche et al 2005; Hines and Johnston 1997). There are indications that RtI is redefining the disability categories created under IDEA (Fuchs 2003; Vaughn and Fuchs 2003).

In 2001 Congress signed the No Child Left Behind Act, which required Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for all regular and special education students. Tilly, Reschly and Grimes (1999) note that these services, comprised of small remedial study groups, resemble the special education resource room. The difference is that they are given under the auspices of regular education and are often implemented within the general education classroom. RtI replaces the need for support that previously prompted most of the referrals to the Committee on Special Education for mildly disabled students. RtI's AIS programs dovetail with efforts toward fuller inclusion of struggling and disabled students and a greater sense of teacher responsibility for all types of learners.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation originally developed policy clout by coupling Title I funds to compliance with directives to provide remedial reading and math. Initially, for many districts, this grant appeared to be a federal bonus to assist
struggling learners with remedial reading. Gradually, the requirements for districts to qualify for this money began to shape the types of remedial programs within schools. Title I funds were allocated to districts based on state formulas for financial need such as free and reduced lunch eligibility number and census data. While the amounts were determined at state departments of education, school districts applied for funds and submitted budget proposals that demonstrated provision of remedial services to students who did not meet state proficiency requirements on tests.

Gradually, mandates for increased remedial services were put in place (see section 100.1(g), 100.2(ee) of NYS Education Department Regulations). The increase in AIS services mandated in New York parallel the institutionalization of these remedial services in most states (Kadamus 2000). While Title I funds initially appeared as a “bonus” to support struggling students, the funds now represent only a portion of the monies dedicated for a wide range of remedial programs, specialists, and services. The greater portion of funds now comes from general funds supported by the local tax base. This shift in financial responsibility from state and federal to local funding for remedial education will surely become an issue within next few years (Martin, Martin, and Terman 1996).

RtI has become the system to administer a broad range of academic and behavioral AIS services. Whether schools adopt RtI or the same process by another name, it is mandated to be in place for evaluation by 2012. After 2012, non-compliance with this procedure will lead to interruption of both state and federal funding to schools. Mandates for RtI are outlined in NYS Part 100.2 Regulations (general education requirements) in 2008. All NYS districts are required to implement all components
outlined in the regulations by July 2012. With the introduction of the Response to Intervention model (RtI), AIS is monitored on a three-tiered system. Regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are supporting this initiative through

PART I: THE REDEFINITION OF DISABILITY UNDER RTI

"Disability is one of those human conditions that are both universal as well as strongly shaped by their cultural context...cultures differ greatly as to which specific condition they recognize as a disability, how they interpret matters of causation and what sort of countermanding action they stipulate. Disability is thus "culturally constructed," endowed with significance and meaning in the context of particular shared beliefs, established (and occasionally challenged) through the act of collective cultural interpretation."

-Heinz-Dieter Meyer

Meyer's statement that "disability is culturally constructed" provides a comparative perspective that calls to question notions on which special education designation in the U.S.A. has been developed. In relation to RtI, these questions are fitting. The severely disabled, most often impeded by recognizable physical, mental and/or behavioral impediments are cross-culturally recognized as disabled. It is the LD (and sometimes OHI) categories of disability that show considerable variation internationally and which constitute the population of special learners who are gradually being re-defined as "regular" rather than "special" students under RtI.

Special education legislation in the USA has up to this point developed around the premise that students with disabilities should be identified early and offered specialized supports that allow them access to education in the least restrictive environment, LRE (IDEA 1997, 300.550; Hehir 2006). The conflict between 1) identifying disability, which places the students outside of the norm, have been counter balanced with 2) inclusionary
efforts designed to normalize and integrate the experiences and academic services of disabled students (Martin, Martin and Terman 1996).

Once recognized as disabled, students have been provided modifications to regular programs, specialized instruction and testing modifications to level the playing field with their peers. This effort to assist students in access to the regular program has been supported by both special education and 504 Law, which provides supports and modifications based on medical issues. Struggling students who did not qualify for special education were left without assistance (Klotz 2007).

Since the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1974 (IDEA), Gresham (2001) points out that most special education students have been identified as "learning disabled" (LD) and most often assigned resource room support to help them pass their regular classes. Wedl (2005) identifies this disability as the most controversial due to ambiguity of definition and corresponding eligibility issues. In fact, there are no physical symptoms and the I.Q. testing on LD students produces, on average, scores comparable to the general student population. The definition of learning disabled has changed little since Kirk (1963) used the words at a national conference to describe the phenomena of having difficulty learning.

Students in the LD category are not distinguishable from other students who struggle to learn. It follows that when RtI provides interventions that are very similar to the resource room that these students will no longer need to be identified as LD to gain access to the additional help that they need to learn. O'Connor's (2003) study in Pittsburg elementary schools noted 15% of students identified in need of special education at the schools whereas 8% were identified in the experimental schools implementing RtI.
AIS classes include remedial reading, writing and math and are similar to the traditional special education resource rooms. Wedl (2005) points out that due to this similarity in the programs, mildly learning-disabled students have increasingly been placed directly into AIS support groups. Because students who need extra support are increasingly having their instructional needs addressed through the regular education initiative of RtI/AIS, decreased numbers of students are being referred to the CSE. As a result, heterogeneity is rapidly increasing in classrooms.

Of the 13 categories of disability, identified under IDEA 97, the reduction in ratios of disabled to non-disabled will be found mostly in the categories of “specific learning disability” (LD) and “other health impaired” (OHI). Gresham (2001) notes that the (LD) category comprises fifty-two percent of students in special education programs nation-wide. OHI is a new and growing category that is used very often to classify students with attention deficit disorder (ADD). This category, similar to the LD category, is comprised of students who usually have comparable cognitive measures to the general student population. In other words, learning disabled students who tend to have typical IQ’s but are educationally impeded by the more mild disabilities, such as reading disabilities, minor processing issues or ADD are able to learn the same material with additional assistance (Rose and Meyer 2002). Unlike students with more pronounced disabilities, the mildly disabled are often in need of more support but not separate classes and are therefore being served in remedial AIS classes in much the same way as they had been supported by a traditional special education resource room (Heward 2003; Hitchcock et al. 2005; Rose and Meyer 2002).
The criteria for eligibility under IDEA, based on psychometric testing demonstrating a discrepancy between ability and performance, created a situation in which many students were left waiting to fail (Klotz 2007). Support services were not available until they were identified as disabled or had a medical justification (under 504 law) to get additional services (Fletcher et al. 2004). Reschly and Ysseldyke (2002) discuss the ambiguity of LD identification and inconsistencies in the ability-achievement discrepancy model used to identify LD. Tilly and Reschly (2000) noted that the population of LD students identified with LD ranged from 2.73 to 9.43% state to state. This range is not comparable to the range seen nation-wide in other disability categories. A lack of clarity about the designation of LD is a problem and RtI has been presented as a solution.

Until the reauthorization of IDEA as IDEIA, the procedure for identifying learning disabilities was through psycho-educational testing that demonstrated a discrepancy between IQ and achievement scores. As a guideline, when achievement was 2 + grade levels below the intelligence quotient, students would be deemed eligible for special education services under the designation of LD and sometimes referred to as unspecified LD (Tilly and Reschly 2000). When the discrepancy model for identifying LD classification was eliminated as the main criteria for CSE designation, the rationale for determining eligibility was freed from that measure and sent back to RtI (Gresham 2001). This uncoupling of the discrepancy model from CSE designation criteria is having an impact on the numbers of students identified under the non-specified LD category and the Other Health Impaired category, which was often used for ADD, and
ADHD, identified students. These students are now regular education students and, as such access AIS services under RtI.

The new mandate to meet the needs of all students in the regular classroom with support through RtI effectually moves the line demarking the norm and redefines disability. As Fletcher (2009) points out, with a "continuous distribution and no natural breaks" (p 6) LD identification under RtI will require the identification of various other cut off points for useful participation in regular education. This will require time to develop with considerable room for inconsistency across educational settings (Jimerson, Burns and VanDerHeyden 2007).

The shift away from disability testing is being replaced by RtI and instructional support in various forms of AIS. Only after being offered numerous interventions both in and outside of the classroom and showing little response, are students referred to special education for testing. This process of remediating and assessing responses to various types of intervention results in fewer referrals and a smaller percentage of students designated as disabled (L. Fuchs 2003). Response to intervention evaluates and monitors student progress noting how much progress is made in response to specific instructional strategies. By offering a wide range of services through regular education, schools are expected to expand their abilities to instruct students with differing abilities.

Previous to RtI there were pre-referral requirements before students were tested for disabilities, the RtI threshold to be passed before a referral to the CSE requires documentation of interventions attempted (Hehir 2006). RtI requires that teachers monitor responses to all interventions. Fuchs and others (2003) describe the construct for
provision of alternative teaching methods and various modifications to assist struggling students that teachers using RtI will employ as they keep records of student responses. It involves a student-centered and innovative approach to diagnostic and prescriptive teaching. Previously, such adjustments were only allowed under special education. As such, many of the RtI strategies include modifications previously reserved for only CSE designated students (Batsche et al. 2005). The types of modifications encouraged, such as decreasing homework, repeating directions and extending time allotted, have allowed regular teachers to monitor the learning styles of students who struggle in their classes within the general education setting.

RtI: Universal Remediation and Supplemental Instruction:

Identifying students in need of additional and/or supplemental instructional services can be done with RtI without labeling students as disabled under special education, which can make an impact on attitudes toward struggling learners. Hehir (2009, p.8) states: "attitudes toward disability have a major impact on the education these children receive". While students who do not respond to interventions with improved learning are referred for diagnostic testing, proponents hope that the services will be as effective as services traditionally provided only to students with IEP’s or 504 plans, resulting in fewer students identified in the category, disabled.

As stated earlier AIS, in Tier II resembles a special education resource room, as it is comprised of small group or one-on-one instruction. This extra support is available to all students who have unsatisfactory performance on state assessments or are referred by teachers to CST Teams. AIS classes are equally available to English Language Limited (ELL), regular education students, as well as students with individual education plans
(IEP’s) and 504 plans. AIS services are used during Tier II of the RtI process and would include any strategies or modifications beyond modifications those employed in the regular classroom and before designation as disabled.

Hehir (2006) acknowledges that the reauthorized version of IDEA, renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004 (IDEIA), is now focusing on merging special education and regular education programs whenever possible. By decoupling the discrepancy model for identifying disabilities, which relies on a two-year difference in IQ scores and performance on tests, IDEIA has effectively removed the line between at-risk and mildly disabled students so that everyone is eligible for extra help and modifications designed to help them succeed. RtI, which applies best remedial practices to all students in need of services, is keeping a segment of students under regular education umbrella who would likely to have been designed as disabled in past years (Center for Policy Studies Hamline University).

Jimerson, Burns and VanDerHayden (2007) describe a process of exposure to AIS using research-based interventions in order to monitor responses of students to various instructional strategies for all students who are resistant to regular instruction. The rationale of this new requirement is to ensure that delays are not related to weaknesses in instruction (Kavale 2005). RtI encourages application of a number of strategies to help at-risk students learn on the premise that it is important to know whether the student is disabled or if, on the other hand, the curriculum and/or pedagogy are weak (Strangeman et al. 2008).

Previously teachers referred students who struggled to the CSE, as special education was the only door to resource room support. With RtI, all struggling students
are eligible for these classes as a first form of remediation. This in effect has redirected most of the students who would have been referred by Committee on Special Education (CSE) into AIS classes for a similar type of support that was previously only available in the special education resource room (Fletcher et al. 2004).

Teachers will be the first to note the impact that the shift to RtI is having on this segment of the student population at the school level. This is so because policy shifts often take place (top down) and assessment is based on state or national level outcomes data. Results of large state tests usually are available the following year and do not provide much detail on student learning. First-hand assessments of success at the building level may present a more accurate picture of the impact of an initiative separate from other variables that influence composite results.

Wartgow (2008) and Hess (1998) bemoan the fact that often new mandates are announced causing shifts before a previous policy change has taken root. This sort of policy churn wastes time and finances due to the need for new forms of teacher training, purchase of new materials and development of support systems designed to meet the needs of new initiatives (Wartgow 2008; Hess 1998). Teachers, over time, may become wary of taking on policy changes that they believe may be cancelled out by other mandates (Hess 1998; Wartgow 2008; Whetton 1997).

Reschly and Ysseldyke (2002) caution that the trend to designate fewer students as disabled by providing academic intervention through RtI will have impact on a number of efficiency concerns. The mandates involved in implementation of delivering AIS services to all students through the RtI model has become a government supported solution that involves more adjustments to education than improving instruction for
students. There is a coupling of solutions to instructional and financial constraints. Funding is a very serious issue facing public education as special education numbers increase. At inception IDEA represented a progressive model to secure rights for significantly disabled students. Viability of special education funding became an issue when more than 8% of students were designated a disabled. Currently, with many school districts facing 14-18% special education designation this policy change involving RtI slowing down and decreasing referrals was “a solution at the ready” (Kingdon 1995).

The availability of AIS for all students has slowed and reversed the numbers referred to CSE’s for evaluation. This is so because for the mildly disabled the intention of the CSE referral was to secure more individualized support in a resource room which very closely resembled the AIS small group used under RtI, Tier 2.

As a result of the emphasis on early identification of disability under IDEA legislation, the percentage of students designated disabled was inadvertently raised. RtI, as a model, serves as a filter to sort out struggling from disabled learners in regular education. Fuchs and Vaughn (2003) note how the effect of RtI in reversing the trend to identify disabilities early by providing service to all struggling students while systematically monitoring their responses to research-based strategies.

While stakeholders hope that RtI will be effective in meeting student needs, there has been little conversation with teachers about the rationale for RtI as an appropriate gauge for assessing disabilities. The shift takes place as a result of mandate and in-service trainings supported by district level BOCES are geared toward implementation. Presently, all students, regular, special education and undetermined, can access help at any time that they show signs of need. While this appears reasonable it will take teacher
buy-in to adjust to the change in their environments and duties (Kavale, Holdnack and Mostert 2005).

The longevity of this shift, which is expected to result in lower percentages of students identified as disabled, will depend on teacher buy-in to the new model. Such buy-in would be seen in increased tolerance and improved ability to meet diverse needs as well as the effectiveness of RtI and AIS. State Education can adjust measures/assessments to set the bar wherever it is needed to control the numbers of students designated under special education. When test scores rise, teachers and administrators often notice that the test has become easier, begging the question as to whether the “reform” is rigged or truly creating progress (The Site: NYC Educator, nyceducator.com). Since the assessment of success is increasingly monitored by state assessments, the determination of success/failure may not calibrated with classroom performance and teacher concerns.

A program that requires motivation and commitment on the part of teachers will be far less likely to succeed if teachers feel that their concerns regarding student performance are out of the loop (Sofo 2008). For this reason study of teacher satisfaction with the shift is important.
PART II: THE IMPACT OF CHANGE ON TEACHERS

"There are no revolutions in education. Schools have an incredible immune system. They react to new things coming into the system the same way our immune system does. They gather around and try to kill it as soon as they can" (Hofmeister 2004)

The above quote is stated by an observer of failed reforms who believes that imposed change, without regard to teacher satisfaction, is often subverted. Kurt Lewin's (1951) change theory noted that the more democratic the change the less resistance will be exhibited within a given field. His view of space as psychologically defined is relevant to the middle school classroom. Behavior is understood as the function of the interaction between personal goals and the environment (Lewin 1951; Schein 1996). In RtI implementation, if the stresses between teacher goals and a changing environment are noticed and managed, change may be better facilitated. Wartgow (2008) claims that reforms fail because they are too frequent and imposed by mandates, which causes teachers to view new programs cynically as "reform du jour."
In order for school change to be long-lasting, it must be supported by the school culture. This is the basis of Sofo's (2008) argument that the best solutions to improve the performance of struggling learners in middle schools are bottom up reforms. As a superintendent, he studied the instructional reforms in his district, noting the complex process of weaving change into school culture by working from the classroom level up to the building and then district levels. Top down mandates, he posits simply do not work in the long run. The stresses involved in changing classroom practices did not impede progress in the middle school in his district when teachers had authentic influence on the design (Sofo 2008). Imposed directives did not succeed, so after change was established in the middle grades, Sofo extended participatory reform at the elementary and high schools.

In addition to the need for more teacher participation/involvement in change designs, instructional reform models may corrode teacher job satisfaction if the redesign affects core dimensions of work that contribute to satisfaction. A decrease in job satisfaction may go on to compromise some of the necessary components of teacher motivation to participate in the extra work and training in the process of adjusting to change. For example, teacher job satisfaction will be influenced by workload increases during a policy change that requires learning and implementing new strategies (Lance and Butt 2005). To highlight this concern, the RtI model requires thorough redesign of both instructional and assessment strategies (Batsche t al. 2005; Mastropieri and Scruggs 2005).

This redesign of teacher work and professional relationships will have probable influence on all of Hackman and Oldham's core dimensions of job satisfaction to varying
degrees. Perie and Baker (1997) discuss other workplace factors demonstrated to have an influence on teacher satisfaction, such as administrative support, student behavior and school environment are influenced by RtI implementation. The level of these variables throughout implementation of RtI, or any other reform model, will be expected to either support or corrode prospects for success of the initiative (Lance and Butt 2005).

Fletcher and others (2004) noted that fundamental shifts in middle school teacher practice will emerge directly related to the change in the way services are provided under RtI to children who need help to succeed. Teacher motivation is apt to be either adversely or positively influenced by redesign of their duties because the psychological needs (of meaningful dimensions of work) may be nourished or compromised during the change process (Brewer, Rees and Argys 1995; Hackman and Oldham 1976; Shachar 1997).

Of the five dimensions identified in Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, all are involved in the shift to RtI. Earlier studies on job satisfaction offered evidence that work attitudes and behaviors were influenced by optimal configurations of "core dimensions" leading to the premise that adjustments in these domains must be handled carefully to maintain job motivation (Hackman and Lawler 1971). Since teachers are responsible for implementation, their satisfaction may determine the longevity of the RtI model. Questions related to these five, core dimensions will be written into the survey to inquire into shifts in teaching practice under RtI that have demonstrated a correlation with job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham 1976).
Implementation of RtI will require changes in fundamental aspects of the teaching career, including the level of tolerance that regular education teachers have with students who are not performing on grade level (Gerber 2003; Shachar 1997; Tiner 1995). Changes in school culture will require teachers to work more closely with other teachers and specialists in meeting the needs of diverse learners. More flexibility in the way that lessons are delivered will be required, thereby impacting teacher autonomy (D'Amico and Grimmett 2008). In a study on a period of intense policy change in the context of schools in British Columbia, significant impact on the school culture was noted with policy changes that changed the professional interaction levels of teachers (D'Amico and Grimmett 2008). Implementing the RtI reform model involves an increase in teachers working and planning together and will redesign both work style and workload, at least initially (Lance and Butt 2005; Shachar 1997).

In addition to changes in the workload and teaching style, the success of this adjustment relies on schools being able to influence teachers psychologically in order to, in effect extend the range of tolerance for different abilities (Gerber 2003) (Kingdon 1995). Increased tolerance is necessary to effectively diversify instructional practices and services (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2000). The successful inclusion of students in regular education relies as much on teacher tolerance for differences in learning as it does on student progress (Gerber 2003; Hines 2002). This involves very fundamental changes in the way that teachers cooperate with other teachers to deliver instruction. An example is the new encouragement for team teaching (Batsche et al. 2005). Team teaching requires joint planning and a high degree of cooperation between professionals who previously
may have only met in a faculty room (Johnston and Hines 1997). This change influences the school culture in essential ways.

Perie and Baker's report (1997) raises an awareness that policy advocates and administrators should be more aware that changes in the environment (workplace) caused by change reforms will directly affect teacher satisfaction. Coburn and Honig (2008) discuss problems related to district office implementation of policies that include sophisticated interaction with stakeholder concerns beyond the school level, but scant decision making based on evidence or teacher input. Evidence suggests that reform initiatives may be sound but ineffective, since teachers aren't involved in design (Whetton 1997; Wartgow 2008). Considering the difficulties that teachers face in the change process, they will be less satisfied with initiatives that are pitched as mandates than they will be with those that engage their professional insight (Guskey 1988).

Wartgow (2008) and Whetton (1997) advise that mandates from state and federal levels are naïve if they are issued with an assumption that the threat of a loss of funding will ensure compliance. As is the case with other program changes, success of RtI, will eventually depend on teacher cooperation for longevity (Wartgow 2008). Cohen and March (1974) refer to schools as organized anarchies, stating that; "Teachers decide if, when and what to teach. Students decide if, when, and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when, and what to support." and "The "decisions" of the system are a consequence produced by the system but intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one" (pp 33-34).

Political and financial concerns influence the direction of schools, however, Cohen and March (1974) declare that cultural forces tend to eventually determine the
outcome of directives. Further, as loosely coupled systems, schools have complex goals that are open to interpretation by the various stakeholders who may refuse to implement policies that they were not properly consulted on or prepared for (Weick 1976). Weick's observation that organizations are not as interdependent as they may appear, support an understanding that the components/individuals within organizations/schools do not automatically comply with organizational goals (Tomlinson 1988).

Wartgow (2008) in an attempt to change culture in his district received a message from teachers "It's the Culture, Stupid!" He describes his shock as they entered a meeting with the message stenciled on t-shirts. Beyond individual reactions to change, teachers exist within a larger culture that also reacts. School culture serves as a repository for what they collectively believe works and is "right". Norms, shared and often inexplicit, do not evaporate in the face of state mandates. In their discussion on school culture, Kent Peterson and Terrence Deal (2002) chide policymakers for superficial approaches to change with claims like: "such external demands will never rival the power of cultural expectations, motivations, and values".

Huchinson's (1991) work on the change process establishes that individuals, facing change, represent their own and their group's shared values and are not inclined to work toward goals that conflict with shared values. Cottrell and Harvey (2004) insist that it is normal and expected for groups to resist change. He identifies five reasons for reluctance to change: 1) the change is out of their control; 2) they don't understand why it is necessary; 3) they succeeded the old way; 4) they feel incapable of changing and 5) they perceive that the price outweighs the benefits.
These simple reasons for reluctance articulated by Hutchinson (1991) highlight Whetton's (1997) assertion that administrators must communicate with teachers with an awareness of the existing culture. He explains that change causes uncertainty but information reduces it. He advises a focus on what is to be done, why it is to be done and when it is to be done for better success with teachers (Whetton, 1997).

A hidden factor in teacher defensiveness to change may be confidence to accomplish the new task. Tiner (1995) discusses the different skill repertoires of regular and special education teachers, with one requiring relatively more content knowledge and management skills and the other more patience and problem solving. As such, when faced with an unfamiliar task, that redefines the way that a teacher is accustomed to teach, one may say "that won't work in my classroom", and what they are really saying: "I'm scared of trying that in my classroom" (Hutchinson 1991).

In “Management of Change”, Hutchison (1991) refers to Bernes's (1967) classic, Games People Play, in highlighting how fear of change would lead a teacher to select a socially acceptable mask of "dissatisfaction" with changes that they actually fear. Defensiveness might be better understood as a need for more communication and authentic buy-in. Implementation of the RtI process requires changes in how teachers individually and cooperatively interact so circumventing the initial work with teachers on meaningful change will not likely quicken the pace of change (Hutchinson 1991).

In their psychological research into the ways that groups react to change, Blacker and Shimmin (1984) present a list of psychological benefits that groups provide: 1) they provide identity and esteem; 2) enable us to test reality; 3) satisfy needs of belonging; and 4) make individuals more powerful and capable of achieving their individual goals.
Teachers, within their cultures, resist change about which they have not developed a consensus. In this light, the stresses to change individual practice are paralleled by additional level of resistance in changing the collective pattern or culture.

As discussed, the RtI initiative requires more change than many other reform model mandates. RtI is described by Boyer (2009) as a systemic rather than an add-on reform initiative. In light of the cultural penetration required to rearrange both established procedures and deeply held beliefs, change models establish the importance of addressing both the underlying culture and personal belief system (Marris 1974; Lewin 1947).

The RtI initiative appears to have the required components to identify serious learning difficulties, remediate and assess student progress. (Batsche et al. 2005; Kavale, Holdnack and Mostert 2005). However successful implementation of this model relies on teacher buy-in, and Mastropieri and Scruggs (2005) articulate concern because the model requires fundamental changes in areas related to middle school teacher satisfaction on both personal and interpersonal levels. Wartgow (2008) recommends initiatives be few and far between and stresses that preparation is paramount: "Introducing new reform initiatives into the schools - prior to developing the capacity to understand, manage and support those reforms - is a recipe for failure (p. 41)

First, implementation will take several years (Fletcher 2009). Even with enthusiastic building staff, RtI will require extensive training, new materials, common planning time and an increase in meetings to study individual student response(s) to intervention. All of these changes influence the design of a teacher’s workday and have
the potential to influence core dimensions of teacher satisfaction (Oldham and Hackman 1980).

Secondly, this shift is not a benign policy alternative, as it disturbs teachers’ core assumptions about the best classroom models. At issue with the RtI policy shift is that teachers do not always react positively to changes in classroom heterogeneity (Batsche et al. 2005). One fundamental concern is that the RtI model must be built across this fault-line of one of the most prominent education policy controversies. Issues related to the "tracking wars" re-emerge beneath the surface whenever policy changes increase or decrease the heterogeneity of instructional groups.

Change involves stress in the form of extra work and effort and change also ignites conflict when issues are related to policy controversies (Rein and Schon, 1993). Loveless (1999) stresses that ethical people reason differently, he made this point in response to the bitter differences in opinion that took place during the tracking wars. The conflict among teachers about ability grouping students for instruction is common to RtI, as well. Rein and Schon (1993) explain that individuals derive different meanings from the same conditions in that values embedded in their policy frames cause them to react to changes that challenge their given frame.

During the tracking debates of the 1980's, policymakers and the teachers responsible for implementation of models were confused and troubled by the depth of disagreement (Loveless 1999). Martin Rein and Donald Schon (1993) discuss difficulties in identifying frames that underlie policy arguments and the force of these frames on the way that we think about education and organize schools. This conflict of values is often
unstated and inexplicit yet it profoundly influences attitudes and behaviors (Sergiovanni et al. 1999).

Not all teachers will struggle with the increased heterogeneity in the classroom. Principals who know their staff well can often identify which teachers will show signs of stress with a greater range of student abilities in the classroom (Shachar 1997). Teachers with similar levels of skill and commitment to their students often have very different conceptions of the appropriate range of heterogeneity of ability within their classrooms (Brewer 1995; Loveless 1999; Gamoran 1995). Different prioritization schemes influence the type of policy change that individual teachers within a school will support or oppose. For example, the tendency toward a prioritization of excellence over equity or vice versa identifies the public values underneath policy communities (Sergiovanni et al. 1999). Mandates introduced to meet political stakeholder concerns for equity or civil rights are not immediately matched with the goals that teachers have to see results and improved student performance (Meyer 2110).

While investigation of values underlying policy arguments are beyond the scope of this study, values and teacher judgments are implicit in the degree of teacher satisfaction with change policy initiatives. For example, the rationale for increasing heterogeneity is not as fundamentally related to students’ educational outcomes as it is to social outcomes (Hines 2002). Teachers who react strongly to this issue, on either side of the debate, know that it is the concern of sociologists (for equal access) more than instructors (for good teaching practice) that advocates for fuller inclusion (Hines 2002).

As Loveless (1999) and Gamoran (1995) differently argue, teachers who are for ability grouping are usually motivated by a desire to work at individual student's best
instruction zone of learning, while teachers who are against it tend to express concerns for equity, self-esteem, and long term issues of social stratification. While RtI is designed to provide individual and small group support to struggling students in areas of need, the balance of the day is in the regular education classroom. Batsche and others (2005) confirm that disparate teacher views on what is instructionally best for students adds to the complexity of initiating and sustaining systemic school change.

RtI will change the teacher's work style and schedule in numerous ways. For regular education teachers to go beyond their comfort zone and experiment with different remedial strategies before referring students to special education requires increased tolerance for the struggling and slow learning students in their classes (Shachar 1997). RtI implementation relies on increased tolerance for natural differences in ability and performance in the classroom. Teachers are simultaneously required to observe and assess individual student's responses to various interventions interwoven in regular education. In their discussion of attitude barriers to increased heterogeneity, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000) found that most while teachers agree with the goals of inclusion, they are uncertain about their abilities to assess and manage diverse needs effectively.

Beyond changes in classroom heterogeneity, Hines and Johnston (1997) and Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000) discuss how job satisfaction may be influenced by the ways that RtI implementation will change the way that teachers are accustomed to work. In studies done on teacher job satisfaction, teachers have rated administrative support, teacher control over in class procedures and student behavior as higher than other variables such as the age of the teacher or even pay (Perie and Baker 1997). A strong correlation between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction has also been demonstrated.
All of these factors, related to teacher job satisfaction are affected by the model change to RtI.

Lance and Butt (2005) point out that the culture change associated with this mandate will require understanding of the impact change and support of teachers during the transition to a new model. Anecdotal evidence, available to any administrator working on implementation of RtI, suggests that regular education teachers are concerned that their workloads will change (Kochhar, West and Taymans 2000). Specifically, the concerns seem to be that RtI record keeping of remedial efforts and informal assessments will increase, thereby taking regular education teacher focus off whole-class instruction (Fletcher et al. 2004; Mastropieri & Scruggs 2005). Additionally, special education teachers are expressing concerns about being marginalized, relegated to a support role or being displaced (Wyatt-Ross 2008).

Batsche and others (2005) claim that successful implementation of RtI, will involve transformation of schools into more cooperative professional model. For this to happen regular and special education teachers will have to be satisfied enough to work in close collaboration (Batsche et al., 2005). Teachers will either buy-in or, if dissatisfied with the reform model begin a reverse policy backlash that will eventually dissemble the initiative (Wartgow 2008; Tomlinson 1988). In regard to the implementation of RtI, surveying teachers in their programmatic and implementation concerns and their satisfaction with job redesign may produce information useful in changing school policies, in general. (Deal and Peterson 2002; Baker and Perie 1997; Johnston and Hines 1997).
Thus, while the RtI solution appears to dovetail with the dual goals of reducing the number of students served under special education and serving all struggling learners within regular education, questions remain about teacher buy-in. This concern is tied to a lack of clarity about how the new model will affect teacher roles and the redesign of workload shared between regular and special education teachers (Fletcher et al., 2004; Lance and Butt 2005).

CHAPTER III: METHODS

The central problem investigated in this study was teacher satisfaction during the early stages of implementation of the RtI initiative. The data reported may be germane to any initiative/mandate, in that the concerns teachers have about their work (job satisfaction) and their beliefs about best practice whether regarding level of balance of work, heterogeneity in the classroom, co-teaching or other issues, must be considered and addressed in order to increase chances of successful implementation of the initiative (Baker and Perie 1997; D'Amico and Grimmett 2008; and Wartgow 2008).

PARTIPANTS

The sample consisted of middle school teachers and principals from New York’s Hudson Valley Area. Special education teachers, regular education teachers, AIS
teachers and others (guidance counselors, speech therapists and other special teachers) received invitations to complete the survey by way of their building principals who sent the letter of explanation and email link with access to the online survey. The Survey was started by 201 teachers with 60.7% completing all of the demographic and at least 90% of the other 43 questions. Teachers with complete survey responses entered after 6-1-09 and before 7-15-09, total 127 that comprise the population. All groups of teachers were well represented in the survey as well as in the 5 focus schools that are viewed in relation to an interview with their school principal.

SAMPLE SELECTION AND PROCEDURES

In order to survey teachers and interview the principals of the schools they work in, a meeting with 8 principals in the region was held to explain the purpose of the study. The principals were informed of the possibility of their participation in a related interview regarding the details of implementation, types of training offered to teachers and other administrative supports during policy change was projected for schools with good response rates and usable (completed) surveys.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In selecting a method, I chose an anonymous survey to allow for a broad range of both respondents and questions, combined with an interview of the principals of schools participating in the survey to create a context for the answers within each group. This format allowed teachers to express their job satisfaction on detailed questions about
various issues related to the RtI initiative, with both Lickert and some extended responses.

The teacher responses were analyzed and an additional layer of analysis was applied to 5 focus schools within the population. The five schools with the most usable data were linked to the qualitative principal interview data of the school. In the interviews, principals of five schools provided information about the implementation process, including anticipated difficulties. Within and across schools, teacher responses were analyzed and responses across different types of teachers, i.e., regular, special education and AIS were compared using ANOVA to note differing levels of satisfaction with the implementation.

THE TEACHER SURVEY

In Part I of the survey, teachers responded to demographic questions, general satisfaction with the implementation of RtI in their middle schools. In Part II, they responded to a number of questions that relate to satisfaction with the RtI model in meeting student needs and changes in the structure of their work that included changes in time use and cooperating with other teachers, in Part III they responded to a number of questions that relate to key components of teacher job satisfaction (Oldham and Hackman 1976; Oldham and Hackman, 1980).

HYPOTHESES
1) The satisfaction levels of middle school teachers with the early implementation stages of RtI will correlate with the core dimensions of job satisfaction identified in Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey (1976), and that,

2) Teacher satisfaction will be influenced by various adjustments to work conditions and relationships brought about through implementation of the RtI model.

In relation to hypothesis #1

(The five core dimensions of job satisfaction), it was anticipated that:

- RtI will increase teacher satisfaction with the impact of their work on children (Task Significance).
- RtI will decrease teacher satisfaction with autonomy in the workplace as a result of increased meeting, co-teaching planning time (Autonomy).
- RtI will increase teacher satisfaction with feedback received on work from supervisors (Feedback).
- Teacher satisfaction will increase with the introduction of a variety of challenging skills and abilities required for RtI implementation (Skill Variety).
- Teachers will report less satisfaction with completion of tasks (Task Identity/Completion).

In relation to hypothesis #2, it was anticipated that:

- Teachers will report less satisfaction as a result of the increased time spent in meetings and co-planning with colleagues.
- Teachers will be more satisfied with students learning outcomes.
• Teachers will be report low satisfaction with consultation prior to and during RtI implementation. Balance of workload between types of teachers will result in less satisfied regular education teachers.

Survey responses of the entire population of middle school teachers were analyzed on individual variables and in relation to composite variables constructed from combination of between 3 and 10 like variables. ANOVA’s were run on some of those variables based on teacher type, 1) regular education; 2) special education; 3) academic intervention teachers and 4) "other" teachers, to note any differences among teacher type. Then the responses of the five focus schools were analyzed and viewed within the qualitative context of the principal interviews of the focus schools.

THE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

The five middle schools with the most complete responses were selected as focus schools and the principals of these schools were interviewed on the RtI implementation process. Questions included preparation for change, degree of teacher consultation and training and any anticipated difficulties with the new model. The purpose of the interview was to create a context for the answers provided by teachers at the five schools. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with principals centering on 10 questions about preparations for implementation, the implementation process and perceptions of teacher satisfaction with the RtI model. This qualitative data provided detailed insight into the context in which the shift from the previous model took place, as well as any particular expectations about levels of teacher satisfaction principals anticipated in and
among the different groups of teachers. Also evident in the interviews was the implementation style of each school leader ranging from "top down" directives to participatory, consensus building approaches.

INSTRUMENTS FOR SURVEY AND INTERVIEW

A survey of 43 items was developed to address the main questions regarding teachers’ beliefs about RtI and the process of implementation. The survey was modeled on the Job Diagnostic Survey developed by Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham (1976, 1980) to assess job satisfaction. This survey required responses to statements with a range of possible reactions with various aspects of the RtI model, the implementation process, and the five core domains of job satisfaction (Oldham and Hackman, 1976).

All responses were kept anonymous and were only accessible by the researcher. The survey consisted of three parts, Part I identified the participant's role within the school and Part II and III were comprised of questions focused on two major issues with regard to teachers’ beliefs about RtI and the influence implementation has on job satisfaction, respectively. Part II questions related to the changes in the workplace with regard to workload, meetings, etc. and teacher satisfaction with these adjustments in the classroom. For example, they were asked how well teachers deal with having more children with learning difficulties in their regular classrooms. Teachers were also asked to rate the impact of these changes to student learning. (See Appendix for survey questions and format). Part III questions were related to the core dimensions of job satisfaction identified by Hackman and Oldham (1976), skill variety, task identity, task significance autonomy, and feedback on job performance. Teachers were asked to comment on their satisfaction with the impact of RtI on these dimensions of their work.
An email was sent to 16 schools with teachers at 12 schools, currently implementing RtI, participating. The email outlined the study included informed consent, and requested their participation in the online survey, providing enough information that respondents could understand the purpose of the study but remaining as concise as possible (Abelson 1995). A link provided contained a deadline for completing the survey. A time period of 6 weeks was set up for data collection. At the end of that period, all responses to the survey were collected and downloaded from surveymonkey.com in SPSS for analysis.

The interview of principals consisted of a face to face interview centering on ten questions, in which principals were encouraged to provide extended responses to questions about implementation in the schools surveyed. These interviews provide a context for the teacher responses within five focus schools.

All the non-demographic questions were scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Scores across items were summed together to best measure teachers’ levels of satisfaction across different factors. Questions were totaled across the following dimensions: training, assessing students’ needs, meeting time, record keeping, working with colleagues, tolerance, and job satisfaction. Also, a total score across all items were calculated for each of the five focus schools.

To best evaluate differences in teachers’ satisfaction with implementing RtI, ANOVAs were conducted on each of the dimensions as well as on the total score from the survey. The independent variable is teacher type (regular education, special education, AIS, and other) and each of the scores, the dependent measures. In addition
to the ANOVAs, correlations were run on the scores on the different dimensions to look for any linear relationships across variables.

It was expected that to the degree teachers feel that they have been involved in planning and implementation that they would report a more positive experience with RtI. When they were given ample joint planning time with co-teachers and meeting time, they would report more success. It was expected that the results would indicate concerns about the balance of work between regular and special education teachers, since Tier I and Tier II take place in or are based (with AIS support) in the regular education classroom. This was tested through questions about balance of work and also by the composite variable named: Balance. It was also expected that if the core dimensions related to job satisfaction were either disturbed or fostered in the process of implementation that teachers and that there would be considerable variation in satisfaction related to their rating of approval for the RtI initiative (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

It was likely that a portion of regular education teachers would report a relatively high degree of discomfort with co-teaching and record keeping duties instituted in Tier I. Special Education teachers were expected to express that they are being marginalized in class instruction and that they occupy a support role as co-teachers in the regular classroom. On the other hand, when related to higher satisfaction with RtI as a model and success with co-teaching, it was expected to increase satisfaction for both regular and special education teachers.

It was anticipated that regular teacher tolerance for varying abilities in the regular class would be a significant variable on whether or not teachers buy in to the model. If
teachers reported having to slow their instruction in order to meet the needs of struggling students, regular education teachers may express frustration about neglecting the more advanced students. On the other hand, if struggling students consistently fail in regular classes, special educators may advocate for quicker referral to the CSE.

In order to best test these expected relationships, ANOVAs were conducted using scores across the following dimensions, collaboration (including increased meeting time), record keeping, and an increase in the range of student abilities in the regular classroom. This analysis was done in order to determine which of these variable correlate with teacher satisfaction during implementation of the RtI initiative.

CHAPTER IV: TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

There were two stages of data collection. The first stage was an internet based teacher survey completed by teachers in twelve schools about the impact of the implementation of RtI on their job satisfaction. The second stage involved interviews conducted with five principals to create a descriptive context for five focus schools with the fullest responses from the twelve schools that had taken part in stage one. The Principal Interviews will be discussed in the next chapter.

During stage one of data collection the survey was posted on the internet via the website SurveyMonkey.com, to make it assessable to teachers. The coded responses were downloaded into a MicroSoft Excel file from which incomplete surveys were dropped. (Teachers who did not complete the survey included: 3 AIS teachers, 30 regular
education teachers, 26 special education teachers and 14 other teachers). The data was then uploaded in SPSS to analyze responses across answers. Variable names were created from questions to fit within the constraints of the columns. The five Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) variables were a focus of the analysis. Composite variables that grouped four types of questions, created by combining between 3 and 9 questions, were another focus in analysis of teacher responses. (These composite variables are described in detail below).

Responses were coded from 1, being most negative, to 5, most positive. For example, most questions asked to what extent the teacher agreed or disagreed with a survey statement, with strongly disagree coded as 1, and strongly agree coded as 5. These scores were then used to conduct ANOVAs to look for general differences on mean responses on several variables. Finally, correlations were conducted across several of the variables to examine any significant linear relationships across teacher agreement with the statements.

There were a total of 201 teachers from 12 schools who began the survey online. A total of 127 teachers completed enough of the survey to be included in the analyses to produce a general picture of teacher satisfaction with RtI. Five of the schools responded in numbers large enough for analysis as units. These focus schools are extracted later in this report to be viewed independently and in relation to the principal interviews from the 5 respective schools.

An internet link to the survey was sent to 20 schools with twelve responding. The responses used from the twelve schools that responded are below with the number and
pseudonym for each of the five focus schools. The schools used had the most usable data among the twelve schools that responded to the Teacher Survey.

The total teachers from 12 participating schools, n=127 was composed of 59 regular education teachers, 27 special education teachers, 11 AIS teachers and 24 other teachers. (Note: not all teachers answered all the demographic questions therefore numbers do not always add up to 127 total.) The total response and eliminated entries are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Did not complete</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>% Dropout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Aldridge</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 Bryant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 Colfax</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11 Dupont</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12 Emerson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>36.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The five focus schools are in bold with pseudonyms)
The following table shows the results of the teacher survey questions after non-completers were eliminated. Results are included on teachers who after filling most of the demographic information, went on to answer 90% or more of the substantive questions within the 43 question survey. An abbreviated version of the survey questions with the associated averages includes 1) general questions on teacher satisfaction with RtI; 2) the Five Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) variables and, 3) the four composite variables. These composites are averages across numerous questions related to changes that RtI has created in the job domains of time use, balance of work among different types of teachers, benefit of the RtI model to students and consultation, training and other support offered to teachers during implementation. The purpose of the composite variables is to add fuller understanding regarding how these four important aspects of teacher work may or may not influence teacher satisfaction during RtI implementation. The questions that are included in the composites are discussed later in this chapter.

### Abbreviated Teacher Survey Questions with Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th># of responses</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate satisfaction with your job?</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4.20 (.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had sufficient training</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.78 (1.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had sufficient training for use in reg. classroom</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2.69 (1.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident to instruct different ability levels</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.95 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in 1:1 remedial work</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.82 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in progress monitoring</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.04 (.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly meetings increased</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.77 (.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of meetings increased</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.83 (.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting time is necessary</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.47 (.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much time spent in meetings</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.91 (.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time working with other teachers</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3.04 (.88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a result of RtI, collegiality improved 124 2.93 (.69)
Collegiality increased on team/department 123 2.95 (.73)
Amount of recordkeeping increased 124 3.41 (.97)
Too much record keeping involved 126 3.11 (.91)
My class changed for the better 123 3.16 (.72)
I am a better teacher as result of RtI 123 3.07 (.75)
I am a better co-teacher as result of RtI 121 2.97 (.74)
School collegiality improved (overall) 123 2.85 (.68)
Division of work: reg/sped teachers approp. 121 2.81 (.95)
Regular teachers work increased 120 3.59 (.79)
Sped in support rather than co-teach role 120 3.43 (.97)
My overall opinion of RtI 121 3.36 (.86)
Tier II services should be assigned earlier 121 3.67 (1.00)
RtI effective with struggling learners 120 3.15 (.80)
Little difference in efectives SPED and RtI 119 2.93 (.97)
All students in my class benefit from RtI 120 3.12 (.89)
Tier II services assigned at the right time 117 2.97 (.79)
Tier II services are effective 118 3.29 (.79)
Range of abilities in my class has increased 119 3.04 (.75)
Teachers consulted on implementation 112 2.42 (1.07)
I influence implementation in my school 113 2.92 (1.10)
Satisfied w/ impact on duties/relationships 111 3.14 (.78)

JDS variable on skill variety 109 3.30 (.84)
JDS variable on task completion 111 2.83 (.71)
JDS variable on task significance 111 3.27 (.89)
JDS variable on autonomy 110 2.80 (1.86)
JDS variable on feedback 109 3.02 (.85)

Time (composite variable) 122 3.01 (.70)
Balance (composite variable) 116 2.59 (.52)
Benefit to students (composite variable) 109 3.15 (.53)
Consultation/training (composite variable) 111 2.73 (.89)

The general tone of the responses is neutral with most of the averages falling close to 3, the neutral answer. No particular question stood out as being very strongly agreed with or disagreed with across all teachers. The lowest average on a single satisfaction question is 2.42 on question #38, which asks for agreement with the statement: "…teachers were sufficiently consulted before RtI implementation in my
middle school." As such, teachers were more in disagreement with that statement indicating that more teachers responded that they were not sufficiently consulted on RtI.

The responses of these teachers were analyzed across a number of dimensions beginning with their responses to questions on overall satisfaction with RtI in their building. On a scale of 1 (strongly negative) to 5 (strongly positive), the average response for all who responded to this question was 3.36 (sd = 0.86). Thus, the teachers' overall opinion tended to be centered around mostly neutral to slightly positive.

**Results of survey of all teachers**

Survey Question: "How satisfied are you with RtI implementation in your school?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular education teachers</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 59)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education teachers</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of Teacher Satisfaction: Regular and Special Education Teachers

In comparing teacher type, the only significant differences are indicated between regular and special education teachers. On the first three variables listed below, special education teachers scored significantly “lower” As such, they responded more “negatively” in that that they disagreed more with the statement than did regular education teachers. The reverse is true for the question that asked whether all students benefit from RtI. Regular education teachers disagreed more with the statement than did special educators.
## Differences in Satisfaction with RtI Implementation based on Teacher-type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers Mean (SD) and n</th>
<th>Special Ed Teachers Mean (SD) and n</th>
<th>t-test value and significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too much time is spent in meetings</td>
<td>3.11 (.72) n = 62</td>
<td>2.63 (.74) n = 27</td>
<td>t (88) = -3.12 p &lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased work for reg. ed teachers</td>
<td>3.79 (.79) n = 58</td>
<td>3.32 (.85) n = 25</td>
<td>t (81) = -3.55 p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little diff between RtI and Sped Resource Room</td>
<td>3.14 (.90) n = 56</td>
<td>2.65 (.94) n = 26</td>
<td>t (80) = -3.74 p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students benefit from RtI</td>
<td>2.95 (.90) n = 57</td>
<td>3.58 (.81) n = 26</td>
<td>t (81) = 2.94 p &lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite: Balance Of work between teachers</td>
<td>2.49 (.56) n=56</td>
<td>2.80 (.43) n=23</td>
<td>t (77) = 3.59 p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were few significant differences across teacher job title, F < 1, p < .05. The overall opinion of RtI was not significantly different across types of teachers. But the teacher average score for special education teachers (3.52) tended toward more positive than regular education teachers. These numbers appear to be in the direction of what was expected, that regular education teachers are less happy about RtI implementation than are special education teachers. Perhaps more data with equal numbers of regular and special education teachers would strengthen this possible trend and a significant difference would be found.

### Comparison of Teacher Satisfaction with RtI based on Seniority

The Teacher Survey found only one significant difference between teachers of different seniority levels (see table below). On the statement:"RtI requires too much record keeping", the difference between teacher types was calculated at F (2, 118) = 2.84,
p<.05. Five other differences are identified that approach significance. Future studies in which more teachers are surveyed in these domains may reach significance. The group of teachers with the highest average, agree more with the statement – and the lowest scores disagree more with the positive form of statements. Overall, most responses, on average, tend to be rather neutral (with a small tilt toward being more positive than not).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Junior teachers (1-5 yrs) Mean (SD) and n</th>
<th>Mid-career teachers (6-15 years) Mean (SD) and n</th>
<th>Senior Teachers (15 yrs and more) Mean (SD) and n</th>
<th>F-test value and significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RtI - too much record keeping</td>
<td>3.11 (.74) n = 28</td>
<td>2.89 (.89) n = 47</td>
<td>3.35 (.92) n = 46</td>
<td>F (2, 118) = 2.84 p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time working with other teachers</td>
<td>3.33 (.48) n = 27</td>
<td>3.00 (.99) n = 44</td>
<td>2.87 (.92) n = 45</td>
<td>F (2, 113) = 3.53 p = .089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality increased with RtI</td>
<td>3.14 (.59) n = 28</td>
<td>2.98 (.86) n = 46</td>
<td>2.75 (.62) n = 44</td>
<td>F (2, 115) = 3.25 p = .068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My class changed for the better | 3.04 (.81) | 3.33 (.63) | 3.00 (.70) | F (2, 116) = 3.18
| n = 27 | n = 46 | n = 46 | p = .064

I am a better teacher with RtI | 3.04 (.64) | 3.26 (.68) | 2.89 (.83) | F (2, 116) = 3.03
| n = 28 | n = 46 | n = 45 | p = .055

Reg ed teachers workload increased | 3.42 (.58) | 3.44 (.87) | 3.80 (.82) | F (2, 112) = 3.22
| n = 26 | n = 45 | n = 44 | p = .066

THE JOB DIAGNOSTIC VARIABLES

Next, analyses were done on the five questions related to the JDS (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). These 5 dimensions are referred to as the JDS (Job Diagnostic Survey) Variables and each one was measured using a single statement on the survey. Teachers were asked to respond with how much they agreed with the statement (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

1. Task Significance in this study was defined as: the degree to which a teacher feels that his/her job has a positive impact on students. The statement on the survey read: *Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on students*.

2. Autonomy is the degree to which teachers have freedom/independence to schedule and determine how the job is done. The statement on the survey read:

*Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher*.

3. Feedback is the degree to which teachers receive clear and direct feedback on how well they are doing. The statement on the survey read:

*Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher*.
4. Skill Variety is the degree to which changes in work increase the variety of skills and abilities involved in teaching. The statement on the survey read:

"Using RtI increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well".

5. Task Completion/Identity is the degree to which the individual tasks contribute to the completion of the whole job. The statement on the survey read:

"With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was under the previous model".

ANOVA tests were run on the responses to these JDS statements to test differences across different types of teachers. Results indicate that there were no significant differences in how different types of teachers answer any of these five questions related to the 5 core dimensions of job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The means, standard deviations, and F values are reported below for each teacher type and each of the five JDS variables. As with the overall opinion of RtI, most of the responses tended to be in the neutral to slightly positive side of things. Thus most teachers are not reporting any overwhelming negative impact of RtI with regard to those aspects of their job and that does not differ across different titles (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JDS Variables based on Teacher-type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular ed teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special ed teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other –</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further examination of the JDS questions was done by calculating correlations between these variables and other ones. None of the 5 JDS variables were significantly correlated with teachers’ reported job satisfaction or with how long they had been teaching. However, there was a significant correlation with how long they have been using RTI. Length of time of RTI use was correlated with the variable “feedback,” $r = -.23$, $p < .05$. The more time they have been using RTI, the less they agree that RTI increases the feedback they get from administration on how they’re doing. Additionally, all five JDS variables are significantly correlated with teachers’ RTI opinion, $p < .01$. (See table below for values.) All the correlations with RtI opinion are positive indicating that the more positive they say they are about RTI, the more they agree with the JDS statements. The more negative they are about RTI, the more they disagree with the JDS statements.

**Correlations by JDS Variable with Overall opinion of RtI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation with RTI opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Identity/Completion</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Significance</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE COMPOSITE VARIABLES

In order to assess teacher satisfaction with the changes to their work and relationships during the implementation of RtI, clusters of survey questions were combined to create composite variables. The composite variables were a way to group similar questions for a fuller look at how teachers felt about four key influences that RtI implementation has on their teaching. The following composites are composed of between 3 and 9 survey questions listed below:

**Time:** Teacher satisfaction with the impact of more meetings, more co-planning, more record-keeping was tested by the "Time" (composite variable), composed of 5 questions on Teacher Survey:

1) As a result of RtI the number of meetings I must attend has increased.
2) As a result of RtI the length of meetings I must attend has increased.
3) I believe RtI requires too much meeting time.
4) As a result of RtI, the amount of record keeping I do has increased.
5) As a result of RtI, I spend too much time doing record keeping.

Changes introduced by the RtI model have had significant changes on the daily schedule of teachers. The composite variable made up of questions that inquire about teacher satisfaction with time spent in meetings, planning and record-keeping are important because they constitute the most obvious changes that RtI has introduced into the teacher work day.

The mean for "Time" for all teachers was 3.01 (sd = .70), with a possible range of 1 to 5. Five questions were included in this variable.
**Balance:** Teacher satisfaction with the balance of work between different types of teachers was tested by the "Balance" (composite variable), composed of 3 statements rated in the RtI Teacher Survey:

1) The division of work between regular and special education teachers is appropriate. (This rating was inverted to coordinate with the next 2 questions).
2) The amount of work for regular education teachers has increased.
3) Special education teachers take a supporting rather than a co-teaching role in educating students in co-taught classes.

Since the work style of teachers is changed by RtI, satisfaction with the balance of work between different types of teachers was analyzed with uses of the combination of questions that dealt with teacher satisfaction with the division of tasks among regular, special education, AIS and other teachers. To calculate this variable, the responses to first statement were inverted and then they were added to the remaining two questions to keep the direction of teacher satisfaction rating consistent and then the average was calculated.

The mean for "Balance" for all teachers was 2.59 (sd = .52) with the range for this variable from 1 to 5. The differences between teacher type were significant. The means for the teacher groups were: regular education 2.49 (sd=.56); special education 2.80 (sd=.43); AIS 2.81 (sd=.26) and other teachers 2.50 (.54) with F (3, 115) = 2.93, p < .05.

This difference is driven by the difference between regular education teachers and the special education teachers.

**Student Benefit:** Teacher satisfaction with the way that RtI benefits students was tested by 9 relevant questions with the Student Benefit" (composite variable):

1) I am confident in my ability to instruct learners with significantly different
abilities within the same classroom.

2) As a result of RtI my 1:1 remedial interaction with students has increased.

3) As a result of RtI, my monitoring of student’s understanding of the lesson has increased.

4) I believe RtI has changed my classroom for the better.

5) I believe I am a better teacher to my students due to using RtI.

6) I believe I am a better co-teacher as a result of RtI.

7) RtI is effective in meeting the needs of my students who are struggling learners.

8) All students in my class benefit from the use of RtI.

9) The academic performance in my class has increased under RtI.

Like other initiatives that are introduced into schools, teachers are less satisfied when they feel that the new model is either less effective or will not make much difference in terms of benefitting student learning with the methods they are already using. The mean for "Student Benefit" for all teachers was 3.15 (sd = .531) The range for this variable is 1 to 5.

**Consultation:** Teacher satisfaction with the degree of consultation and training available before and during implementation as well as their satisfaction with their ability to influence practice in their school was tested by combining 4 questions within the "Consultation" (composite variable):

1) I believe I have had sufficient training to implement RtI.

2) I believe I have had sufficient training to implement RtI in the regular classroom.
3) I believe teachers (including myself) were sufficiently consulted before RtI implementation in my middle school.

4) I influence the implementation process in my middle school.

Questions about consultation and training are aimed at an assessment of teacher satisfaction with the way that the school district, by way of the administrators engages with them in implementation and supports them in the process of change. The mean for "Consultation" for all teachers was 2.73 (sd = .89). The range for this variable is 1 to 5.

**Composite Variables: Comparison of Teacher Types**

As with previous variables, ANOVAs were run using teacher type as the independent variable. The only significant differences among teacher types across the groups of scores on these variables is between regular education and special education teachers on the balance of work. The F value for balance is significant. F (3, 115) = 2.93 p< .05. The AIS teachers along with the special education teacher report more satisfaction with balance when compared with the regular education and "other" teacher categories. The correlations with the balance composite variable and opinion of RtI at r =.025 show no relationship. The means and standard deviations are reported below.

As with the responses for everyone, these means tend to demonstrate a slight trend for mostly neutral to mildly positive responses on three of these clusters of questions: "time"; "student benefit" and "consultation".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Title</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Student Benefit</th>
<th>Teacher Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Ed</td>
<td>3.09 (.71)</td>
<td>2.49 (.56)</td>
<td>3.11 (.55)</td>
<td>2.61 (.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Ed</td>
<td>2.84 (.65)</td>
<td>2.80 (.43)</td>
<td>3.23 (.49)</td>
<td>2.75 (.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>2.99 (.62)</td>
<td>2.81 (.26)</td>
<td>3.27 (.50)</td>
<td>2.93 (.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.00 (.75)</td>
<td>2.50 (.54)</td>
<td>3.10 (.53)</td>
<td>2.88 (.84)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correlations between these composite variables and the teachers’ opinion of RtI were calculated with interesting significant correlations between these variables. When we look at RTI opinion – it is significantly (p < .01) positively correlated with Balance Student Benefit (r = .58) and Consultation (r = .41). So those who rate RTI more positively are more in agreement that RTI benefits the students and they are more in agreement that they were adequately consulted regarding RTI.

Conversely, RTI opinion is not correlated with how teachers agree with the impact on their time. In fact this correlation was calculated at almost zero – no relationship (r = .071 and r = .097, respectively).

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### CHAPTER V: TEACHER VOICES

#### General Comments on Satisfaction with RtI Implementation

A sampling of representative teacher comments entered in the optional response section (on a teacher survey question related to overall satisfaction with RtI implementation) shows the impact of policy change enacted in different schools with various levels of awareness of and/or concern for teacher satisfaction. As such, teacher responses range from cynical to enthusiastic. A variety of voices shed light on issues
pertinent to teacher satisfaction.

One teacher commented: "This is just another fad in the world of education. Why is it that other industrialized countries don't have these kinds of expensive, time-consuming programs and yet the achievement levels for their students are higher"? This comment relates to the general concern that teachers have about policy churn (Hess 1998). This sentiment may contribute to teachers waiting for the RtI reform to fail while showing minimum compliance with administrative directives (Wartgow 2008; Tomlinson 1988).

Time to manage implementation and balance of work among professionals is also raised by these teachers: "With the limited knowledge I have, it looks like more paper work and more meetings without an increase in time or pay to do either.” Another teacher concern: "Each year, more and more responsibility is being placed in the regular education teachers’ laps and there is little guidance, direction, instruction and time given to those teachers so they can figure out ways to make it work well”.

Some teacher comments were enthusiastic about the possibilities of improving instruction and benefit to students. On teacher stated: "We have not implemented RtI yet, but it seems as though it will have a positive effect on the learning environment", and: "Knowing what the students' needs are makes planning lessons and documenting their progress easier", and another: "Able to track students better and make program changes".

This teacher expressed enthusiasm about increased professional collegiality/cooperation that may result from the RtI model but also expressed concern about the extra time needed to make changes at the building level: "The process has just
started. *The people I work with on the team are coming together. We had to iron out the bumps. I think we are coming together as a "think tank". The message to the school is we need more time..."* What he/she meant was that teachers need more common planning time to develop systems for working together and communicating about student' needs during the work day.

These representative comments demonstrate that there is a wide range of comfort levels with RtI and that teachers have strong opinions that should be heard on RtI and the process of implementation. Like the survey responses, comments are mostly neutral with some very optimistic and some very negative opinions. Many teachers express concern about increased workload for regular education teachers. Teachers are also concerned about the investment of time and energy into a program that may not have sustained support, or policy churn (Hess 1999). A waste of time, training and money goes along with what one respondent calls "fads in the world of education". Some are fairly open and hopeful that RtI may improve both education and teacher interaction. Other comments indicate that many teachers in the Hudson Valley area have not been sufficiently consulted nor received the information and/or training that are needed to implement the mandate.

CHAPTER VI: THE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW (FIVE FOCUS SCHOOLS)

Five Focus Schools and Interview of their Principals

Stage two of data collection consisted of interviews on the RtI implementation process with principals from five focus schools. The principals were
asked ten open-ended questions about preparation for RtI implementation in their buildings, training and consultation of teachers during the process and also asked to comment on their perceptions of teacher satisfaction and expected outcomes.

Principals were interviewed at five middle schools located in Dutchess and Ulster Counties in the Hudson Valley of New York. The names of the five focus schools and their school leaders have been renamed with A-E acronyms. All the mean scores were tested for differences across schools. None of the teachers' responses were significantly different across the five selected schools, with averages clustered around 3.0, the neutral response.

The averages for the five schools on the composite and JDS variables are presented below and are placed here for reference. They will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Each principal interview will be presented and followed by case study comments on the results of the teacher survey for that school. Each of these school leaders presented their perspectives on teacher receptivity to RtI, their leadership style in relation to this change initiative within their own school culture.

Below are two tables with responses to the Teacher Survey on the composite variables and the Job Diagnostic Study (JDS) variables.

THE COMPOSITE VARIABLES:
### THE JOB DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY (JDS) VARIABLES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Benefits Students</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aldridge</td>
<td>2.95 (.72)</td>
<td>2.56 (.52)</td>
<td>3.22 (.41)</td>
<td>2.75 (.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant</td>
<td>2.97 (.33)</td>
<td>2.79 (.63)</td>
<td>3.18 (.37)</td>
<td>2.95 (.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colfax</td>
<td>2.82 (.49)</td>
<td>2.65 (.51)</td>
<td>3.04 (.27)</td>
<td>2.25 (.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dupont</td>
<td>3.05 (.57)</td>
<td>2.72 (.40)</td>
<td>2.92 (.30)</td>
<td>2.31 (.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>3.02 (.58)</td>
<td>2.60 (.56)</td>
<td>3.28 (.72)</td>
<td>2.81 (.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JDS questions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Increase My impact</th>
<th>Freedom</th>
<th>Increase Feedback</th>
<th>Increase Variety</th>
<th>Finish More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aldridge</td>
<td>3.44 (.89) n = 27</td>
<td>2.93 (.87) n = 27</td>
<td>3.15 (.73) n = 26</td>
<td>3.26 (.76) n = 27</td>
<td>2.89 (.70) N = 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant</td>
<td>3.36 (.67) n = 11</td>
<td>2.55 (.93) n = 11</td>
<td>2.73 (.79) n = 11</td>
<td>3.50 (.71) n = 10</td>
<td>3.09 (.30) N = 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colfax</td>
<td>3.00 (.43) n = 5</td>
<td>2.83 (.58) n = 5</td>
<td>2.67 (.49) n = 5</td>
<td>3.00 (.43) n = 5</td>
<td>2.67 (.65) N = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dupont</td>
<td>3.44 (.73) n = 9</td>
<td>3.00 (.50) n = 9</td>
<td>3.22 (.44) n = 9</td>
<td>3.22 (.44) n = 9</td>
<td>3.00 (.50) N = 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>3.11 (.93) n = 9</td>
<td>2.78 (.97) n = 9</td>
<td>2.89 (.93) n = 9</td>
<td>3.33 (.50) n = 9</td>
<td>2.78 (.97) N = 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Aldridge Middle School  
Mr. Anderson  
July, 2009
Mr. Anderson is a late career principal of a large rural middle school. He has been at Aldridge MS for more than 10 years and has an assistant principal who has been working with him so long that they refer to him as "associate principal", an uncustomary title created for the relationship between these two administrators. When asked about how he was introduced to RtI, he said: "I've been reading about it for years through curriculum development publications and it comes up at the District Steering Committee and in central office memos and parts of it look like other things that we have been doing to improve student learning. The only big change is the delay of referrals to special education and the record-keeping of documentation now required before referrals are acted upon."

He went on to say that fast changes don't work: "I soft-pedal all changes. I put it (RtI) up for display and let the teachers poke at it, sniff it and check it out",... any big changes are introduced and discussed, but I wait for the teachers to compete with other districts to implement an initiative and then support them in doing it." He explained that his strategy does not involve the coercive use of his power as a principal and that leadership in education should be educational rather than directive: "With more than thirty years in education, my style requires that all change comes from the bottom up." In response to questions about the time frame for implementation, Mr. Anderson reported that many teachers had been doing RtI on their own because they knew that they would need documentation before any referrals to the CSE would be considered. Building-wide implementation has been in practice for about 6 months.

Mr. Anderson predicts that teachers will be pretty satisfied with implementation process since it is not being forced on them but that satisfaction with RtI will eventually
depend on other things such as effectiveness in improving student learning and whether they can keep up with the extra work generated. He felt that RtI will contribute to a "professional learning community" model with teachers meeting to reflect on and discuss teaching strategies. He expressed concerns about regular education teachers growing weary of the tedious work involved in teaching kids who struggle to learn. He noted that special education teachers have been specialists in dealing with slow learners and that keeping more of those kids in the regular classroom (depending on the numbers) may frustrate regular education teachers.

In regard to balance of work between types of teachers, he noted that more work has fallen onto regular education teachers but that they will do it if it works well for the children. He predicted that the worst-case scenario would involve "union complaints" with teachers reporting that their work has changed and expanded so much that the district is in violation of the teacher's contract. So far, the teachers involved in RtI are open to the extra work at Aldridge but Mr. Anderson stated concern that the work will balance out among types of teachers.

Problems anticipated include getting all teachers involved since some teachers will continue to say "I can't teach that kid." He also expressed concern that RtI is more than a model for remediation because it is (or will become) the new due process for special education and that for this reason a cynical view among teachers may emerge that it is just a way to slow down referrals rather than an improved delivery system for all kids.

Aldridge Teacher Responses within the context of the Principal Interview
Thirty-one teachers from Aldridge Middle School responded to the survey, although not everyone answered every question. Given the principal’s interview, it is interesting to look at responses of the teachers from his school. Mr. Anderson has been at Aldridge Middle School for over ten years and said that his teachers will be "pretty satisfied (with RtI), since it is not being forced on them". The results indicate that there are no strongly negative teachers, (3) identified themselves as negative, (11) neutral, (12) positive and (4) teachers, strongly positive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aldridge Teachers' Opinion of RtI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid strongly positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses of teachers from Aldridge Middle School and the JDS variables:

**Task Significance** Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
This positive leaning response may relate to Mr. Anderson's expectation that RtI may eventually contribute to a "professional learning community" model in which teachers would find meaning in reflecting on and improving their teaching strategies.

**Autonomy** Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 6</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variable "autonomy" came up in all schools, including Aldridge, as neutral toward negative. This outcome was expected due to an increased expectation for teachers (using RtI) to work with colleagues and to modify how they teach. Mr. Anderson was concerned about autonomy and the majority of his interview responses demonstrated his care to avoid actions that interrupt the teachers' sense of autonomy. However, the scores for his school were not significantly different from some of his peers who did not express similar concerns.

**Feedback** Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 9</td>
<td>n = 12</td>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of teachers are neutral, but there is substantial agreement with both positive and negative statements about feedback, with 9 reporting that feedback has increased and 5 reporting no increase in feedback. There are no strong opinions (1s or 5s), which is
consistent with Mr. Anderson's moderate leadership. He expressed a wait-and-see attitude toward change and is therefore unlikely to change his interaction style with them in terms of providing increased feedback.

- **Skill Variety** Using RtI increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 12</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mostly positive and neutral, this response from Aldridge teachers was reflected in Mr. Anderson's comments. His remarks on RtI contributing to a "professional learning community" in the teachers' culture are relevant to the new skills they share and use under RtI. "Skill variety" responses are similar to teacher responses on "task significance", teachers are more positive toward the suggestion that RtI introduces new skills and modest "improvement" in their practice.

- **Task Completion/Identity** With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was under the previous model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>n = 17</td>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aldridge teachers are mostly neutral on the impact of RtI on "task completion/identity." In contrast, Mr. Anderson anticipates increased teacher frustration as the domain of their tasks expand and commented in the interview that if not handled properly that frustration (about changes in the tasks that make up their work) could
provoke complaints to the teacher's union. In this light, even with 5 teachers disagreeing and 1 strongly disagreeing, Aldridge teachers are less negative than he, as principal, expected teachers to be when their tasks are significantly modified and/or shared with other teachers.

**Task Completion/Identity** With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was under the previous model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>n = 17</td>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aldridge teachers are mostly neutral on the impact of RtI on "task completion/identity." In contrast, Mr. Anderson anticipates increased teacher frustration as the domain of their tasks expand and commented in the interview that if not handled properly that frustration (about changes in the tasks that make up their work) could provoke complaints to the teacher's union. In this light, even with 5 teachers disagreeing and 1 strongly disagreeing, Aldridge teachers are less negative than he, as principal expected teachers to be when their tasks are significantly modified and/or shared with other teachers.

**Composite Variables and Teacher Satisfaction with RtI at Aldridge**

With regard to the composite variables, teachers from Aldridge Middle School are neutral. **Time** – The responses of teachers at Aldridge averaged for a score of 2.95 (sd = .72) on the composite variable for time changes in their job under RtI. This average is
slightly higher than the average of all teachers surveys (3.01), which indicates that the teachers at Aldridge responded with more disagreement about the time increases related to RtI. That is, teachers disagreed more that RtI adds more time in the areas, of extra meetings, co-planning and other time consuming tasks to their workload. **Balance** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.56 (sd = .52) which is the lowest average indicating the least satisfaction with balance of work among teachers. **Benefits Students** - the average for the teachers from this school was 3.22 (sd = .41). This mean ranks second in satisfaction with the way that students are benefited by RtI. **Consultation** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.75 (sd = .8).
focus schools, Bryant is the smallest, with approximately 300 students, 100 per grade 6-8. He has regular (almost daily) contact with all teachers in the building and an "open door" policy.

In response to questions about his introduction to RtI, Mr. Bjornson paused and said: "I really don't know when I first heard about it". He offered to connect me to the Director of Special Education for the district, explaining that she is directing teachers to implement RtI and mentioned that she introduced it as "a new State Education Department mandate/requirement." Mr. Bjornson said that no in-service trainings have been offered and no teachers from his building have been sent to conferences on RtI.

In response to a question about what the best outcomes of RtI might be he said "I don't know... none". At this point he said that RtI is just new terminology for what he has been doing in his building from the start. His apparent lack of interest in RtI (as a new model) was explained by his comments that it is not new in his building. Mr. Bjornson stated: "All of our students who need extra help go through the Child Study Team. We have always looked carefully at what has to be done for each child to succeed. In terms of pre-referral strategies, we have always conferred and tried everything before considering special education designation". He went on to say "We have always worked closely with the school psychologist and each child who needs help is a case study in our building. This (RtI) is not a big change."

When asked about problems, the principal said that he has not had a single complaint and does not expect any unless the formalization of requirements to document remedial strategies attempted with students becomes a barrier to designating disabled students when designation is warranted. He predicts that if that happens that his teachers
(and teachers in general) will become cynical toward the process and just do the best they can with students, "pushing them on to the next grade even if they aren't ready".

In terms of teacher collegiality, co-teaching and balance of work, Mr. Bjornson stated that there are no problems and there are no changes. He explained that in working out the master schedule (his project on the day of the interview) that he is working out common planning time for teachers before he schedules classes. He made this point to emphasize that creating optimal conditions for teachers to meet and work together is essential to doing what is best for kids. At this point he added that long before RtI was introduced, he decided to create an intensive remedial support system in order to do the best that they could for kids before they go to the high school and face the consequences of a lack of preparedness. In conclusion, Mr. Bjornson said that his teachers will be "very satisfied" with RtI and that they will not likely notice any difference in what they have already been doing.

Bryant Teacher Survey Responses in the Context of the Principal Interview

Eleven teachers from Bryant Middle School responded to the survey, although not everyone answered each question. An important feature of the interview with Mr. Bjornson, the principal, is his claim that RtI is "not a big change" and that it is just a change in terminology used to describe what they were already doing at Bryant. This claim is novel among the five focus schools and may be related to the finding of Bryant
teachers as the most satisfied with the composite variable for consultation and training 2.79 (sd=.63) and also due to Bryant Middle School being the smallest school in the study. Mr. Bjornson reported that he has daily conversations (consultation) with each teacher in his school, which may contribute to making RtI implementation seem to be “not a big change.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid strongly positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the JDS Variables, the responses from Bryant Middle School were as follows:

**Task Significance** Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 8</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relatively positive response of Bryant teachers may relate to Mr. Bjornson’s comment, that teachers will be satisfied with RtI implementation. He makes this claim because: “they have been doing RtI in their remedial programs for years. Mr. Bjornson mentioned that the schedule is built around the planning needs of the teachers and support staff, which may also contribute to the teacher report that they are making a significant impact on students.
**Autonomy** Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 6</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>N = 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variable "autonomy" came up in all schools, including Bryant, as neutral toward negative.

- **Feedback** Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 7</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Skill Variety** Using RtI increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 3</td>
<td>n = 6</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Bjornson did not articulate any changes in what teachers do as a result of the RtI initiative. Teachers may have changed some of their classroom strategies or redefined some of them as RtI remedial procedures. This positive leaning response does correlate with Mr. Bjornson's confidence that teachers use a variety of strategies to help struggling students.
**Task Completion/Identity** With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was under the previous model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 0</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 3</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bryant teachers are mostly neutral on the impact of RtI on "task completion/identity."

Mr. Bjornson did not identify any concerns among regular or special education teachers in task identity/completion.

**Composite Variables and Teacher Satisfaction with RtI at Bryant**

With regard to the composite variables, teachers from Bryant Middle School are neutral. **Time** – the average for teachers from this school was 2.97 (sd = .33). This mean was the middle score among the five schools in terms of satisfaction with the way that Time issues are impacted by RtI implementation at Bryant Middle School. **Balance** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.79 (sd = .63). While neutral in satisfaction levels, Bryant teachers report the most satisfaction with the way that workload is balanced between teachers. **Benefits Students** - the average for the teachers from this school was 3.18 (sd = .37). This is the mid data point of the averages for the five focus middle schools. **Consultation** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.95 (sd = .87). This score, while neutral, is the most satisfied among the schools. This score is interesting to note in light of Mr. Bjornson's comments that his teachers will be satisfied since RtI is what they have always done under other names. Bryant Middle school is by far the smallest among the five focus schools with only 300 students in grades 6-8. The size of the school lends to more interaction between teachers and the principal. In the
Interview he mentioned that he sees all of his teachers every day.

Colfax Middle School
Mr. Carlson
July, 2009

Mr. Carlson is a retiring principal of a medium/large rural middle school. The teacher survey was completed during his last month at Colfax Middle School and the principal interview was completed a few weeks after his retirement. His school is unique within this study because it houses a middle school with grades 5-8 as opposed to 6-8. This feature seems to have contributed to the implementation of RtI since the model was originally developed for use in elementary schools in which one teacher typically has contact with students throughout the day and is therefore better able to track students responses than in a 6-8 setting in which students change classes many times per day.

In response to questions about his introduction to RtI and early implementation at Colfax Middle School, he explained that his focus on intensive remedial reading programs were simply extended from 5/6th grade into the 7/8th curriculum. He said that he chose not to announce it as something "new" but to just roll it into what was already going on and to focus in on literacy such that he could announce it while they were doing it. He said, "the key to success with change is to mask it, don't name it ...just stress working more directly with kids on literacy because teacher resent policy gimmicks that regularly cycle through the schools."

Implementation of literacy improvements began four years ago with 1) expansion of the elementary literacy program into the upper middle school grades; 2) reading and writing workshops; and 3) large percentage of the school budget dedicated to grade level
and classroom libraries and trade book sets. Rather than announce RtI as an initiative, Mr. Carlson linked it to existing remedial programs and strategies and focused on literacy.

At this point in the interview, Mr. Carlson offered his perspective on what type of students can be most effectively helped by RtI. He posited that severely disabled students will still need separate programs and therapies but that the area that needs improvement within regular education is literacy. He commented on the learning disabled (LD) sector of kids saying that intensive remedial literacy programs have made as much or more success than special education. In this light, he had all teachers, including math, science and the creative arts work with word lists and use common language to focus on vocabulary improvement and literacy across the curriculum. (Extensive discussion on the goals of literacy education omitted from report).

Problems with RtI at Colfax Middle School are mostly related to the increased time needed for planning and meeting in pairs or small groups of teachers. As a model that requires more co-planning and more meetings, this will continue to be one of the main stressors at Colfax. He reported his teachers as mostly satisfied. He commented on increased workload for regular education teachers and marginalization of special education teachers. To get at the underlying problems between teachers, he met with them separately and discovered that special educators were embarrassed to report in front of other teachers that moving more of their students into the regular class has relegated them to serve as teacher aides rather than teachers.

While Mr. Carlson believes that the focus on improving instruction within the purview of regular education will lead to many improvements, he is concerned that RtI
can be used as an obstacle to getting disabled kids the help that they need by slowing down the process of identifying disabilities. He noted that, if RtI is used correctly, the culture will change for the better and faculty relationships will become more cooperative.

Colfax Teacher results in the context of the Principal Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colfax: Opinion of RtI</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid neutral no response</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unique to Colfax middle schools is the overall neutral responses to most queries. Mr. Carlson, did not change his remedial focus as a result of the RtI mandates, but rather classified literacy programs he already had in place as RtI whenever fitting. He is the only retired principal among schools surveyed.

With regard to the JDS Variables, the responses from Colfax Middle School were as follows:

**Task Significance** Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This neutral response on task significance is consistent with Colfax teachers' opinion of RtI, also neutral. Since Mr. Carlson is not bringing attention to RtI (just focusing on literacy) they may not know enough about it to have formulated a strong opinion.

Colfax Middle School serves an expansive rural area and does not have much contact with neighboring schools, which may also contribute to less teacher exposure to RtI.

**Autonomy** Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 8</td>
<td>n = 3</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colfax teachers are mostly neutral on autonomy. Mr. Carlson, retiring within months, is not pushing teachers to change what they do. His way of incorporating RtI is to increase teacher attention to teaching literacy across the curriculum.

**Feedback** Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 8</td>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of them are in the neutral to negative on feedback. Again, based on the principal interview, RtI may be understood by Colfax teachers as a theory encouraging more remedial efforts, in general. If this is the case, it may explain their overall neutral responses to questions about implementation.
**Skill Variety** Using RtI increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mostly neutral, again, this response from Colfax teachers was reflected in Mr. Carlson's comments since he is working on the foundation that he has built with literacy, teachers may not have been required to implement new strategies. Since he retired at the end of the year they may find a new principal more aggressive in RtI implementation.

**Task Completion/Identity** With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was under the previous model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colfax teachers are mostly neutral on the impact of RtI on "task completion/identity.” The lack of strong reactions was expected since Mr. Carlson did not announce a change or require teachers to adjust their teaching style or to take on new tasks. This is difference between Colfax middle School and some of the other focus schools in which new tasks were introduced that took time away from the routine established.

**Composite Variables and Teacher Satisfaction with RtI at Colfax**
With regard to the composite variables, teachers from Colfax Middle School are neutral but report slightly less satisfaction than their counterparts in the other focus middle schools. They are the lowest mean in satisfaction with balance of work and consultation for "benefit to students", they are fourth out of five. They report less dissatisfaction with the time RtI takes than the other schools. In the Principal Interview, Mr. Carlson indicated that he is not announcing RtI as a new initiative but rather focusing on literacy, which he believes is at the heart of a good RtI program. Another factor unique to Colfax Middle School that may have influenced teacher satisfaction is that as teachers responded to the survey, Mr. Carlson was weeks away from his retirement. Knowing that the mandate to implement RtI may be presented more forcefully when they return to teach in the Fall, teachers' may have had additional concerns about RtI implementation.

**Time** – the average for teachers from this school was 2.82 (sd = .49) This average is the least dissatisfied among the schools. **Balance** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.65 (sd = .51). This average is the middle score among the focus schools in terms of satisfaction with the balance of work among teachers. **Benefits Students** - the average for the teachers from this school was 3.04 (sd = .27). This score is ranks fourth out of the five schools in satisfaction with RtI in benefiting students. **Consultation** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.25 (sd = .63), this response from Colfax teachers is the lowest mean for satisfaction with the degree that teachers have been consulted and offered support during implementation.

Dupont Middle School
Mr. Danson
July, 2009
Mr. Danson is an early to mid-career principal in a large semi-rural district. He has one assistant principal per grade level in addition to paid teacher leaders. The team leader program used at Dupont Middle School is called "Teachers in Charge." The role of these teachers is to coordinate initiatives within the building and to disseminate information on building plans, such as RtI. This porous leadership has made implementation much easier for Mr. Danson since he has layers of administrative and semi-administrative assistance.

While aware of the development of RtI for ten years and actively promoting it within the school for 2 1/2 years, he has had no in-service trainings in his building and has not dedicated faculty meeting time to RtI. He stated: “RtI has been around for a long time, at least for ten years in the memos from SED geared toward special education. We waited for a district initiative before trying to implement in our middle schools since we expected it to be a universal requirement for remediation.”

RtI was introduced as a new requirement. When asked about teacher satisfaction with RtI, Mr. Danson responded "satisfied", "not sure, we haven't had that discussion." He ventured that teachers are 50/50 in support of it. He mentioned the increased work and meeting time and added that there are some teachers who avoid work and that those teachers will be less satisfied than others who are willing to commit more time to planning, meeting with colleagues and developing strategies based on the individual needs of struggling students.

Mr. Danson is unsure if teachers will be able to diversify instruction to the extent needed to teach students with varying ability levels within regular education. He mentioned that the biggest challenge will be to increase the comfort level of regular
education teachers with that 15% of students that were taught in separate settings before RtI. He added that beyond learning difficulties that many needy students have social/emotional issues that interfere with both their learning and that interrupt whole group instruction. After addressing the difficulties, Mr. Danson said "on the positive side, teacher training programs in the colleges are changing to prepare teachers for this environment".

Obstacles to the long term success of RtI were cited as 1) time to discuss and plan is limited; 2) limited time to review literature on model programs; 3) teachers are accustomed to working in an isolated environment and some will not adjust to this cooperative model. Positive outcomes that Mr. Danson noted were 1) Faculty Rooms have a much more professional atmosphere, no time for idle gossip; 2) The school is becoming more focused on kids and individual learning styles; 3) Middle schools have become more like elementary schools which means that they're a more nurturing place.

Dupont Teacher Results in the Context of the Principal Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid positive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The opinion of RtI at Dupont is unique in its polarization, no teachers reported neutral, with approximately half of teachers reporting positive and half negative assessment of RtI. Of note, on tests run on the composite variables for Dupont Middle School the "Benefits Students" is most negatively assessed by Dupont teachers among the focus schools (see page 73). Among the five focus schools, Mr. Danson introduced RtI as a mandate and has simply expected changes in the teaching delivery system.

With regard to the JDS Variables, the responses from Dupont Middle School were as follows:

**Task Significance** Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 6</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dupont Middle School is the largest school in this study and has separate houses with organized teams and support staff dedicated to those teams. The team leaders are paid "teachers in charge" and they take care of organizing teams and ensuring that teacher concerns are represented in cabinet meetings with the principal. This arrangement may contribute to a less negative response on this question with teachers reporting that they make an impact on outcomes.

**Autonomy** Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 7</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The variable "autonomy" came up as neutral at Dupont.

**Feedback**  Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 7</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses are mostly neutral.

**Skill Variety**  Using RtI increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 7</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dupont teachers are mostly neutral on the impact of RtI on "task completion/identity.

**Composite Variables and Teacher Satisfaction with RtI at Dupont**

With regard to the composite variables, teachers from Dupont Middle School are neutral. **Time** – the average for teachers from this school was 3.05 (sd = .57), indicating
that among the five schools they ranked fourth in satisfaction with how implementation influences their time use. **Balance** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.72 (sd = .40), indicating the second highest satisfaction with balance of work among types of teachers within the focus schools. **Benefits Students** - the average for the teachers from this school was 2.92 (sd = .30). This score was the most negative among the five focus schools but not statistically significant. **Consultation** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.31 (sd =.59), which ranked fourth out of five in satisfaction with consultation during RtI implementation.

Mr. Danson was the only principal within the five focus schools who did not discuss concerns for teacher satisfaction during RtI implementation. When asked how satisfied his teachers were with RtI implementation, he responded: "satisfied", "not sure, we haven't had that discussion". His business-like approach to getting things done at Dupont was not troubled with concerns about how changes, even those initiated by mandates, would influence teacher sentiment and school culture. Some of the natural effects of this position may have been mitigated by the organizational structure at Dupont Middle School.

Perhaps more of a "manager" than other principals in this study, Mr. Danson had an additional layer of administration between himself and his teachers. This is a unique organizational feature among the 5 focus schools and the 12 schools surveyed. Dupont is the only school included in the study that has one assistant principal per grade to handle matters directly with the teachers. Another level of semi administrative support is in place through the "teachers in charge" model of team leadership. While middle schools almost universally have teams, paid team leaders are not as common. Most,
middle schools have unpaid, informal team leaders. Among schools that have paid team leaders, the amount given to Dupont teachers is more than double the amount paid in other middle schools. Their role is to facilitate change and improve communication. They also do clerical work and keep records making a number of initiatives easier for other teachers. The score for consultation ranked second in negative teacher assessment. The other two composite variables, "time" and balance", were similar to other schools.

Emerson Middle School
Mr. Erickson
July, 2009

Mr. Erickson is an early to mid-career principal of a small rural middle school. He has worked at Emerson MS for 3 years, previously working in a larger school that served as a training site for RtI in the region. After approximately 6 months in his position at this school he began to introduce RtI in team meetings. In his second year at Emerson he sent 11 people for 30 hours of RtI training, including a cross section of
regular, special education and AIS teachers, himself and the school psychologist. Mr. Erickson reported that RtI has been in full use at the building level for one year.

Mr. Erickson reports that his teachers seem to be 50/50 in terms of being "satisfied" with RtI as a model. He referred to RtI as a "mixed bag" and also as "the new special education". In early implementation he has consulted teachers and involved them in planning. When asked about consultation with teachers and the opportunity for teacher input, he stated "as a small school, we have good communication overall and we touch base on most things fairly often". Mr. Erickson has an open-door policy and teachers bring any important concerns to his attention. He has made adjustments to the schedule in order to facilitate meetings and co-planning such that all teachers that work together have common prep time.

Mr. Erickson predicts that his teachers will be satisfied with RtI to the extent that it will help them identify student needs earlier and get them "back on track". He noted that it will only work if the change is systemic and he therefore supports extra efforts in the beginning to be sure that the entire faculty is up to handling the needs of students within regular education. Areas of concern included, 1) lack of time for additional duties and, 2) special area teachers not knowing the goals for children since they do not attend team meetings and generally teach during the common meeting times of the subject area teachers.

In regard to concerns of balance of work between different types of teachers, Mr. Erickson stated that it is working out well since there is common planning time. If the schedule was not changed, he believes that there may have been more concern about regular education teachers' workload increasing. With increased record-keeping of
student response to intervention within the classroom, he senses that teachers are "being patient", but that they will eventually complain if RtI turns out not to be worth all of the extra effort. When asked what being "worth it" would mean for his teachers, Mr. Erickson said: "RtI would have to be clearly better for the students to be worth it". Only one of the regular education teachers at Emerson expressed frustration with the behaviors of some children who the teacher believed would have been better served in special (separate) classes. With support, he gained some skills/strategies resulting in that teacher being more satisfied with the model than he was at inception.

Mr. Erickson stated that "time" will be a problem during the learning curve which he expects to last 3-4 years until everyone is trained and teachers develop better skills in working with varying students abilities as well as working with other teachers. One regular education teacher was reported as having a very hard time sacrificing his time and teaching style (autonomy) to meet the needs of "special education students". In terms of increased meeting time and increased record-keeping, he said that teachers will become accustomed to these new tasks (if RtI turns out to make a positive difference for students), again referring to the change as a learning curve that will take work up front.

Emerson Teacher Results in the context of the Principal Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerson: Opinion of RtI</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>strongly positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>60.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This opinion is neutral but has some positive and negative data points. Mr. Erickson expected a 3-4 year learning curve for his school. He also sensed stress among teachers in anticipation of an increased workload and believed that the only way to make up for the extra work would be if it turns out to be that much better for student learning.

With regard to the JDS Variables, the responses from Emerson Middle School were as follows:

**Task Significance** Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 3</td>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerson teachers are neutral to positive on task significance. In the Principal interview, Mr. Emerson spoke about one teacher who was having a hard time dealing with the academic and behavioral issues of special education students and this possibly explains the on strongly negative response.

**Autonomy** Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>n =2</td>
<td>N = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This outcome was expected due to an increased expectation for teachers using RtI to work with others and to modify how they teach. Mr. Erickson discussed teacher
satisfaction with autonomy being compromised by the "learning curve" that he predicted would take 3-4 years. During this time of adjustment he expects that teachers may complain that their autonomy is compromised by the demands to work and plan with other teachers. He specifically cited one teacher's frustration with the sacrifice of his autonomy because RtI required him to work with special education teachers on problems that he felt were not his responsibility.

Feedback Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feedback is mostly neutral. We know from the interview with Mr. Erickson that he has daily contact with all of his teachers due to the size of the school.

Skill Variety Using RtI increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 3</td>
<td>n = 6</td>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>N = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses are mostly positive and neutral. In light of Emerson teachers' highest rating on the composite variable of benefit to students, it is possible that they are further along in terms of employing innovative teaching strategies. Mr. Erickson has the most experience with RtI among the 5 principals interviewed. He came from a district that had employed it early on and had been discussing strategies with his staff. This may have had an effect even though formal building wide use of RtI was recent. Another reason
may be that Emerson is a small school and in the face of a new program all teachers must be prepared to learn.

Comparing the smallest schools (both Emerson and Bryant Middle schools) to Dupont (the largest middle school) there is less specialization so the number of tasks done by each teacher at a school like Emerson may increase contributing to a positive read on skill variety. These two small schools had the highest satisfaction with Skill Variety.

**Task Completion/Identity** With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was under the previous model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 0</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>n = 2</td>
<td>n = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerson teachers' satisfaction with the impact of RtI on "task completion/identity" shows considerable variability. Mr. Erickson commented on the problems teachers have with time for meeting/planning and for increased record-keeping. His primary concern with RtI implementation is the stress that time limitations put on teachers to complete all of the new tasks involved.

**Composite Variables and Teacher Satisfaction with RtI at Emerson**

With regard to the composite variables, teachers from Emerson Middle School teachers are neutral but over the four composite variables report the most satisfaction. Even so, standard deviations are noticeably wider suggesting a wider range of satisfaction levels among teachers.

**Time** – the average for teachers from this school was 3.02 (sd = .58). **Balance** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.60 (sd = .56), second in five schools in
dissatisfaction with balance of work among different types of teachers. **Benefits**

**Students** - the average for the teachers from this school was 3.28 (sd = .72), indicating that they are Emerson teachers are the most satisfied with the benefit RtI offers to students. There are especially large differences among teachers’ assessment of RtI as benefitting student learning. With the highest standard deviation, Emerson teachers are polarized on this important issue. Mr. Erickson demonstrated an awareness of this sentiment among faculty and stated in the interview that he expects implementation to take 4 to 5 years.

**Consultation** – the average for the teachers from this school was 2.81 (sd = .89), the most satisfied among the focus schools.

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**VII. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW**

The principals of the five focus schools expressed a number of parallel administrative concerns about Response to Intervention. First, they realized that the path to designate students as disabled would now be re-routed through a process that involved documenting research-based strategies that had been attempted with students and either worked or proven unsuccessful. Next, the principals were in various stages of designing or preparing to implement new programs for students who would no longer qualify for special education designation. Finally, they were faced with promoting the new approach by getting teachers involved and trained by leading them through a systemic change with
their job satisfaction reasonably intact. This final concern, dovetails with the concerns of this study.

Faced with their own administrative concerns about implementation, principals were asked to comment on how satisfied they felt teachers would be with the RtI reform. These comments were obtained in the context of a personal interview. The five principals of the focus schools articulated similar concerns about teacher satisfaction with this reform, anticipating problems with the redesign of teacher work and relationships. For example, four out of five expressed concern for the adjustment of regular education teachers to RtI especially anticipating regular education teachers being upset by an increased workload. The expectation of differences in satisfaction with RtI, based on teacher type, by principals interviewed corresponded with the quantitative finding of significant difference in satisfaction of regular education and special education teachers with the balance of work.

All principals interviewed were reluctant to launch it as a new initiative, stating that they were careful in introducing RtI because they expected teachers to struggle with various aspects of the change and four principals were further concerned with announcing it as a directive because they believed that a top-down approach would lead to an erosion of teacher satisfaction. The only principal that did not express concerns about teacher satisfaction was from Dupont Middle School, the largest school in the study. It is important to note that Dupont’s principal is supported by three assistant principals who are in charge of handling all of the teachers concerns, one for each of the grades 6-8. This organizational model shields Mr. Danson from the direct complaints of teachers, so he may be less exposed to the satisfaction concerns of teachers in his building than the
other principals whose schools were smaller and who have daily contact with most or all of their teachers.

In response to the open-ended questions, each of the principals commented on issues that were similar to the answers to queries that were analyzed in the teacher survey. There were four broad areas of concern. First, they anticipated that difficulties involved in balancing the new division of work between regular teachers, special educators, AIS instructors and other support personnel may cause some job dissatisfaction for some teachers at least during the transition to RtI. Second, knowing that the additional time to learn and coordinate the change may produce stress they expressed concerns about teacher satisfaction with their workloads. Third, principals of the focus schools were alert to teacher cynicism about whether the change would benefit students enough to warrant such extensive redesign of their work. Fourth, most of the principals were aware that teacher satisfaction would be compromised if teachers were not sufficiently consulted and trained. This awareness is seen in the caution that the principals, especially the most experienced administrators, had with imposing RtI as a mandate. This caution showed a general awareness that dissatisfaction would be provoked if teachers were not consulted before and during implementation.

While RtI was presented as a directive, in the form of a mandate in memos from the New York State Education Department, the four principals concerned about teacher (dis)satisfaction, avoided presenting the RtI initiative as a mandate. Even though an implementation date has been noted on SED memos, these principals presented RtI to their faculty as if it were an option. They were cautious of provoking reactions like: “this is just another fad in the world of education,” spoken by a teacher in the survey.
Administrators were concerned with reform being understood as the phenomenon Hess (1998) described as “policy churn” and is evident in the following principal interview comments:

Mr. Anderson in his claim that fast changes don’t work, said:

_I soft pedal all changes._

Mr. Bjornson distanced himself from the implementation approach of the director of special education at Bryant Middle School who was presenting RtI as a mandate, claiming instead that nothing is new:

_RtI is just new terminology for what we have been doing._

The difference in approach may be partially explained by the finding that the change includes a perception among regular education teachers that the balance of work has become inequitable. Another explanation may be that the principal must work with all teachers and upset to the collegiality between types of teachers would be expected to cause conflict that the principal must resolve.

Mr. Carlson, the principal who was retiring during the week of the interview said that he had seen problems in leadership when things moved quickly and was ignoring the directive while considering any instructional approaches that may be necessary to meet needs of students who would no longer qualify for special education. Mr. Carlson believed that:

_The key to success with change is to mask it, don’t name it...because teachers resent gimmicks._

Mr. Carlson went on to say that he “rolled it into what we are already doing” and added that it wouldn’t help to “stick it out as another change”.

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Mr. Danson commented on the RtI initiative as a continuation of a model that had been proposed for special education:

*RtI has been around for a long time, at least ten years in the memos from the State Education Department geared toward special education. We waited for district initiative before trying to implement in our middle schools since we expected it to be a universal requirement for remediation.*

Mr. Erickson just described RtI as:

*RtI is the new special education.*

He went on to say that special education services for the mildly learning disabled students will now take place in the regular classroom and that it will be a lot of work up front but will probably result in an overall improvement.

Despite the fact that they were concerned with teacher satisfaction during the implementation process, long term success was universally expected. All principals stated that, after going through the initial difficulties associated with the change, they expected their teachers to be satisfied with RtI. They all went on to note probable good outcomes for students as well as the teachers, themselves. In the area of positive outcomes, all of them anticipated an improvement in the profession learning community within their schools because RtI requires teachers to spend more time planning and assessing student outcomes together.

Mr. Anderson expected that RtI will contribute to a professional learning community model with teachers meeting to reflect and discuss teaching strategies. Mr. Bjornson said that his teachers will be very satisfied once Rti is implemented. Mr. Carlson said that the focus on improving instruction within the purview of regular
education will lead to many improvements. Mr. Danson noted three improvements including, faculty rooms having a much more professional atmosphere and less gossip, the school is more focused on kids and their learning styles and middle schools have become more nurturing noting that Rti makes them more like elementary schools. And finally, Mr. Erickson predicted that teachers at Emerson Middle School will be satisfied because once RtI is in place it will help them identify student needs earlier and get them back on track.

The contrast between the reluctance of principals to announce the change with the general consensus that it will lead to improvements is interesting. These findings may be understood by an appreciation of the real difficulties involved in change. That is to say that while change may be good, it is most often not easy.

All of the principals who participated in the survey understood the challenge to teachers involved in the RtI reform, especially regular education teachers who were previously not responsible for remediation nor for tracking individual students’ responses remedial efforts. Students who previously may have been referred to special education and determined disabled, under RtI will remain in the regular education program with supports. This change rearranges the tasks and relationships that make up teacher work. Jim Wright of the RtI Action Network said “RtI is the new paradigm and the associated RtI assumption is that the child that struggles to learn is typical” (personal communication 4/8/10). The numerous changes to teacher’s work will require support.

The findings of the Principal Survey uncovered administrator concerns about teacher satisfaction parallel to the central questions of the Teacher Survey. They demonstrated awareness of issues pertinent to teacher satisfaction during the change.
process. In the absence of a plan to deal with teacher satisfaction issues, they talked about slowing down the process to avoid negative reactions from teachers. Principals interviewed generally agreed with each other that, teachers will struggle with the transition but all of them were hopeful that teachers would be satisfied with RtI once fully implemented.

The fact that administrators adjusted their leadership style, specifically slowed down the process of change, in order to avoid aggravating teacher satisfaction, suggests that more study of teacher satisfaction would be useful. Clearly, administrators were disinclined to move faster than the building culture was prepared to move and were gauging introduction of RtI. If the basic concerns relevant to teacher job satisfaction are better understood before change is introduced, perhaps less disruption will take place when adjustments are made. Beyond a basic conclusion that change will be facilitated by improved understanding of the variables that influence teacher job satisfaction, it is also important to consider the benefit that will be brought to bear on school culture with more sensitive and informed introduction of initiatives in general. If state departments of education and administrators at the school district level understand issues related to teacher satisfaction, change will be more efficient and further, the school culture will be better tended. In this light, further research into the variables most relevant to teacher satisfaction would be valuable, since administrators, often come into their leadership positions with scant or little training in how to teachers during times of change.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
Response to Intervention (RtI) is in the early implementation stages in schools throughout New York. This study sought information on teacher satisfaction with RtI through a teacher survey and also through interviews conducted with principals of five of the twelve schools surveyed. The quantitative and qualitative results of this study offer insight into factors of job design and other conditions that may impact the satisfaction of middle school teachers involved in this reform.

The 43 questions on the teacher survey were designed to give voice to teachers on their satisfaction with the areas of their work that are impacted by the RtI initiative. After looking at the results of all survey questions, composite variables, made up of clusters of questions on the same themes, were tested to determine the impact of RtI on teacher satisfaction in four general areas of concern: 1) time; 2) balance of work; 3) benefit to students and 4) consultation/trainings during RtI implementation. It is in the testing of these composites that some correlations with satisfaction with RtI emerged. Most evident was regular education teachers' concern about the balance of work between types of teachers. Regular education teachers are less satisfied than special education teachers. In particular, regular education teachers expressed dissatisfaction due to increased requirements for implementing and monitoring remedial strategies in the regular classroom. This information should alert administrators to carefully balance work to provide sufficient support to regular education teachers in the Response to Intervention implementation process.

The main hypotheses of the study were that:
#1: The satisfaction levels of middle school teachers with the early implementation stages of RtI will correlate with the core dimensions of job satisfaction identified in Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey (1976), and that,

#2: Teacher satisfaction will be influenced by various adjustments to work conditions and relationships brought about through implementation of the RtI model.

In relation to hypothesis #1 (The five core dimensions of job satisfaction), analysis of the survey results found that teachers' satisfaction with RtI was significantly correlated with all five JDS variables. All the correlations with RtI opinion are positive indicating that the more negative they say they are about RtI, the more they disagree with the JDS statements.

In relation to hypothesis #2, it was anticipated that:

- Teachers will report less satisfaction as a result of the increased time spent in meetings and co-planning with colleagues. This was tested by the composite variable "time" and less satisfaction was not supported by the data. This was the case even though regular education teachers reported an increased workload and unfair balance of work between themselves and the special education teachers.

- Balance of workload between types of teachers will result in less satisfied regular education teachers and was tested by the "balance" variable. No significance was found for the whole group, but when regular and special education teachers were compared the difference showed regular education teachers significantly less satisfied than special education teachers with the balance of work.
• The expectation that teachers will be more satisfied with students’ learning outcomes was tested by the variable "student benefit" and was not significant but was found correlated to the variable of overall satisfaction with RtI.

• The expectation that teachers will be report low satisfaction with consultation during RtI implementation was not found significant. However the question about whether teachers were sufficiently consulted before RtI implementation produced the lowest mean average for satisfaction on the survey. Consultation was significantly correlated with the variable for overall satisfaction with RtI.

The findings of the survey have mixed agreement with the hypotheses. While regular education teachers were slightly less satisfied than special education teachers in general, the only significant differences in teacher satisfaction with RtI based on teacher type was found on the composite variable that dealt with balance of work among different types of teachers. Other differences between types of teachers were not significant.

The Job Diagnostic Survey, an established measure of job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), was used to assess well-known variables involved in job satisfaction, in general. The five core JDS dimensions were tested as variables and did not demonstrate significant findings in terms of differences between types of teachers or between schools involved in the survey. Teachers were relatively more positive on Task Variety and Task Significance, neutral on Task Identity and Feedback and relatively more negative on Autonomy. With scores mostly around "3", the neutral response, the five dimensions, ranked: 1) skill variety; 2) task significance; 3) feedback; 4) task completion; and 5) autonomy from most to least satisfied in averages.
Correlations were found between the variable of overall satisfaction with RtI and all of the JDS variables, and the correlation were significant at p < .01. Positive teacher responses on the JDS variables moved in relation to the variable of "satisfaction with RtI implementation". This finding is noteworthy because the Job Diagnostic Survey on job satisfaction is a well-known measure with high reliability.

Another set of positive correlations were found with overall satisfaction with RtI and two the composite variables of "student benefit" and "consultation". This demonstrates that teacher satisfaction with two of the four composite variables, that were created to take a fuller look at how these important domains of teacher work, correlate with teacher satisfaction with RtI implementation. As such, administrators should be mindful of the importance of discussing all steps in the shift to RtI with teachers in terms of students benefit, with ongoing consultation and support. Implementation should be done with utmost care to balance the work load fairly among teachers.

The composite variables combined a number of like survey questions based on surface similarities or themes to obtain a broader sense of teacher satisfaction with the impact of RtI on issues related to "time", "balance of work", "benefit to students" and "consultation and training". Correlations between these composite variables and the teachers' opinion of RtI were calculated with interesting significant correlations. When we look at overall opinion of RtI, it is significantly (p < .01) positively correlated with Student Benefit (r = .58), and Consultation (r = .41). So those who rate RtI more positively are more in agreement that RtI benefits the students and they are more in agreement that they were adequately consulted regarding RtI.
Conversely, RtI opinion is not correlated with how teachers agree with the impact of Response to Intervention on their time. In fact correlations were calculated at almost zero – no relationship (r = -.071). Satisfaction with RtI implementation did not correlate with the way that the process of implementation impacted their time, as tested by the composite variable for issues related to time. Teachers in response to numerous questions about extra work in the form of more frequent meetings, increased record keeping, and even more work did not correlate with teacher dissatisfaction with RtI. Satisfaction with RtI also does not correlate with the balance of work variable at (r - .025).

These findings advise administrators to carefully plan for the distribution of work so that tasks are fairly distributed among types of teachers. It would also be useful for school leaders to note that while regular education teachers note unfair division of the work that this does not significantly influence their overall satisfaction with RtI in the early stages of implementation. This does not mean that in later stages unfair balance of tasks will not influence teacher satisfaction. While it cannot be established that teachers are willing to work under more difficult conditions for the benefit of their students, it may be suggested by the results of this study.

In that light, researchers may be inclined to study teacher motivation through investigation into why teacher satisfaction with RtI is correlated with whether RtI benefits students but not with the impact of implementation on their time or the fair balance of work among teachers. While popular claims are made about the “sacrifices” that teachers make in their work, it would be of interest to study a possible benevolence factor. If some work is more of a “calling” than other vocations, motivational studies will have an additional variable to consider with regard to study of teachers.
The correlation between teacher satisfaction with whether or not they were consulted, and satisfaction with the early stages of RtI, uncovers an expectation of respect/regard. This correlation was interesting and was seen in the optional replies of teachers who complained that new initiatives are “mandated,” “announced at faculty meetings” and/or “dumped in their laps”. On the other hand, teachers who expressed satisfaction with the consultation variable were relatively more satisfied, and some were enthusiastic.

This finding is important for building leaders and for researchers. Clearly, a large scale change will fare better with teachers’ support and it is indicated that involving them will help. For researchers, again in the area of motivation studies, when teachers report a sense of feeling consulted they also registered more satisfaction. While it is fairly obvious that workers in any field prefer to be respected, it would be of interest to study how this variable may influence behavior of teachers during times of change.

The qualitative findings of the second part of the study, The Principal Interview, supported the relevance of the questions/concerns of the study. When asked what problems or obstacles they expected during implementation of RtI, all were concerned about time, balance of work between teachers, training and whether the initiative would adequately meet the needs of students. Four of the five principals reported concern about teacher satisfaction. Those principals stated that while some teachers are positive and others negative that they expected a neutral to positive level of satisfaction, which is what was found in analyzing the Teacher Survey.

There were no significant differences between schools. Mean differences were slight. In comparing principals’ comments on particular questions, there were no striking
correlations with the survey results from their schools. However, the two most senior principals (Aldridge and Colfax) expressed the most concern for teacher satisfaction during interviews. These principals said that they don’t push new initiatives. Interestingly, while not statistically different from other schools, the teachers’ answers were more moderate with fewer strongly positive or strongly negative opinions.

The principal from Dupont Middle School was least concerned about teacher satisfaction. When asked how satisfied teachers in his school were, he responded: “satisfied, we haven’t had that discussion”. The teachers from this school were the least satisfied with the benefit to students. They were fourth out of the five schools in satisfaction with consultation and training. Those two composite variables were the most closely correlated with overall satisfaction with RtI.

CHAPTER VIII: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have important implications for administrators, researchers and policy advocates. School administrators are advised to give priority to teacher consultation and training during times of change. When teachers participate in change, personal investment leads to greater success (Sofo 2008). Whetton (1997) and
Wartgow (2008) both argue that reform initiatives that may be otherwise sound are rendered ineffective when teachers aren’t involved in design.

The results of this study attest that teachers are more positive about change when they feel that they have been consulted on and involved in the process of implementation. Complementing the quantitative results from the survey, the interviewed principals with the most administrative experience, as well as the optional comments made by teachers, supported the finding that change done without teacher consultation doesn’t endure. Effective change reform depends on teacher buy-in and cooperation. To ensure longevity, an understanding of the factors involved in eliciting teacher satisfaction and support is arguably as important as the soundness of the model itself (Gerber 2003; Whetton 1997).

Another proposition of the study’s results is that reform, specifically RtI, will be more satisfactory to teachers when the balance of work is carefully considered during the change process. This claim is maintained by the survey result that uncovered that the only significant difference in satisfaction (by teacher type) was that regular education teachers and special education teachers differed in satisfaction with the balance of work.

The Teacher Survey found significant difference in the satisfaction levels of regular versus special education teachers on questions pertaining to balance of work between teachers. The implication of this difference in satisfaction is that administrators need to be careful in assigning new tasks involved in RtI such as the monitoring of student progress. This is so because, for the first time, regular education teachers are involved in implementing and monitoring remedial interventions, which increase their workload. Classroom interventions are more manageable in elementary classrooms than
in middle school classes that change by periods. As such, greater attention to teacher satisfaction at the secondary level will be important for RtI’s success (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2005). Teacher workload must also be considered as teachers are required to put more time and effort into their work in order to communicate and collaborate across subject areas (Lance and Butt 2005). Some of these tasks could be assigned differently to improve the balance of work between teachers.

Satisfaction with RtI is also correlated with teacher perceptions that the initiative benefits all students. They are concerned that RtI will be as good, or better, than other models that have been proposed and/or implemented. The correlation between satisfaction with RtI and the composite variable made up of questions on learning outcomes for all types of students suggests that in the introduction of RtI (or any other model) that administrators at the building level, researchers and policy advocates should address teacher concerns about the benefits of a program to students before launching new initiatives.

The results of the Teacher Survey concur with research findings that middle schools function optimally with highly collaborative models that focus on student needs (Sofo 2008). Sofo further declared that top-down mandates, that do not incorporate consultation with teachers and convince teachers that changes will make a positive difference for students, fail. In accordance with Sofo’s study, the composite variables associated with “consultation” and “student benefit” in the Teacher Survey, correlate with satisfaction with RtI. As such, teachers become cynical about reform when they are not satisfied with these factors. One teacher (in the optional comment section) commented on change imposed by mandate, likening it to “fads” that may not lead to improved
student performance: "This is just another fad in the world of education. Why is it that other industrialized countries don't have these kinds of expensive, time-consuming programs and yet the achievement levels for their students are higher?"

The absence of a correlation between the "time" and "balance" composite variables with the survey question on “overall teacher satisfaction with RtI” warrants further research. Teacher satisfaction with RtI was not influenced by teachers’ response that it takes too much time, nor was it influenced by inequitable balance of work between regular and special education teachers. This finding suggests teachers' willingness to overlook satisfaction with increased workload and more time consuming tasks. However, satisfaction with RtI is correlated with the “consultation” and “benefit to students” composite variables. This suggests that when teachers are consulted and involved in change and also if they are convinced that the change will benefit students that teachers are more satisfied with RtI. The composite variable for balance of work was not found to be correlated with satisfaction with the Rti initiative, even though regular education teachers were significantly less satisfied with the balance of work that they shared with other teachers.

That balance of work was found to be a problem for regular education teachers, but that teachers were still positive about RtI if it benefits students and they are consulted is important for practitioners to consider during implementation of RtI, or any other reform. If teachers are patient with an aversive condition during early implementation, it cannot be assumed that it will last beyond the earliest stages of implementation. If these findings suggest that in assessing their own job satisfaction, teachers are willing to prioritize the needs of students over increased demands placed on their time, it would be
worthy of further research. Such research could lead to better understanding of teacher behavior in relation to satisfaction and motivation. Further, research into whether teachers suppress concerns with how much time they have to put into their jobs in favor of the organizational needs (benefit to the students) would also be very useful in understanding teachers’ career motivation.

Beyond the scope of this study, more research should be done on the influence that 1) increased teacher consultation and training may have on teacher satisfaction during times of change, and 2) teachers’ perceptions of the benefit a reform has on students and satisfaction. If teacher satisfaction levels decrease with insufficient support in the form of consultation and training, then reform initiatives would be better introduced through an interactive process than announced as state or federal mandates. If teacher satisfaction decreases without sufficient evidence that a program is likely to meet the needs of students, then adding in introductory evidence before announcing a change may prove helpful.

The identification of correlations between satisfaction with RtI and the JDS variables also provides support for attention to increasing an awareness of the job conditions that need support during change reform. Further research on teacher motivation would be helpful in understanding why teachers will accept some stresses more than others.

Change causes stress, as the two most senior principals of the focus schools indicated in their interview, they try to have teachers lead the change, since imposed change, in their assessment was unsuccessful. As Hutchinson (1991) and Cotrell and Harvey (2004) argued, there are a number of reasons that individuals/teachers, resist
change. The reluctance of the more experienced principals to announce change policies attests to a knowledge of how critical smooth transitions and teachers support for change are to the success of the change.

The impact that factors including equitable balance of work, time constraints, consultation and evidence of the beneficent impact on students have on teacher satisfaction during the introduction of new models should be researched, considered by policy advocates and carefully considered by practitioners. Concerns for a change in workload have often formed the initial resistance to change in schools (Kochar, West and Taymans 2000). Or, as one teacher stated on the division of work variable: “regular education teachers have been resistant to RtI and its implications.” More understanding of how changes in models and student placement influence teacher workload is, therefore, vital to teacher buy-in to the change process.

CHAPTER X: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Educators agree that school reform should principally be about doing what is right for students. However, teacher satisfaction with those reform efforts and the process of implementation are important factors in the change process. Teacher satisfaction is not only applicable to employees’ contentment, but is also crucial to the long term success of
the reform. The intention of this research was to highlight the impact of change on teacher satisfaction and to use the lens of a systemic change, in this case Response to Intervention, to note the degree of impact of some factors involved in change.

With the goal to improve education for all students through reform, policy advocates should be cognizant of the impact of job redesign on teachers who are responsible for implementation. Better understanding of how changes impact teacher satisfaction will inform policy makers and administrators on how to support teachers through transitions during times of change.

Studies on student’ response to various remedial models is abundant. However research on teacher satisfaction with change reforms related to these initiatives is inadequate (Wartgow 2008). Response to Intervention, as a systemic model, will take several years and teachers support to be fully implemented. Systemic changes generally fare differently in secondary as compared with primary schools due to the number of teachers involved and a lack of time to consult and jointly plan in secondary school settings (Sofo 2008).

With so much attention and analysis on student performance under RtI, policymakers and administrators may assume that this model will proceed on its own merits. However, the frontline of change and the only agent able to make this system work for all students is the teacher. Increased understanding of the factors involved in teacher satisfaction is important in the change process in general (Fletcher 2009; Sofo 2008; Wartgow 2008 and Whetton 1997).

Teacher satisfaction is even more important to consider in regard to systemic changes requiring a great deal of commitment from faculty working in middle schools.
As such, if teachers determine the success of students, as Gerber (2003) argues, the first consideration in implementing new initiatives should be the management of teacher satisfaction with adjustments and redesign of their work.

In line with the claims of Baker and Perie (1997); D’Amico and Grimmett (2008) and Wartgow (2008) the present study encourages researchers, policy advocates and administrators to pursue understanding of stress factors involved in the re-design of teacher work during change. These concerns are as relevant to reforms in general as they are to RtI, specifically. If the impact of changes involved in reform on teacher satisfaction are studied and understood, leaders will be better prepared to control conditions related to these facets of work that influence teacher satisfaction. It calls to mind the management adage: The most important assets in your organization are the employees working with you. If you take care of your people, your people will take care of the bottom line.

APPENDIX A:

Dear Middle Level Teacher:

I am a middle school assistant principal and a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York at Albany. My dissertation includes a study of teacher satisfaction with the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI). I am writing to ask for your participation in my study. Your participation will require just a small amount of time (less than 15 minutes) to answer questions in an
online survey about your satisfaction with various aspects of the implementation of this model for remediation and disability identification.

As a middle school teacher, you are in a position to best know how well a model is being implemented and how well it is working. Your responses will be able to help researchers understand how middle school teachers perceive the current success of this model, how the implementation process influences job satisfaction, as well as the issues that middle school teachers believe need more attention paid with regard to the model.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. There is no penalty for not completing the survey, nor is there any compensation for completing it.

Your responses will be kept anonymous.
APPENDIX B:

Teacher Satisfaction Survey

You have been invited to take part in a research study that is aimed at an understanding of the satisfaction that teachers have with the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RtI) process in two areas. First, the survey will ask how you assess RtI in identifying and remediating the educational needs of struggling students and, second, how the changes in procedures introduced through RtI implementation influence your satisfaction with your work as a teacher. Karynn Zahedi, from the Department of Education Administration and Policy Studies at the State University of New York, is conducting this study as a component of her doctoral dissertation. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Mrs. Zahedi at kzahedi@rhcsd.com or her dissertation committee chair, Dr. Heinz Dieter Meyer, hmeyer@albany.edu.

Participation in this study will involve responses to a questionnaire that should take approximately 15 minutes. You will be asked questions about your satisfaction with:
1. The RtI model in meeting student needs
2. The amount of training provided for you with regard to RtI
3. Meeting time issues related to RtI
4. Co teaching and co-planning with other teachers with regard to RtI
5. Record keeping issues related to RtI
6. Tolerance for a different range of learners in the regular education classroom
7. Job satisfaction and the RtI model.

The survey has three sections. Part 1 identifies your role within the middle school, Part 2 asks you to assess the effectiveness of RtI in improving student outcomes as well as the impact that implementation has on your daily work, including questions about training, planning times, class composition and record-keeping. Part 3 is an inquiry into your assessment of the impact that this change has on job satisfaction in general.

Each section is short. You will be asked to identify your answers by choosing a multiple choice answer, on a scale of 5 points from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In Part II, and in Part III short responses are optional on some questions.

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX C:

The Teacher Survey

Questions:

Part I

1. I am considered a:
   a. regular education teacher
   b. special education teacher
   c. AIS Teacher
   d. Other

2. I teach students in (check all that apply):
   a. grade 5
   b. grade 6
   c. grade 7
   d. grade 8

3. How long have you been using RtI?
   a. Not yet implemented
   b. 1 year
   c. 2 years
   d. 3 years or more years

   How long have you been a teacher?
   a. 1-5 years
   b. 6-10 years
   c. 11-15 years
   d. 16-20 years
   e. Over 20 years

   How would you rate your satisfaction with your job?
   a. Very satisfied
   b. Satisfied
   c. Neutral
   d. Unsatisfied
   e. Very unsatisfied
Part II

4. I believe I have had sufficient training to implement RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

5. I believe I have had sufficient training to implement RtI in the classroom
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

6. I currently monitor Tier I students under RtI, with approximately ____ number of students on a weekly basis.
   Fill in the blank

7. I am confident in my ability to instruct learners with significantly different abilities within the same classroom.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

8. As a result of RtI, my 1:1 remedial interaction with students has increased.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

9. As a result of RtI my monitoring of students understanding of the lesson has increased.
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

10. As a result of RtI, the length the meetings I must attend has increased.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

11. I believe that the time spent in meetings is necessary for implementing RtI.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

12. I believe RtI requires too much meeting time.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

13. As a result of RtI, I spend more time working with other teachers.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

14. As a result of RtI, I believe I get along better with my fellow teachers.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

15. As a result of RtI, I believe teacher collegiality has increased on my team or department.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

16. As a result of RtI, the amount of record keeping I do has increased.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

17. As a result of RtI, I spend too much time doing record keeping.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

18. I believe RtI has changed my classroom for the better.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

19. I believe I am a better teacher to my students due to using RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

20. I believe I am a better co-teacher as a result of RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

21. I believe that collegiality has improved in my school as a result of RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

22. The division of work between regular and special education teachers is appropriate.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

23. The amount of work for regular education teachers has increased.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

24. Special education teachers involved in RtI take a supporting, rather than a co-teaching role, in educating students in co-taught classes.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

25. My overall opinion of RtI is
   1. Strongly positive
   2. Positive
   3. Neutral
   4. Negative
   5. Strongly negative

   Why ________________________

26. I believe Tier II AIS services (pull out) should be assigned to at-risk students earlier.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

27. RtI meets the needs of my students who are struggling learners.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

28. There is little difference in the effectiveness of RtI and the special education resource room in meeting the learning needs of struggling students.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

29. All students in my class benefit from RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

30. I believe Tier II AIS services are assigned to at-risk students at the right time point, after a sufficient number of interventions have been attempted in the classroom.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

31. Tier II (Pull-out interventions) services are effective for the students I work with.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

32. The range of the academic performance of students in my class has increased under RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree
Part III

33. Using RtI increases the effectiveness of my teaching/influence on student learning.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

   Comments about teaching effectiveness and the RtI model:
   ____________________________________________________________

34. Using RtI increases the significant and important impact that my work as a teacher has on children.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

   Comments about positive impact of teacher efforts on children:
   ____________________________________________________________

35. Using RtI gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in my work as a teacher.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

37. Using RtI increases the information/feedback I receive from administrators and colleagues on the effectiveness of my work as a teacher.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree
Comments about professional feedback and the implementation of RtI: ________________________________

38. I believe the teachers (including myself) were sufficiently consulted before RtI implementation in my middle school.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Comments about teacher consultation before RtI implementation: ______________________________________

39. I influence the implementation process of RtI in my middle school.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Comments about teacher influence on the RtI implementation process: ________________________________

40. Using RtI in teaching increases the variety of challenging skills and abilities necessary to do my job well.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Comments about the increase of skill variety and the implementation of RtI: ________________________________
41. I am satisfied with the overall way that my job duties, relationships and outcomes are influenced by the implementation of the RtI model.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Comments about the impact of RtI implementation on my job duties, relationships and outcomes:

42. My job as a teacher requires more high level and complex skills due to RtI.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Comments about high level and complex teaching skills:

43. With the use of RtI, I am more able to finish each aspect of my job than I was able to under the previous model.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Neutral
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly disagree

Comments about task completion under RtI:

Questions in Part III are adapted from the revised Job Diagnostic Survey of Hackman and Oldham (1976) by Idaszac and Drasgow (1987).
1. How did you first come to know about RtI and how did you go about developing a plan to implement it?

2. How long have you been using RtI in your building?

3. How many (in-service trainings) have been dedicated to RtI implementation?

4. What are the best outcomes that you see or expect to see from RtI?

5. What problems or obstacles do your teachers face with this model of remediation?

6. How satisfied do you think teachers in your building are with the early stages of RtI implementation?

7. How are teachers consulted on various issues related to RtI implementation such as scheduling and co-teaching aspects of the program?

8. How has the workload of regular and special education teachers been influenced by the implementation of RtI. Are there any problems balancing the duties of these teachers?

9. How do you see RtI implementation influencing school culture, including teacher collegiality?

10. What obstacles do you find with RtI and what would you do to improve it?
Definitions:

RtI: Response to Intervention

AIS: academic intervention services

CSE: committee for special education

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

LRE: least restrictive environment

ELL: English Language Limited, previously ESL: English as a Second Language

Title I: The federal grant assigned under NCLB to provide remedial services

504 Status: legislation enacted to provide services based on medical issues

UDL: Universal Design for Learning
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