

Vista Unified School District Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) Implementation Guide

Acknowledgements

The Response to Instruction and Intervention Implementation Guide is the result of the dedication and collaboration of the VUSD RtI² Taskforce members, as well as on-going feedback from teachers, parents, and administrators throughout the district. Their participation, guidance, and support are greatly appreciated.

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A. Introduction

The Vista Unified School District Response to Instruction and Intervention Implementation Guide is a framework for providing the English Language Arts and Mathematics instructional programs in grades K-12. All classroom teachers, administrators, and support staff may utilize this guide while planning, delivering and assessing instruction for all students, as well as providing opportunities for the parents or guardians of all students to become actively involved in the education of their children. This plan is aligned to state guidelines for Response to Instruction and Intervention, current research, and input from multiple stakeholder groups in Vista Unified.

The purpose of the Vista Unified School District is to educate all students to become responsible citizens who make positive, intelligent and productive contributions to their community, state and nation. In order to achieve this, a strong educational program must be available to all students. Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) focuses on the development of strong core programs, as well as tiers of support for students based on frequent data analysis and monitoring. The goal is early identification and prevention of academic or behavior concerns in order to ensure success for all students.

Response to Intervention is a nationally recognized term. In November 2008, the California Department of Education modified the term to Response to Instruction and Intervention, thus RtI². Response to Instruction and Intervention is not a program or curriculum. RtI² refers to an integrated system consisting of high quality instruction and behavior interventions determined by data analysis. It is a framework for allocating services and resources in response to students' needs. In Vista Unified School District, the guiding principle of RtI² is that all students can learn at high levels, and it is our responsibility to organize all resources to ensure this happens. The implementation of the RtI framework will be responsive to the needs of students both academically and behaviorally ultimately reducing the identification for students for Special Education services.

All components of the Vista Unified School District Response to Instruction and Intervention Implementation Guide are aligned to the [VUSD Local Education Agency Plan \(LEAP\)](#) and the [Title III Improvement Plan Addendum \(IPA\)](#). If instruction is implemented using a tiered system of supports in every classroom at every school, as outlined in this guide, research has shown that students will have a greater likelihood of successfully demonstrating mastery of the grade level content standards in reading/ Language arts and mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

In 2008, the California Department of Education defined the [core components of Response to Instruction and Intervention](#).

- **High quality classroom instruction** - Students receive high quality and culturally relevant, standards-based instruction in their classroom setting by highly qualified teachers.
- **Research-based instruction** - The instruction that is provided within the classroom is culturally responsive and has been demonstrated to be effective through scientific research.
- **Universal screening** - School staff assess all students to determine students' needs. Based on the collected data, school staff determine which students require close progress monitoring, differentiated instruction, additional targeted assessment, a specific research based intervention, or acceleration.

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- **Continuous classroom progress monitoring** - Academic performance of all students is monitored continually within the classroom so that teachers can adjust their instruction accordingly. In this way, teachers can identify those learners who require more depth and complexity in daily work and those who are not meeting benchmarks or other expected standards.
- **Research-based interventions** - When monitoring data indicate a lack of progress, an appropriate research-based intervention is implemented. The interventions are designed to increase the intensity of the students' instructional experience.
- **Progress monitoring during instruction and intervention** - School staff use progress-monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of the acceleration (to be defined) or intervention to make the necessary adjustments and/or modifications, as needed.
- **Fidelity of program implementation** - Student success in the RtI² model requires fidelity of implementation in the delivery of instructional support specific to the learning and/or behavioral needs of the student.
- **Staff development and collaboration** - All school staff are trained in curriculum, assessments, data analysis, programs, and research-based instructional practices and strategies. Site grade level or interdisciplinary teams use a collaborative approach to analyze student data and work together in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.
- **Parent involvement** - The involvement and active participation of parents at all stages of the instructional and intervention process is essential to improving the educational outcomes of their students. Parents are informed of the progress of their students in their native language or other mode of communication, and their input is valued in making appropriate decisions.
- **Specific Learning Disability Determination** - The RtI² approach may be one component of Specific Learning Disability determination as addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 statute and regulations. As part of determining eligibility, the data from the RtI² process may be used to ensure that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions.

B. Implementation of Instructional Program

A district wide instructional focus has been set targeting reading comprehension across all content areas. Instructional program guidelines have been developed to ensure that all teachers are using the state board approved, district adopted core ELA, ELD, and math curriculum appropriate to each grade/course level. (Insert document listing district-adopted curriculum).

The *Vista Unified Daily Instructional Time and Materials Guidelines for Elementary* has also been established to ensure that core instruction is not supplanted with supplemental resources (Insert instructional time guidelines for elementary, middle and high school).

Every grade level shall develop and implement instructional schedules that comply with the VUSD guidelines.

The Direct Interactive Instructional (DI²) model has been adopted district wide for use in all classrooms in an effort to promote more active student participation during lessons. (Insert DI² description). In addition, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was adopted as a district wide initiative and professional resource to ensure that all teachers make content comprehensible for English learners. (Insert SIOP description). All teachers K-12 have received initial training in the DI² and SIOP model. All teachers will continue to receive on-going training and support from site principals, instructional coaches, and EL support teachers in sheltered instruction and direct interactive instruction.

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C. Tiers of Support for Students

VUSD has outlined the layers or tiers of instruction to ensure that all students receive the appropriate differentiated support and intervention. These include core instruction (including universal access), strategic intervention, and intensive intervention.

Tier 1 - Core Instruction, including Universal Access (UA):

- **Core Instruction:** All students, including English learners (EL), students with disabilities (SWD), students with learning difficulties, and advanced learners in all grade levels, are provided the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted basic core instructional program materials in Reading Language Arts (RLA), Mathematics, and English Language Development (ELD). These materials are implemented daily as designed based on the requirements outlined in the California Department of Education (CDE) curriculum frameworks to support the needs of all students.

Rationale

As public education institutions, schools are charged with ensuring that all students have the opportunity to master their grade level standards via the adopted curriculum. Recognizing this, and the variety of the levels of preparedness that students bring into each grade level, the RLA Framework delineates a specific need, and time, for teachers to scaffold (differentiate) the standards via adopted curriculum in order that all levels of students have access to core grade level standards.

Application

At all levels, teachers use the adopted basic core and program ancillary materials designed for universal access/differentiated instruction to meet the needs of students, including strategic learners.

- **Universal Access:** Universal Access is embedded in the adopted basic core instructional materials, daily instruction, and specific time is allocated every day for teachers to differentiate instruction for all students based on student need according to on-going assessment data (California Department of Education, 2007). The idea of "access to the core" is the purpose of UA. Universal Access is the first level of the Response to Intervention (RtI²) model.

Application:

- Elementary classroom teacher provides 30 minutes of UA instruction during the core English language arts portion of the school day through the use of the district adopted core and ancillary materials to **preteach, reteach, reinforce,** and/or **extend** the core lessons and skills taught through the adopted curriculum. This may be a time where teachers use flexible grouping strategies to provide instruction based on specific student needs.
- Secondary teachers also provide UA instruction during the core classes. Teachers will differentiate when necessary as to depth, complexity, novelty, or pacing and focus on the standards and the key concepts within the standards that students must master to move on to the next grade level.

"For advanced students it means enriched instruction that encourages students to address topics, time periods, or connections across disciplines not

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normally expected at that grade level. For students experiencing difficulty in the language arts, the teacher should focus on the key concepts within the standards and eliminate confusing activities or variables. The lessons should be even more organized and sequential and be focused on the most important concepts. Instruction is not thereby watered down. Instead, it is distilled to ensure that instructional time is used to help students understand the fundamental concepts or skills needed to master later standards.”
(California Department of Education, 2007).

Tier 2 - Strategic Intervention: Targeted instruction for students below grade level needing additional time to master difficult English language arts content (California Department of Education, 2007).

Rationale: Strategic Intervention is a response to those students who are significantly below their grade level standard (1-2 years), often having "gaps" in foundational knowledge. These gaps hold students back from being able to layer on new learning, as the standards require. In order to fill these learning "gaps," teachers/schools have a separate time when they work with these students to specifically fill the gaps. The word "strategic" is the key term because there is not enough time in the day to simply "teach everything again." A strategic intervention is used to efficiently deliver support in the specific areas necessary to get the student(s) back on track to meet grade level standards. Diagnosis is necessary to pinpoint areas of need and ongoing curriculum-based assessments are administered every 2-4 weeks to see if the intervention is working. Strategic Intervention is used in the second level of the RtI model.

Application:

- In the elementary grades (K-5), Strategic Intervention occurs within the general education classroom. The general education teacher provides a 15-30 minute intervention lesson (*Reference VUSD K-5 Instructional Minutes Guideline document*) to selected students in addition to the core instruction. Core materials, ancillary materials, and/or supplementary materials are used.
- In the secondary grades (6-12), Strategic Intervention is provided through an additional period of class time. This additional time allows for pre-teaching targeted skills, strategies, concepts, and vocabulary, or re-teaching skills and strategies that have not been mastered. The pacing guides for grades 9-12 will include the skills and strategies that can be reviewed during the support period. (*Insert pacing guides when completed*).

Tier 3 - Intensive Intervention: Designed to be delivered in place of the core ELA instruction for students who are two or more years below grade level in grades 4-8 in order to accelerate their reentry into the appropriate grade level ELA program (California Department of Education, 2007).

Rationale: Students significantly below grade level cannot keep up with the level of rigor and the pace of a grade level language arts program. These are students in serious risk of dropping out of school due to lack of success and low self-esteem. The "gaps" in their learning go beyond foundational knowledge of concepts and skills. These "gaps" cannot be adequately addressed with short strategic interventions. In order to remediate the significant learning deficit, a separate, State Board approved, curriculum is used in place of the standard grade level ELA curriculum. This curriculum is intended to accelerate their learning and close the achievement gap within one to two years of participation in the intensive

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intervention program. The goal is to return the student(s) to the mainstream classroom as soon as possible. Intensive Intervention is the third level of the RtI² model.

Application in Grades K-3:

Students receive Core Language Arts program, including ancillary materials, and/or district approved supplemental materials for targeted purposes. Students should receive additional instructional time during the school day. Additional instruction, specifically designed to assist students in meeting grade level proficiency, may occur during extended learning opportunities before or after the students' instructional day.

Application in Grades 4-8: Intensive Intervention is intended to replace the complete English language arts program and instructional minutes in grades 4-8. Students are placed into the intensive intervention group during the core ELA scheduled time during the day. Generally, this group includes students from different classrooms within the grade level and/or between two grade levels. The Instructional materials must be state board approved and district-adopted.

On April 21, 2011, the Vista Unified School District Board of Trustees approved the adoption of *Language! The Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum* published by Sopris West, as the intensive intervention curriculum for grades 4-5 beginning with the 2011-12 school year. In grades 6-8, VUSD will continue to pilot intensive intervention curriculum in order to establish which program it will recommend for district adoption for the 2012-13 school year.

Application in Grade 6-12: Need to outline intensive intervention for the following student groups. Include criteria for placement, course title, and instructional materials.

- English Only and Reclassified English Learners
- English Learners
- Long term English Learners (insert Long-Term English Learner Placement document)

Application in Special Education: Need to outline intensive intervention for the following student groups. Include criteria for placement, course title, and instructional materials.

- RSP
- SDC
- Other

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Tiers of Support for Students

ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

TIER 3 Intensive, Individual Interventions

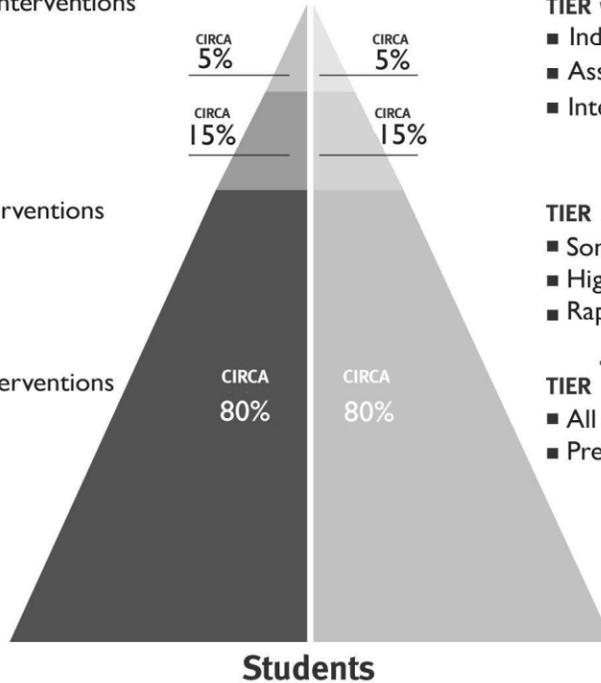
- Individual students
- Assessment-based
- High intensity
- Of longer duration

TIER 2 Targeted Group Interventions

- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

TIER 1 Core Instructional Interventions

- All students
- Preventive, proactive



BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

TIER 3 Intensive, Individual Interventions

- Individual students
- Assessment-based
- Intense, durable procedures

TIER 2 Targeted Group Interventions

- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

TIER 1 Core Instructional Interventions

- All settings, all students
- Preventive, proactive

Tier 1 Core Instruction / Universal Access (State approved/District adopted ELA, MATH, ELD)

All students - Preventative/Proactive

- Students receive Core Language Arts program (Best, first teaching)
- Differentiated instruction for all students through Universal Access
- Teachers look at student data and student work to determine who needs additional support in specific skill areas (Formative and summative assessments, authentic student work samples, etc.)

Tier 2 Strategic Interventions (In addition to State approved/District adopted Core ELA, MATH, ELD)

- Targeted instruction for students needing additional time in specific skill areas
- Diagnostic testing required to select specific focus of instruction for students
- Judicious selection from resources should directly align with current, grade level objectives from the core ELA program
- Student progress is monitored via short cycle assessments, including diagnostic and formative measures

Tier 3 Intensive Interventions (State approved/District adopted Core replacement program for ELA, ELD)

- Designed for student in grades 4-8 who are two or more years below grade level
- The goal of intensive intervention is to accelerate learning for the purpose of getting students back to into grade level core curriculum (not to exceed two years)
- Students receive instruction through the use of a research-based intervention program

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- Carefully designed and implemented, explicit, systematic instruction
- Student progress is continuously monitored

D. Assessment

VUSD believes that high quality teaching and learning will benefit all students' academic success. In order to effectively measure the degree to which students are learning, a culture of assessment and data analysis must be in place.

A sound assessment system is an essential component of a standards-based instructional system focused on teaching and learning. The VUSD assessment matrix is grounded in research and based on a framework of strategies and measures designed to provide a comprehensive profile of student achievement. The assessment plan relies on multiple resources including: [California Standards Tests \(CST\)](#), [California Modified Assessment \(CMA\)](#), [California Alternate Performance Assessment \(CAPA\)](#), [California High School Exit Exam \(CAHSEE\)](#), [California English Language Development Test \(CELDT\)](#), district common assessments (benchmarks), curriculum-embedded classroom assessments and teacher created assessments. Student progress is monitored through the on-going analysis of multiple measures (State, district, and classroom assessments.) In addition to monitoring student growth, assessment results help individual schools and the district gauge the effectiveness of the instructional programs and identify areas of strength and areas of need.

The purpose of administering assessments is to ensure that student academic growth is not only being measured, but that instruction is adjusted to meet the needs of students. The following are critical elements of the VUSD assessment plan.

- Measuring student growth towards proficiency
- Communicating assessment information (results with students and parents?)
- Making informed judgments about learning and teaching
- Understanding and using assessment results for:
 - continuous improvement over time at the district, school, and classroom level
 - improved standard-based instruction
 - informed decision-making
 - equity for all students
 - research-based practices

Assessment serves multiple purposes and the results are communicated to various groups dependent upon the purpose. Initially assessment can be characterized in two ways:

Summative Assessment: Assessment of Learning:

- Assessment that happens after the learning has taken place to determine how much students have learned is referred to as summative assessment. Summative assessment results may be used to determine student placement as well as make decisions about programs. Examples include STAR, CELDT, SAT, AP, IB, final exams, end of course projects, end of course grades.

Formative Assessment: Assessment for Learning

- Assessment that happens while the learning is still taking place is referred to as formative assessment. Formative assessment takes place throughout teaching and learning to diagnose student needs, plan further instruction and provide students with feedback to improve the quality of their work.

Clear Purposes:

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The overarching purpose of a sound assessment system is to enhance student performance and growth related to State content standards. An individual assessment may provide information for multiple users, while a body of evidence from multiple assessments over time will provide a comprehensive view of the teaching and learning that is occurring during the course of a school year.

Data Analysis of Assessment Results Supports:

- Improvement of student learning - Classroom Level (Student and Teacher)
 - Assessments provide data to help teachers create an instructional focus and determine what comes next in the learning for their class and for individual students.
 - Assessments provide continuous data to support and validate teacher judgments of student proficiency.
 - Assessments allow teachers to monitor continuously student progress toward each standard.
 - The assessment process must include feedback of results to students and parents.
 - Assessment results helps students to establish learning targets which fosters student involvement in their own learning and continuous improvement over time.
 - Answers the question, "How goes each student's journey to each standard?"

- Improvement of instructional programs – Program Level (Grade level, School and District)
 - Assessment data allows us to monitor student achievement related to content area standards and instructional program objectives.
 - Assessment data provides periodic evidence summarized across classrooms indicating standards met and those not yet met.
 - Assessment data help to evaluate school and district programs. These data provide valuable insights to curriculum alignment efforts.
 - Answers the question "Collectively, what standards are our students meeting or not meeting?"

- Provide public accountability and support -- Institutional/Policy Level (District and State)
 - Assessment reports inform the Board of Education, school communities, and our district community as a whole about the quality of district educational programs, and provide comparative information about district programs and others in the nation.
 - Assessments provide data to determine the number and percentage of students meeting the standards.
 - Answers the question, "Are enough students meeting standards?"

RtI² and Assessment

A major feature of the RtI Model is its use of data to drive the decision-making process—at all levels (individual student, classroom, and school).

Assessment/Progress Monitoring Across the Tiers: To support RtI's fluid approach, reliable and ongoing information must be available to:

- Identify academic and behavioral needs of individual students
- Inform the problem-solving process
- Design and modify instruction to meet student needs
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instruction at different levels of the system (e.g., classroom, school, and district levels)

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An efficient system that streamlines increasingly limited resources is paramount. Therefore, RtI uses a tiered system of assessments that increase in frequency and intensity as greater needs are revealed. Timely, reliable assessments indicate which students are falling behind in critical skills or which students need their learning accelerated, as well as allow teachers to design instruction that responds to the learning needs. By regularly assessing students' progress in learning and behavior, teachers can identify which students need more help, which are likely to make good progress without extra help, and which students need their learning accelerated.

An effective assessment plan has four main objectives:

Initial Identification: To identify students at the beginning of the year who are at-risk or who are experiencing difficulties and who may need extra instruction or intensive interventions if they are to progress toward grade-level standards by the end of the year, as well as students who have reached benchmarks and who need to be challenged.

Progress Monitoring: To monitor students' progress during the year to determine whether at-risk students are making adequate progress in critical skills and to identify any students who may be falling behind or need to be challenged.

Differentiate Instruction: To inform instructional planning in order to meet the most critical needs of individual students.

Provide Intervention: To evaluate whether the instruction or intervention provided is powerful enough to help all students achieve grade-level standards by the end of each year.

The four objectives outlined above can be achieved through assessments administered during the school year. These assessments are; universal screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and outcome based. While these assessments correspond to the four objectives listed above, all contribute to the development, planning and implementation of high-quality effective instruction and appropriate intervention.

Universal Screening Assessments: Screening assessments are quick and efficient measures of overall ability and critical skills known to be strong indicators that predict student performance. Administered to all students as an initial baseline, these assessments help to identify students who do not meet or who exceed grade level expectations. Results can be used as a starting point for instruction or to indicate a need for further evaluation.

In VUSD, examples of universal screening tools include the Houghton-Mifflin Emerging Literacy Survey (Grades K-1), STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, and SRI. For a complete list of universal screening tools, please refer to the VUSD Universal Screening matrix.

Progress Monitoring Assessments: Progress monitoring assessments are also brief, but are given periodically to determine whether students are making adequate progress. Progress monitoring assessment data should be collected, evaluated, and used on an ongoing basis for the following purposes:

- Determine rate of a student's progress
- Provide information on the effectiveness of instruction and to modify the intervention if necessary
- Identify the need for additional information
- Analyze and interpret gaps between benchmarks and achievement.

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In VUSD, examples of progress monitoring assessments include the Houghton Mifflin Theme Skills Tests (Grades K-5) and the Integrated Theme Tests (Grades K-5). *Identify progress monitoring tools at middle and high school.*

Diagnostic Assessments: While relatively lengthy and administered after universal screening indicates a deficit, diagnostic assessments provide an in-depth, reliable assessment of targeted skills. Their major purpose is to provide information for planning more effective instruction and interventions. Diagnostic assessments should be given when there is a clear expectation that they will offer new or more reliable information about a child's academic or behavioral needs that can be used to help plan more powerful instruction or interventions. If schools are implementing screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments in a reliable and valid way, the need for additional testing, using formal diagnostic instruments, should be reduced. Because they are time-consuming and expensive, complete diagnostic tests should be administered far less frequently than the other assessments. However, specific subtests from diagnostic instruments might be used to provide information in areas not assessed by screening, progress monitoring, or outcome assessments. School leaders should continually ask if the value of the information to teachers from formal diagnostic tests in planning instruction merits the time spent administering such tests.

Outcome Assessments: Given at the end of the school year, outcome tests are frequently group-administered tests of important outcomes (e.g., CST). Outcome assessments are often used for school, district and or state reporting purposes. These tests are important because they give school leaders and teachers feedback about the overall effectiveness of their instructional program. As part of an effective assessment plan, outcome assessments should be administered at the end of every year.

E. Summary of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) Development Team work in 2009-2011

The VUSD RtI² Development Team was formed in September 2009, and included representatives from the elementary, middle school, high school, and district office. The RtI² Development Team studied selections from *Beyond the RtI Pyramid* for the purpose of creating common language and rationale around the implementation of RtI².

The team developed frameworks for each of the grade spans (elementary, middle and high school) defining the core components that currently are in place. The team studied effective practices around the implementation of the core components including, universal screening, progress monitoring, protocols for collaboration, processes and criteria for student placement in math and reading intervention, documenting student progress, parent communication, building school-based RtI² teams, and using positive behavioral supports.

In the January 2010, six elementary sites (nine teachers) began the intensive reading intervention pilot in grades 4 and 5, using either Hampton Brown/National Geographic, *Inside* or Sopris West, *Language*.

In October 2010, the intensive intervention pilot expanded to include thirteen elementary sites. Eight sites are piloting *Inside* (16 classrooms total) and five 5 sites are piloting *Language* (10 classrooms total). The participating classrooms include 4th grade, 5th grade, 4th/5th grade combination, Resource, and Special Day. Four sites are not participating in the pilot (Monte Vista, Empresa, Mission Meadows and Bobier). Pilot teachers attended three days of instructional materials training between October 2010 and January 2011.

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The team will analyze the effectiveness of the intensive intervention programs through two lenses: (1) student achievement data and (2) teacher feedback using the VUSD ELA Intensive Intervention Comparison matrix. Student achievement data, using curriculum embedded assessments and [reading lexile scores](#), will be collected and analyzed to determine student growth.

In May 2011, the district will select an intensive intervention program for grades 4 and 5, which will be implemented in all elementary sites in September 2011.

F. Conclusions

The RtI² Development Team shared an overview of their learning with the principals in May 2010. The team identified the following next steps to continue the work in 2010-2011.

- Identify a strategic intervention model that supports the core instruction and targets learning gaps (informed by grade level and department collaboration).
- Continue with identification and adoption of intensive intervention program at each level.
- Develop toolkit of resources for use at the sites.
- Begin work on Positive Behavioral Support Framework

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