MEETING THE LITERACY NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE RESPONSIVENESS OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL
REFORM EFFORTS IN A NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

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ABSTRACT

TIMOTHY WILLIAM SIMS. Meeting the literacy needs of English Language Learners: A case study of the responsiveness of district and school reform efforts in a North Carolina school district. (Under the direction of DR. ADRIANA L. MEDINA)

In response to increased focus on English Language Learners (ELLs), districts and schools have attempted to impact the academic performance of this group by engaging in improvement processes intended to increase achievement. The purpose of this study was to examine the responsiveness of a district's plans to improve literacy instruction to meet the needs of ELLs in response to federally required accountability provisions. The selected school district has been identified for Title III improvement for over four years due to the performance of ELLs and six of the district's schools have been designated focus schools as their achievement gap exceeds the state average. This case study analyzed the district and school plans developed to impact ELLs utilizing a template designed by the Institute of Educational Science (IES) at the United States Department of Education. The template is based upon research the IES identifies as having strong evidence to impact the achievement of ELLs in literacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine the responsiveness of a district's plans to improve literacy instruction to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) in response to federally required accountability provisions. Although increased research has been conducted in meeting the literacy needs of ELLs over the past decade (Morrison, Wilcox, Thomas, Billen, Carr, Wilcox, Morrison, & Wilcox, 2011), a crucial lynchpin in implementing systemic change is the school district's ability to translate educational research into significant action that impacts instruction (Elmore, 2004). In order to achieve systemic reform efforts, districts must build capacity at both the teacher and organizational level (Goertz et al., 1996). The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) brought a new level of focus on improvements for ELLs at the district and programmatic level, as well as the individual school level (Anderson & Dufford-Melendez, 2011). Previously, systemic reform efforts had not significantly focused on meeting the needs of ELLs and research suggests a missed opportunity in leveraging districts' ability to build teacher capacity for teaching ELLs (Coady, Hamann, Harrington, Pacheco, Pho & Yedlin, 2003). This study examines how one district responds to federal and state mandates to improve literacy instruction for ELLs. Pseudonyms are used for the district and school names.

Miramontes, Nadeau and Commins (2011) argue that for schools to restructure to meet the needs of ELLs, careful consideration and planning with appropriate stakeholders

with knowledge of the specific needs of the population must occur. Utilizing a case study approach, this study examined documents developed by one district in the State of North Carolina to address the literacy needs of ELLs. The analysis included documents at both the district and school level. The documents reviewed at the district level included the strategic plan and the Title III plan. The review at the school level included the school improvement plans for the six identified focus schools, which have an achievement gap larger than the state's average. Hamman, Zuliani and Hudak (2004) utilized a similar approach for examining state's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) project plans to determine responsiveness for ELLs. ELL subgroup achievement in reading was analyzed for these schools to determine if the plans as designed are having an impact.

Context

ELLs in the United States have increased 81% from 1990 to 2011 (Whatley & Batalova, 2013). The population of ELLs in North Carolina increased 269% between 1997-1998 and 2007-2008 (U.S Department of Education, 2010). The North Carolina Justice Center identifies a 12.4% annual average increase in ELL population between 2002 and 2010 (Whittenberg, 2011). Payán and Nettles (2008) point out that although North Carolina is not one of the states with the highest population of ELLs, it is one of the six states with the highest increases from 1995 to 2005. The increase in population has created significant challenges for the state of North Carolina with ELLs representing the subgroup with lowest graduation rate in 2010 and the subgroup meeting Adequate Yearly Progress targets only twice in the eight school years from 2002-2003 to 2009-2010 (Whittenberg, 2011). Whittenberg (2011) also reports that reading proficiency was

concerning for ELLs for the two years the subgroup met accountability targets with only 37.4% and 45.2% of students achieving proficient levels.

Along with the significant increases in population, shifts in policy also impacted educational context within North Carolina for ELLs. Reauthorization of ESEA was enacted in 2002 with the specific premise that each student must be assessed for achievement in English language arts and math (Paige, 2006). Furthermore, states and districts were to be held accountable for student achievement (Paige, 2006). In particular, schools and districts were now being held accountable not just for overall student achievement, but also for subgroups of students including ELLs (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Each school was required to annually test students in reading and math and meet certain targets, known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), or face increasing sanctions if even one subgroup failed (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). The targets increased incrementally culminating with 100% of students scoring as proficient in 2013-2014 (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). A significant change in the reauthorization was the creation of Title III as a new formula grant with accountability provisions for states and districts receiving the funds focused on the acquisition of English rather than supporting competitive grants for bilingual education (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). In September 2011, the accountability context began to shift again as the United States Department of Education (USDOE) announced that states could apply for flexibility from certain provisions of NCLB due to the fact that congress had failed to reauthorize the bill (USDOE, 2011). In applying for ESEA flexibility, states had to identify three types of schools priority, focus and reward schools (USDOE, 2012). This development lead the state of North Carolina to identify 130 focus schools and ELLs were one of the two subgroups that caused schools to be

identified as a focus school (Brown, 2012). The changing context of accountability and increasing numbers of ELLs has increased the pressure for North Carolina's districts and schools to impact instruction for this subgroup.

<p align="center">Statement of Problem</p>

The increasing pressure due to federal accountability provisions, challenges of systemic school reform and unique instructional needs of ELLs challenge districts and schools to create instructional environments that are responsive to their needs. Title III provisions of NCLB created a new level of accountability for districts and states in regards to ELLs (Tanenbaum & Anderson, 2010). These provisions provided a new formula for funding to improve the academic achievement of ELLs and brought a new level of accountability focused on that subgroup, but provided new challenges to school districts in states that accepted the funds (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Districts now faced sanctions if ELLs did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) at the school, program and district level (Tanenbaum & Anderson, 2010). NCLB required districts receiving funds from Title III to engage in a school and district reform process that addressed the needs of this traditionally underserved group of students (Tanenbaum & Anderson, 2010). However, the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) process, now written into NCLB, had not specifically designed or considered the needs of ELLs (Coady et al, 2003; Hamann, Zuliani and Hudak, 2004). To add to the challenge for districts addressing ELLs, NCLB required that reform efforts be based on scientifically based research (Hess & Petrilli, 2006).

As the national school reform and accountability contexts changed, the research base in regards to ELLs was also in flux. After the National Reading Panel (NRP; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHHD], 2000) purposefully avoided addressing ELLs in their comprehensive review of reading research, a later panel was convened to address their specific needs. The Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) commissioned The National Literacy Panel for Language-Minority Children and Youth (NLP) in 2003 to examine the research on literacy and ELLs and develop recommendations similar to the NRP but focused particularly on ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). However, the NLP struggled to find sufficient studies meeting the rigorous standards required by IES, which led to inclusion of some qualitative studies (August & Shannahan, 2006). Several researchers challenged the approach of the study based on the research included and the focus on English literacy development, rather than on bilingual literacy or multi-literacy/multicultural perspectives (Cumins, 2009, Escamilla, 2009, Grant, Wong & Osterling, 2007). The IES decided not to publish the findings for the NLP stating that it lacked the scientific evidence required, and the work was published independently (Toppo, 2005). Afterwards, the IES gathered a new panel to develop an evidenced based recommendation for schools to use when determining interventions for ELLs in elementary literacy programs (Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson,Collins & Scarcella, 2007). The required focus under NCLB, spurred additional requirements to utilize "scientifically based researched" programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The U.S. Department of Education IES developed the Doing What Works (DWW) website to help districts and schools implement these evidence based practices (WestEd, n.d.). However, August and

Shanahan (2010) point out that the focus of U.S. Department of Education's research required an approach that focused on English literacy development and additional studies since the publication of the NLP have upheld their findings. In the context of this study, significant research and analysis has been conducted over the past decade which helps better inform what knowledge and skills teachers need when developing English language literacy with ELLs. Although, controversy still remains in regards to the research, overarching themes can be utilized in examining responsiveness of plans to ELLs based on the current available research.

The mandates of NCLB required districts to implement school reform efforts and literacy programs based on research that lacked evidence to demonstrate effectiveness with ELLs (Gersten et al, 2007). Laguardia and Goldman (2007) found a frustration in educators in the Northwest trying to serve the complex needs of ELLs without curricular strategies that are proven to work. The crux of the problem is that districts are mandated to engage in reform efforts and literacy programs that may or may not support quality instruction for ELL. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the responsiveness of a district's plans to improve literacy instruction to meet the needs of ELLs in response to federally required accountability provisions.

<div align="center">Research Gap</div>

Significant research exists on effective school reform, but Mirmontes et al. (1997) and Hamaan et al. (2004) suggest a dichotomy exists between the people developing the plans for reform and those with expertise in addressing the needs of ELLs. Miramontes et al. (1997) determined that frequently the people creating the plans and those with knowledge of ELLs might not necessarily be working together. Furthermore, the

complexity of enacting comprehensive reform in literacy in these newly identified focus schools highlights the challenge of implementing reform efforts for ELLs, based on emerging research on their specific needs. The research suggests that in order to impact literacy instruction it is important for the district to build capacity at the teacher level (O'Day, Goertz, & Floden, 1995).

Theory Overview

Coady et al. (2003) argue that in order for districts and schools to enhance educational outcomes for ELLs, they must engage stakeholders in creating substantive plans that impact at the classroom level. One key role district personnel play in improving educational outcomes is assisting schools to engage in a systemic reform process that builds teacher capacity to meet the complex needs of students (Goertz et al, 1996). Building capacity is a multidimensional process at the teacher and organizational level and incorporates knowledge, skill and views of self (Goertz et al, 1996). Cooter (2003) argues that teachers need high quality professional development to remain on the cutting edge of effectiveness. August and Shanahan (2006) highlight that meeting the literacy needs of ELLs is challenging due to the fact that they are not a monolithic group. Teachers need to adjust instruction based on several factors and the five components suggested by the NRP are not enough to ensure successful literacy development (August & Shanahan, 2006). Research suggests that states and districts create plans and programs to improve student achievement that are not designed to be responsive to ELLs (Hamaan et al, 2004, Miramontes et al, 1997). With emerging research on ELLs specific needs in literacy, it would be informative to examine the concept of responsiveness in the specific light of elementary literacy planning in response to accountability mandates.

Purpose

After years of mandated reform efforts, this study seeks to examine if that dichotomy suggested by Miramontes et al. (1997) continues in an urban district of North Carolina that is required to develop plans for the improvement of literacy instruction for ELLs, based on the current accountability framework. Title III mandates program improvement plans for districts that fail to make certain targets with their ELLs (Tannenbaum & Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, the ESEA flexibility waiver identified focus schools that exceed the achievement gap and required states and districts to intervene (Brown, 2012). These schools are required to undergo specific interventions utilizing turnaround principles to address the achievement gaps of identified subgroups (Brown, 2012). For example in the Adams County School System, the district has a strategic plan, a Title III improvement plan and each of the focus schools has a school improvement plan which is developed to improve the achievement of ELLs. The findings of Miramontes et al. (1997) and Hamann et al. (2005) suggest that strategies selected in these plans may lack evidence to show they would be effective with ELLs. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the responsiveness of a district's plans to improve literacy instruction to meet the needs of ELLs in response to federally required accountability provisions. To that end, this study utilized the tools developed by the IES through the DWW website to examine the responsiveness of plans created in one North Carolina school district.

This study was designed to answer one overarching question: In the case of Adams County School System are the plans designed to improve the literacy achievement of ELLs responsive to their unique needs as determined by the practice guide developed

by Gersten et al. (2007)? In order to answer that question, several additional questions will be examined:

- How are plans designed to improve literacy achievement in the district responsive to the particular needs of ELLs as determined by the IES practice guide developed by Gersten et al. (2007)?

- In what ways do gaps exist that may prevent the plan from meeting the expected outcome?

- How do current achievement results reflect responsiveness for ELLs?

- In what ways do the plans developed demonstrate an alignment in meeting the needs of ELLs?

<div align="center">Significance of Study</div>

The significance of this study lies in the understanding it can provide district, staff, and school planning teams to ensure that the plans created to impact student achievement are designed in a manner that is responsive to the identified target, in this case ELLs. Districts across the state are focused on impacting the performance of ELL, but often struggle to move efforts forward. The findings of this study can offer some insight into the planning and policy that could build capacity at the school level. As accountability systems change and evolve, it is important that educators continue to ensure that the guiding policies are designed with the clear intention to impact the students intended. Furthermore, the study included a descriptive analysis of End of Grade (EOG) reading scores to examine if the district and schools are making progress in closing the achievement gap.

Definition of Key Terms

The following section is designed to elaborate on specific concepts and terms that will be used throughout this study.

Alignment

Alignment refers to how well the different plans reflect similar strategies and are designed to reinforce the efforts at a particular effort. Elmore (2004) argues that in order for reform efforts to work, the district needs to provide a tight instructional focus that schools work within. In this study, alignment will focus on how the different plans support the evidence-based practices identified by Gersten et al. (2007).

Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives

Title III requires each district receiving funds to meet three annual goals with ELLs. First students must demonstrate growth in proficiency on the annual English language proficiency assessment. Second a percentage of students must demonstrate full proficiency in English annually. Third, the ELL subgroup must meet the annual measureable objectives in reading and math as designated by their state on the content assessment (Tanenbaum & Anderson, 2010).

Building Capacity

O'Day et al. (1995) define capacity building as developing teachers' knowledge, skills, dispositions and self-knowledge to effectively impact the learning of the students being served. If schools and/or teachers are not currently meeting the needs of students then they must gain new skill and abilities to change the learning outcomes. Impacting teaching and learning goes beyond simple knowledge of instructional strategies but requires that teachers be able to use the information meaningfully.

Focus School

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI, (2011)] define focus schools as those Title I schools that have had an achievement gap for at least one subgroup greater than the state average for three years. Currently 130 schools have been identified.

Systemic Reform

Systemic reform refers to the collaborative efforts to improve educational practice that has emerged over the past few decades. O'Day et al. (1995) state that systemic reform has three essential components: "(1) the promotion of ambitious student outcomes for all students; (2) alignment of policy approaches and the actions of various policy institutions to promote such outcomes; and (3) restructuring the governance system to support improved achievement" (p.1). Systemic reform becomes a driving force in changing schools at the federal, state and local levels.

Comprehensive School Reform

Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) was a systemic reform initiative designed through federal policy initially in 1998 and then extended into NCLB in 2002. The model employed a vision of whole school change utilizing eleven components. The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) project allowed states to develop models of reform and develop specific plans to impact student achievement. These federally funded projects promoted extensive efforts in systemic reform, which focused significant resources on implementing scientifically based researched programs (Coady et al., 2003).

English Language Learner (ELL)

Currently, in North Carolina, students who enter school and have identified a language other than English as their home language are given the State's initial language screen and may be identified as ELL if they fall below the cut-off score. Students will remain identified as ELL until they meet the comprehensive objective composite (COC) set by the state on the State's English language proficiency test (NCDPI, 2010). This term is generally synonymous with the federal definition of Limited English Proficient (LEP).

District Plans

When referring to district plans, the study includes plans at both the district and school level. At the district level, the term includes the district's strategic plan as well as the Title III Improvement Plan. At the school level, the plans include the required school improvement plan and focus school plan.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to how well the district plans reflect evidence-based practice demonstrated to improve the academic achievement of ELLs. For the purposes of this study, the evidence-based practices are those identified by Gersten et al. (2007) and will be examined using the tool to support implementation on the DWW website.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the responsiveness of a district's plans to improve literacy instruction to meet the needs of ELLs in response to federally required accountability provisions. This chapter will examine second language acquisition, implementation of school reform, literacy instruction, literacy instruction for ELLs, building capacity in teachers, and responsiveness. The chapter is organized by first reviewing the theoretical framework used to conduct the study and then discussion of the key themes from the literature. The chapter will begin with reviewing second language acquisition. Then focus on the historical impetus of school reform in the United States and how that has transformed into a mandate for schools, districts and language instruction education programs, particularly through the implementation of the latest reauthorization of the ESEA. From there, it will examine the research on literacy instruction for elementary students in general and then in particular the emerging research towards ELLs. Then it will focus on how districts and schools build capacity in teachers to improve instruction, particularly in literacy programs. The discussion will end with examining the concept of responsiveness.

Theoretical Framework

This study was a case study of how one district in North Carolina is addressing the accountability requirements of ESEA in regards to ELLs. The framework for this study assumed that school reform efforts designed from scientifically research-based

practices can improve the academic achievement of students. The design examined the documents without questioning the validity of the construct, but accepting it. States, districts and schools accepting funding must work from within this construct. ESEA requires districts to engage in school reform efforts if specific targets are not met and these efforts must be based on scientifically based research (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). Implementing researched based practices for ELLs should not be simply based on what works for all students, but should utilize research that is specifically designed to measure the impact on that specific population (Coady et al., 2003). In order to examine how district and school improvement efforts support ELLs it is important to understand their particular needs. The DWW website templates for addressing K-5 literacy needs of ELLs, provides a framework that each level of actor in school reform has particular responsibilities (USDOE, n.d.). Although many of the responsibilities align, they have particular roles at each level. For example, states must hold districts accountable for ELL achievement, while districts ensure both district and school accountability. Schools must hold teachers accountable. This framework for improvement also recommends that technical assistance is required at each level to ensure coherent cooperative plans (USDOE, n.d.).

Second Language Acquisition

Krashen (1982) proposed five hypotheses to explain the phenomenon of second language acquisition. The first theory, acquisition vs. learning, highlights that language is acquired through use rather than consciously taught as an object. Krashen's (1982) key idea is that similar to a child's first language, learning a second language is subconscious and happens through meaningful use of the target language. Krashen's (1982) second

theory was the natural order hypothesis which suggests that the second language is acquired through a developmental progression. The third theory, the monitor hypothesis, suggested that second language learners developed a process to evaluate production of the target language in order to ensure correct production, which if too finely tuned in development could limit use of the language (Krashen, 1982). Conversely, too, limited use of the monitor could lead to communication errors or misunderstandings. The input hypothesis argues that students need input in the target language that is comprehensible to them (Krashen, 1982). In order to increase acquisition teachers need to present information just beyond the student's current level of understanding. Krashen refers to this as $i + 1$. The remaining hypothesis is the affective filter hypothesis, which suggests that student's level of socio-emotional comfort impacts the ability to acquire and produce the target language (Krashen, 1982).

Seville-Troike (2012) recommends caution in utilizing Krashen's theories of second language acquisition. Seville-Troike (2012) argues that Krashen's theories are vague and imprecise. VanPatten and Benati (2010) state that Krashen's monitor theory fell out of favor during the 1980s and as part of that theory the input hypothesis is no longer included in current research related to second language acquisition. Seville-Troike (2012) does recognize that Krashen's work was influential during the 1980s and 1990s, despite the criticism. Although, Krahen's theories are greatly criticized in second language acquisition research, professional development models such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) continue to include key theories, such as comprehensible input, when training teachers (Echevarria et al., 2013).

In addition to Krashen's main theories, Cummins (2000) distinguishes the difference between basic interpersonal communications skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS represents the primarily social and conversational language while CALP is the deep academic language and skills needed to be successful in school (Cummins, 2000). While, students may appear to have mastered a language when they have learned social language, typically much more time is needed to develop academic language. Cummins (1981) also argues that although surface features of a language may seem different, a common underlying proficiency may exist between students' native language and their second language. By increasing students' knowledge and skills in their native language, the efficiency in learning a second language improves as many of the knowledge and skills transfer to the target language.

<div align="center">Language Instruction Educational Program Models</div>

Cummins (1981) argues that bilingual programs are best suited for fully developing students' cognitive and linguistic abilities. Similarly, Collier and Thomas (2009) argue that dual language programs offer the best opportunity for ELLs to reach parity in school with their native English-speaking peers. In order to acquire language for school, Collier and Thomas (2009) propose four key processes are required to promote language acquisition that include academic, sociocultural, linguistic and cognitive processes. Districts have multiple options in choosing models and programs to address the instructional needs of ELLs, but must consider that they have varied outcomes, based on the processes they address (Collier & Thomas, 2009). Thomas and Collier (1997, 2002) found that the type of language development program impacted students' English language acquisition and their ability to close the achievement gap

significantly. Students in pullout ESL classes remained significantly behind their peers

performing at the 11th percentile in their 11th grade year (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Students who attended content based ESL or sheltered instruction performed better at the

22nd percentile comparable to students in transitional bilingual education at the 24th

percentile (Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002). Students in dual language programs closed

the achievement gap achieving at or above the 50th percentile (Thomas & Collier, 1997,

2007). In researching dual language programs in North Carolina, Thomas and Collier

(2012) determined students in established dual language programs were performing a

grade ahead of students who were not by the end of elementary school.

<p align="center">School Reform</p>

In describing the past 50 years of school improvement, Jennings (2012) portrays

three main approaches to school reform. The first approach is equity-based reform. In

the 1960s and 1970s, policy makers focused on improving outcomes for specific groups

of students through legislative action and specific funding to ensure students had the

equality of opportunity (Jennings, 2012). Due to the fact that states and local districts

were unwilling to ensure all students had equal opportunities to learn, the federal

government stepped in with laws and funding to ensure all students had equal access

(Jennings, 2012). According to Jennings (2012), these actions included The Civil Rights

Act of 1964, ESEA of 1965, Title IX of the education amendments of 1972, and IDEA of

1975.

Jennings (2012) describes the second approach to reform as the school choice

efforts that began in the early 1990s and continue through today. These efforts include

publicly funded vouchers for private school tuition, public charter schools and choice of

public schools. The underlying belief is to provide all parents the opportunity to select which school their child attends. Competition and market forces will have parents select the best schools for their children (Jennings, 2012). Based on market principles, schools that perform well will attract students, while schools that do not perform will not.

The third approach Jennings (2012) describes is standards based reform. The underlying premise of this approach is to identify what students are to know and be able to do at each grade level and measure their ability to meet the grade-level standard (citation). The approach evolved to include accountability provisions that contributed to the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA. The accountability provisions in NCLB provided sanctions to schools and districts that did not meet specific state defined goals for all students or for any one of up to ten subgroups (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Despite the different approaches and the 50 years of effort, Jennings (2012) states that efforts to improve schools have failed, primarily because they have failed to impact what happens in the classroom.

Similarly, Elmore (2004) states "efforts to influence basic patterns of instructional practice in American schools on a large scale have never been sustained or deep enough to have an impact beyond the relatively small proportion of schools that are willing adopters of innovations" (p. 7). Elmore (2004) goes on to describe that in order for improvement efforts to impact schools in an appropriate manner, each level of leadership needs to function at its core role, which provides a comparative advantage and leverages improvement efforts.

Similarly, Schlechty (2001) highlights the challenge of school reform, noting that each level not only has a role, but must also maintain the correct perspective on their role.

For example, the superintendent and central office should consider themselves the moral and ethical leaders of the system. Principals are leaders of leaders. All within the system must focus on the important core work of the schools, the work the students are doing. Each level has a role and must understand their potential contribution in order to focus and leverage change.

From the public policy perspective, Goertz, Floden and O'Day (1996) suggest the impetus for systemic reform efforts in the United States comes from the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). In response, states and districts led top-down reform efforts in the late 1980s to improve standards and graduation requirements. These efforts were followed by bottom-up reforms to improve professionalism and restructuring schools. Neither of these approaches changed practice in the classroom (Goertz et al., 1996). Goertz et al. (1996) blame the failure of these approaches on the complexity of school reform and argue that a systemic approach is needed. The systemic approach involves state, district and school partners addressing policy change as well as building capacity within the schools to change instructional practice.

School Reform Efforts and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Miramontes, Nadeau and Commins (2011) describe key underlying assumptions needed for school planning efforts for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Often instructional reform efforts focus on the whole school population, without specific consideration or understanding of the needs of ELLs. Furthermore, school planning teams must consider that ELLs vary based on educational background, age of entry into school, linguistic background and multiple other factors. It is crucial for school

improvement teams to understand the impacts when considering the programming and placement of ELLs. Universal approaches to school reforms, that do not take linguistically different students' needs into consideration, lack the research base to improve the outcomes for ELLs (Miramontes et al., 2011). Miramontes et al. (2011) identify ten organizing principles for schools to incorporate into the planning efforts that would support effective programs for linguistically diverse students. The first organizing principle is that students must be actively engaged in their learning (Miramontes et al., 2011). The second principle encourages primary language development (Miramontes et al., 2011). The third advocates for learning through two languages and the fourth requires consideration of second language development in instructional decision making (Miramontes et al., 2011). The fifth principle promotes rigorous content standards that are differentiated based on students English proficiency levels (Miramontes et al., 2011). The sixth principle encourages assessment in both languages to inform instruction (Miramontes et al., 2011). The seventh principle recommends that sociocultural and political consideration be weighed in planning programs, and the eighth principle encourages parent and community involvement in the school (Miramontes et al., 2011). The ninth principle promotes intercultural competence so that students understand and respect their own culture and those of others (Miramontes et al., 2011). The final principle recommends a schoolwide decision making process for all areas of the program (Miramontes et al., 2011).

Hamann, Zuliani and Hudak (2004) examined CSR efforts in seven states. Although most of the schools served by the CSR program had a high representation of ELLs, the researcher found little evidence of modifying school reform efforts to meet the

needs of linguistically diverse students. Hamann et al. (2004) examined state education

agency (SEA) applications for CSR and found that although the plans were required to be

based on research few addressed ELLs. SEAs selected over-arching strategies to address

all students that they assumed would also positively impact ELLs without research to

support it. In response to the lack of adjusting efforts for ELLs, Hamann et al. (2004)

report that additional resources are being developed within their research group. Coady,

et al. (2003) synthesized findings on ELL responsiveness to CSR.

Coady et al (2003) developed a handbook for improving CSR efforts for ELLs.

They synthesized from leading research nine principles for building responsive learning

environments for ELLs (Coady et al., 2003). The nine principals include conditions in

which ELLs are most successful. First, all school staff share in the responsibility of

educating ELLs. Second, educators recognize the differences in ELLs and can adjust

their efforts to meet the needs. Third, students' language and culture are viewed as an

asset for learning. Fourth, strong connections exist between schools, home and

community resources. Fifth, equitable access exists for ELLs in the entire school

program. Sixth, despite proficiency levels or previous schooling, teachers have high

expectations for ELLs. Seventh, teachers have the professional development and training

to effectively work with ELLs. Eighth, teachers incorporate language and literacy skills

throughout curriculum and instruction. Finally, assessment is meaningful for ELLs and

incorporates progress towards achievement, preferably in the native language as well as

English. Furthermore, they developed tools to assist schools in meeting the needs of

ELLs through CSR. These include tools for planning, self-assessment, and resource

alignment.

A common theme among researchers on school reform and ELLs is that school reform is complex (Elmore, 2004). In order for schools to truly impact learning in the classroom, leaders at all levels must have the requisite knowledge and skills to build capacity to change instructional practice within in the school. To leverage capacity for reform, leaders at the district, school and classroom level must bring requisite skill and knowledge to practice (Elmore, 2004). If that capacity does not exist, then it is imperative that leaders engage in improvement processes and professional development to increase skill and knowledge within the classroom.

<p align="center">Scientifically Based Reading Programs</p>

In order to examine the responsiveness of literacy efforts for ELLs in reform efforts, it is important to begin a review of the findings of the NRP and then look to the findings of the NLP. This allows for comparison of findings for all students and then allows for analysis of the particular findings that ELLs may need unique consideration. Furthermore, a district or school could select programs or interventions that meet the definition of scientifically based research for all students, but may not be as effective to a particular subgroup.

The NRP was charged by the United States Congress to identify the effectiveness of different instructional practices in reading (National Institute of Health and Child Development [NIHCD], 2000). The NRP conducted a meta-analysis of reading research. The NRP developed an objective screening procedure to ensure that all research findings included met a scientifically rigorous standard. The NRP only included research that utilized experimental or quasi-experimental designs comparable to the designs utilized in psychological or medical studies.

Critics of the NRP argue that the process of selecting and describing the studies excluded valuable studies that lead to incorrect findings (Krashen, 2001). In particular, Krashen (2001) argued that in reviewing research on fluency, the process developed by the NRP led to an incorrect conclusion that sustained silent reading has no statistically valid impact on literacy development. Coles (2000) concurs that the very research designs that make these studies appear to be scientific actually distort what they intend to measure. Furthermore, he concludes that the deficits in the research are problematic as policy makers and practitioners are accepting this science without challenge and developing and implementing reading programs while treating the findings as conclusive (Coles, 2000). Additionally, the minority view of the NRP stated that a potential existed to misuse the results in policy decisions and that practices not examined may be construed as ineffective (NICHD, 2000)

NICHD convened the NRP that identified five components of reading instruction that met the criteria established (NICHD, 2000). These components included phonemic awareness (PA) instruction, phonics instruction, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension strategy instruction. It also found that not enough evidence existed to determine the impact of increased independent reading as an instructional strategy to improve students' fluency, vocabulary or comprehension (NICHD, 2000).

The NRP selected phonemic awareness due to the strong correlational research that predicts students who are strong in these skills upon entering school will learn to read well in the first two years of instruction (NICHD, 2000). The NRP's analysis found that direct systematic instruction in phonemic awareness improved students' ability to read. The NRP found that the amount of research and design of the studies were strong

enough and with significant evidence to suggest causality. They supported the notion that instruction in phonemic awareness improved students' ability to read and understand in later years. This is an area of disagreement. Detractors of the NRP argue that they overstepped and misrepresented the studies (Allington, 2005). The explanation that causal inference can be made based on the amount of data based on correlations is challenged. Additionally, the studies that demonstrated success for instruction in phonemic awareness were based on completion of tasks that required reading isolated words and nonsense words and not the larger aspect of reading for meaning (Krashen, 2004).

The NRP also found that phonics instruction had a significant impact when compared to reading programs that did not include phonics instruction (NICHD, 2000). Furthermore, systematic phonics instruction was more beneficial than programs where phonics instruction was not systematic. Systematic phonics refers to programs that have a set sequence of phonemes to ensure that all of them are taught. Additionally, students typically used decodable books with controlled vocabulary to have opportunities to practice the phonemes being taught. The majority of the research studies relied on measures of single word reading or pseudo word reading.

The use of measures of single word reading to determine effectiveness of phonics instruction remains deeply criticized (Camilli, Vargas & Yurecko, 2003). Researchers contend that the construct is deeply flawed as no one has yet to show that performance on single word reading measures can be linked to better reading comprehension in real reading tasks. Additionally, Camilli et al. (2003) provided a reanalysis of the studies used and found a less robust result for systematic phonics instruction when compared to

programs that used a less systematic approach. They argued that the NRP confused the findings by linking the findings on phonics instruction and systematic phonics instruction as compared to programs without phonics instruction. Additional critiques of the NRP's work (Garan, 2005), included the lack of clear definitions in the research studies examined and that the NRP generalized the work to all students when many of the studies were not representative of different groups of children.

The NRP found no studies that met the established criteria on measuring vocabulary (NICHD, 2000). They also found that vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly. Pre-teaching vocabulary for key concepts improves retention and that multiple exposure to words and repeated reading also improves comprehension. The NRP (NICHD, 2000) did not identify one method of instruction that was particularly beneficial, but suggested that multiple varied instructional methods would support vocabulary development in different contexts.

Detractors of the NRP's findings on vocabulary mostly focus on the exclusion of providing independent reading time to enhance vocabulary and improve reading comprehension (Krashen, 2004). The NRP simply did not find enough evidence to make a recommendation either way. However, detractors argue that in implementing the findings of the NRP, decision makers are using the lack of a finding to recommend the exclusion of independent reading from the school day (Krashen, 2004). *Put Reading First* (Ambruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2003), a publication purportedly providing a summary of the findings, which is freely distributed by the USDOE, states "The research suggests that there are more beneficial ways to spend reading instructional time than to have students read independently in the classroom without reading instruction" (p. 22).

Cummins (2003) argues that only through reading are students exposed to many of the Greco-Latin words that underpin our academic vocabulary. It is only through wide opportunities to read that students expand their vocabulary.

A fourth key component of instruction according to the NRP is fluency instruction. The NRP defined fluency as "the ability to read a text quickly, accurately and with proper expression" (NICHD, 2003 p.3-5). The NRP found that guided oral reading and repeated reading improved students' fluency and comprehension. Further, that programs designed to increase student independent reading do not have adequate evidence to demonstrate an impact on fluency or reading.

The fifth key practice identified by the NRP was comprehension strategy instruction. The Panel found that teaching students cognitive strategies improves their ability to comprehend and understand text. Furthermore, students need multiple strategies to weave together as they attempt to understand text. Teachers through modeling and guiding students to independence can assist students in learning and using comprehension strategies. The challenge is that teaching comprehension strategies is difficult in that it must be implemented in real reading tasks and requires a careful understanding of when each child needs to learn a specific strategy (NICHD, 2000). Not only have the findings of the NRP impacted ESEA (Hess & Petrilli, 2006), but other legislation as well. In 2004, the reauthorization of IDEA, followed suit and required schools and districts to demonstrate that students were receiving reading instruction based on scientific research prior to determining whether or not a student had a disability (USDOE, 2010b). The pressure to impact reading instruction did not simply stop there. The USDOE transformed the research department into the IES and developed a standard

for scientifically based research within the department and guides for consumers of such

research to follow. These definitions remained limited to experimental and quasi-

experimental research designs (USDOE, 2003). Furthermore, the USDOE (2005)

analyzed reading standards in 20 states, to determine how well the standards aligned with

the findings of the NRP. The Department of Education found in the analysis that most

state standards in the sample had adequately addressed comprehension and phonics, but

the majority had not effectively covered phonemic awareness, vocabulary and fluency.

Venable (2006) argues that the findings of the NRP through policy and law have become

the defacto national reading curriculum. Shanahan (2012) argues that one myth of the

Common Core State Standards is that they do not incorporate the findings of the NRP,

but he points out they are clearly reflected in the reading foundations portion. North

Carolina adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010, to be implemented in

the 2012-2013 school year (NCDPI, 2010).

Cummins (2003) argues that although there are differences among researchers,

there is also great consensus on what needs to be included in literacy instruction. He

believes that most educators would support the importance of a rich literate environment,

the development of phonemic awareness, phonics and concepts of print, as well as access

and opportunity to interact with quality literature (Cummins, 2003). Cummins (2003)

stipulates that the biggest area of contention is whether you focus on decoding and

foundation skills and use decodable books, or focus on meaning and interest.

Literacy Instruction for ELLs

In order to better understand the needs of ELLs, the IES initiated the NLP on

Language-Minority Children and Youth (August & Shanahan, 2006). The NLP was to

conduct a meta-analysis of the research on literacy and language minority youth using a similar standard and research design as the NRP (August & Shanahan, 2006). The NLP consisted of experts who served on the original NRP as well as other recognized experts on ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). As expected, the NLP found that the five key elements from the NRP were important to ELLs, but that they needed to be adjusted and other important areas addressed as well (August, D &Shanahan, 2006). The NLP also found that the strongest method of teaching ELLs literacy was through bilingual reading instruction. Furthermore, ELLs did not make the same gains in reading as the native-language peers when simply provided the same instruction in the five key elements of the NRP (August &Shanahan, 2006). These findings were controversial and even after several external reviews the IES choose not to publish them, citing a lack of rigorous research to support the claims (Toppo, 2005). However, members of the NLP, including some who served on the NRP stated that the administration at the time did not like the findings and prevented the publication through federal government resources (Toppo, 2005). Additionally, the IES sanctioned an additional group to develop the first ever practice brief that addressed literacy instruction for elementary ELLs (Gersten et al. 2007). IES practice briefs are designed to provide evidenced based recommendations to support effective intervention (Gersten et al., 2007). The practice brief provides implementation check lists and best practice suggestions to assist in fidelity of implementation (Gersten et al., 2007). Since publication of the brief, the USDOE continued support for the findings through development of resources and tools on the DWW website (www.dww.ed.gov). The DWW website was designed to assist districts and schools in implementing evidenced based research (WestEd, 2012).

Both the IES practitioner brief and the NLP found that ELLs needed adjustments to their instruction. The NLP stated that ELLs did not progress at the same rate when provided the same instruction as their peers (Shanahan & Beck, 2006). However the IES did not directly address this level of instruction, rather the design of the brief as outlined by the authors, was to provide interventions for ELLs as if it were similar to a medical condition (Gersten et al. 2007). The NLP contradicts this assumption by clearly stating that the same instruction as native speaking peers is not sufficient to ensure similar progress (Shanahan & Beck, 2006). The NLP noted differences in ELL's ability to acquire word level skills versus text level skills (Lesaux, Geva, Koda, Siegel and Shanahan, 2006). They identified that ELLs could learn word level skills, such as phonemic awareness or phonics while still developing proficiency in English and did not need to wait for this instruction. ELLs may need adjusted instruction, such as adjusting for sounds that may not be in the students' native language or ensuring students work on words that are part of their oral language vocabulary. Snow (2007) discusses the need to adjust instruction to the students' knowledge base that varies based on native language, culture and literacy ability.

The IES practice guide correlates to these findings in that it recommends that schools frequently assess these word level skills and intervene in small groups in order to address students' needs (Gersten et al, 2007). Furthermore, they recommend at least 90 minutes a week of peer assisted learning opportunities. Clearly this provides opportunities for students to develop oral language skills directly related to their reading as well as opportunities to practice new vocabulary.

Enhanced Instruction Beyond the NRP Findings

August and Shanahan (2006) and Gersten et al. (2007) identified opportunities to enhance instruction for ELLs, beyond the recommendations of the NRP. As an example, whereas the NRP (NICHD, 2000) recommended vocabulary instruction, the NLP (August & Shanahan, 2006) and Gersten et al.(2007) found specific ways in which vocabulary instruction could be enhanced for ELLs, Recommendations in other areas highlight some of the similarities in the findings.

Both the NLP and the IES practice brief recommend varied opportunities for students to learn vocabulary on a sustained basis (Gersten et al, 2007; Shanahan & Beck, 2006). Students benefitted from multiple strategies and methods for learning vocabulary. ELLs needed opportunities to develop vocabulary of common words and expression that they were not familiar (Gersten et al, 2007). This finding differs from the NRP which suggests that vocabulary instruction need not focus on words that students can figure out the meaning. Calderone (2007) used Beck et al.'s (2002) tiered vocabulary to demonstrate that ELLs need vocabulary in all three tiers, rather than the just Tier II and III words recommended in typical instruction for non-ELLs. Tier I words are words in everyday speech, while Tier II words are academic utility words that aid conceptual understanding such as cause and effect or comparison (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002). According to Beck et al. (2002) Tier III words are highly specific academic content words that are infrequently used except in contextual situations. Both the NLP and the Practice Guide called for explicit teaching of vocabulary directly tied to reading instruction (Gersten et al. 2007; Shanahan & Beck, 2006). Gersten et al. (2007) recommend that this instruction be more thorough and explicit than that in a typical

classroom. Gersten et al. also supported Calderone's (2007) notion that ELLs need direct instruction in words that are frequently used in English and often not used in oral language. Calderone (2007) recommends a seven-step process to expedite vocabulary instruction and make it more systematic and structured while providing various engaging activities for students to produce the language that will be utilized in reading.

The NLP suggests that oral language development in regards to reading is crucial and often overlooked in literacy instruction (Geva & Genessee. 2006). Again the 90 minutes per week of peer assisted instruction recommended by Gersten et al. (2007) also speaks to the impact of oral language development. The NLP identified comprehension as an area of concern for ELLs (Snow, 2008). Instruction in comprehension did not make similar gains compared to their native language peers. Qualitative studies suggested that a more complex approach of teaching multiple strategies in connection with each other were promising in improving literacy instruction for ELLs (Snow, 2008). However, no quantitative studies have examined and confirmed these findings (August & Shanahan, (2006).

<center>Professional Development to Build Capacity</center>

One key principle Coady et al. (2003) identified as important in building an ELL responsive environment is that teachers are prepared and willing to teach ELLs. Miramontes et al. (2011) argue that capacity building in the school includes shared decision making that promotes investment and buy in from professionals. This promotes capacity building as the total school becomes involved in meeting the needs of all students. All teachers engage in processes which help determine allocation of resources and determining approaches to meeting the needs of ELLS. Capacity building is crucial

in changing teacher's ability and opportunity to improve learning outcomes for all students, particularly ELLs (Miramontes et al., 2011).

O'Day, Goertz and Floden (1995) identified four dimensions of capacity that need to be addressed, which include knowledge, skills, dispositions and views of self. Knowledge focuses on understanding of content, curriculum, subject, pedagogy and students in order to assist students in learning. Skills refer to teachers' understanding of how they should teach. Dispositions are teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward the subject matter, students, and expectations for students. Views of self, address teacher beliefs about their role in the classroom and their self-perceptions as a learner. During periods of reform efforts each of these dimensions plays an important role and can be a source of dissonance (O'Day et al., 1995).

Johnson (2012) argues that as schools implement reform efforts, the focus must not be solely on the building capacity of individual teachers. Rather, capacity must be built in the context of the school as a whole as well. O'Day et al. (1995) acknowledge that building teacher capacity does not happen in a vacuum, but impacts the organizational capacity as well. Reform efforts potentially impact school vision, leadership, cultural norms, allocation of resources, and shared knowledge (O'Day et al, 1995). It is precisely this level of change that creates the potential to impact learning of ELLS. Working through the challenging process of reform creates the opportunity to refocus efforts on truly meeting the needs of all students, including the specific needs of ELLs (Miramontes et al., 2011).

Cooter (2003) outlines a process of building teacher capacity. The process involves deep training plus coaching. Simple professional development in which

teachers attend training and then implement a practice is unrealistic. Rather, the process allows for multiple opportunities for interaction with content and significant opportunities for coaching in the new practice. This supports teachers in not just learning new ideas, but actually provides them opportunities to practice with meaningful feedback (Cooter, 2003).

Building capacity in teachers becomes the lynch pin in changing practice for ELLs (Coady et al, 2003). Failure to directly consider that the knowledge, skills and dispositions teachers need to impact ELLs may be different from those considered effective for the general population may create a missed opportunity to address their needs. Furthermore, failure to consider the specific needs of individuals or the context of groups of culturally and linguistically different students, may lead schools to adopt programs or strategies with little evidence to impact the intended target.

In summary, building capacity in teachers to meet the needs of ELLs is complex work which requires attention at multiple levels. It is important to consider that although building capacity happens at the individual teacher level, it should be looked at in the context of the whole school. District and school personnel planning efforts must carefully consider the dimensions involved and the process needed to support the efforts.

Teacher Education and Professional Development for Serving ELLs in NC

The NLP also addressed teacher education and professional development in regards to ELLs and literacy. August and Calderone (2006) conducted an analysis of studies in relation to teacher beliefs and professional development and found that such efforts need to focus on three outcomes: "change in teachers' classroom practices, change in their beliefs and attitudes and change in the students' learning outcomes" (Guskey,

1986, p.7). They found that changing teacher practice in regards to ELLs was time consuming, demanding and required significant commitment from teachers and change agents (August & Calderone, 2006).

Casteel and Ballantyne (2010) examined state standards for initial teacher licensure and found that North Carolina references ELLs as an example of diversity, but has no specific licensure requirements for teachers. They concluded that most teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of ELLs (Casteel & Ballantyne, 2010). The status in North Carolina does not appear to be much different. The results of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (2012) indicate that only 17% of teachers have had ten or more hours of professional development in relation to ELLs within the past two years. Yet in the same survey 47% of teachers indicated a need for professional development to effectively address the needs of ELLs (TWC, 2012). Similar results were found on the 2010 biennial survey with 50% of teachers identifying a need for additional professional development and only 20% indicating ten or more hours within the past two years.

<div align="center">Responsiveness</div>

In considering whether district and school plans are responsive to ELLs, two different ideas of responsiveness may be relevant to this study. One concept of responsiveness is demonstrated by Hamann et al. (2004) who defined state CSR plans as responsive if they referenced ELLs and included practices supported by research to promote their success. The other concept, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, includes a broader set of beliefs, dispositions, and instructional practices that teachers use to assist students from non-dominant cultures connect to instruction from

their own experience (Au, 2009). Although responsiveness may be defined differently, the two concepts are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Hamann et al. (2004) simply stated that for their plans to be responsive, the practices needed to be research based. Hess and Petrilli (2003) highlight the change under ESEA that programs implemented through these funds needed to be evidence based, which is defined as supported with scientifically based research. Gersten et al. (2007) developed their recommendations for ELLs based on the requirements of the IES and their recommendations met the criteria set by the What Works Clearinghouse, which meets this rigorous definition. Furthermore, each recommendation was rated based the quality and quantity of the evidence to support it. The tools designed by the DWW website were based on Gersten et al.'s recommendations (USDOE, n.d.). Responsiveness in this context could be narrowly defined to the recommendations of Gersten et al.'s (2007) findings.

Coady et al. (2003) use a broader approach in responsive planning for ELLs. They recommend selecting strategies or designs that were implemented with ELLs and are supported with evidence (Coady et al., 2003). These reform models should consider bilingualism as an asset and explicitly address cultural and linguistic differences (Coady et al., 2003). This definition aligns closely with the concepts of culturally responsive instruction.

Villegas and Lucas (2007) describe qualities of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers approach learners from a constructivist approach in which students learn by connecting what they know to what they need to know (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Teachers demonstrate sociocultural consciousness by understanding how each

individual's world view is unique and created from their personal experience (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Furthermore, Villegas and Lucas (2007) recommend teachers have a deep understanding of their students' lives, family background and interests. In addition, teachers affirm students' diverse backgrounds and hold high expectations for all students (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Teachers use appropriate instructional strategies to connect to students' prior experience and advocate for all students. Villegas and Lucas (2007) suggest that approaching students in this manner is culturally and linguistically responsive, rather than a deficit model.

Au (2009) states the goal of culturally responsive teaching is to improve academic success of culturally and linguistically diverse student by building from their current strengths and interests when approaching new learning. Au (2009) recommends teachers contrast different world views to better understand how the dominant culture may differ from diverse perspectives (Au, 2009). For example, Au (2009) highlights how many mainstream classrooms embrace competition, whereas some diverse cultures prefer collaboration. Current instructional practices support a competitive atmosphere, but providing different opportunities for interaction and clarifying the expectations can support students from diverse backgrounds be more successful in demonstrating the learning (Au, 2009).

Brown and Doolittle (2008) highlight the necessity for culturally responsive teaching for ELLs during their core reading instruction. Teachers need to understand the student's language proficiency in both English and the native language and use culturally relevant curriculum (Brown & Doolittle, 2008). Brown and Doolittle (2008) recommend that if an ELL is struggling with learning to read, that the first step is examine the

instructional program to determine if it is appropriate for the learner considering

specifically the background, linguistic knowledge and language proficiency.

Both responsiveness based on scientific research and cultural responsiveness tend to

impact the academic achievement of ELLs. Cultural responsiveness approaches this

through attempting to build connections to students' personal experiences, while

responsiveness based on scientific research attempts to ensure that selected instructional

models have shown to be effective on the intended target audience. These approaches do

not need to be mutually exclusive as culturally responsive approach could demonstrate a

sufficient evidence to suggest responsiveness through scientifically based research.

Summary

School reform is a complex process that incorporates many inputs, processes and

people from the district through to the school and teacher level. As Elmore (2004) states,

in order to leverage comparative advantage the key players must be in the right place

with appropriate knowledge. Complicating matters for ELLs, Miramontes et al. (2011)

recognize the dichotomy that often reform efforts designed to meet the needs of *all*

students fail to consider the specific needs of students, such as ELLs. In order for reform

efforts to realize meaningful impact in the classroom, the focus must be on building

capacity of teachers individually and as a whole specifically in the context of their

school. The research on literacy reform and ELLs clearly indicates that programs

designed for *all* students may provide some assistance for ELLs. However, greater

opportunities exist to leverage their learning. In order to build capacity of teachers with

ELLs, additional knowledge, skills and dispositions are crucial. Furthermore, the

structure and support of the professional learning become crucial to success. It becomes

important to examine successful efforts at reform within their specific contexts to find

opportunities for other schools and districts to identify potential paths to improve learning

for ELLs. Thus, there is a need for this study to identify potential practices that are

responsive to the needs of ELLs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with the rationale used for selecting a case study as the methodology and then provides an overview of the study design. The next section describes the selection criteria and provides a description of the district identified. After that, the data collection methods are discussed, including instrumentation, data collection, the role of the researcher and the data analysis.

Research Methodology

This study was a descriptive single bound case study of reform focused on ELLs within one school system. Glesne (2006) stated that a case study is a selection of what is studied. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) identified three criteria that suggest a case study is appropriate. First, the study focuses on one group, organization or phenomenon, second the event is bounded by space and time within a natural context, and finally the sources of information should be deep and varied. This case study examined a bound system of a school district, an organization enacting the required reform efforts. The analysis was done within the natural context of planning mandated by federal and state statutes. Documents at the school and district level provided the depth and variety to support case study methodology. This case study utilized a document review to examine district and school improvement documents that would indicate the responsiveness of school and district improvement planning in meeting the needs of ELLs.

Shore and Wright (1997) recommend an anthropology of policy to examine how policy is used to influence governance. In this light, Hamaan et al (2004) examined CSR project applications for responsiveness to the needs of ELLs. This study was designed in a similar manner with a focus on examining district, program, and school improvement plans for evidence of responsiveness to ELLs literacy needs.

The purpose of this study was to examine the responsiveness of a district's plans to improve literacy instruction to meet the needs of ELLs in response to federally required accountability provisions. The district and schools were at that time identified through legislation and state programming requirements to implement a plan to improve the outcomes of ELLs. This analysis utilized planning templates (Appendix A) from the USDOE's (n.d.) DWW website intended to assist districts implementing the recommendations of Gersten et al (2007). These planning documents were developed to help technical service providers assist states, districts and schools implement the practices (USDOE, .n.d.). The templates were used to review each plan and determine which elements were addressed, which potential areas were in need of development and which did not seem feasible. The analysis provided a common lens to examine each plan for its responsiveness to ELLs with particular emphasis on literacy programs. This lens was informative as these products were developed under the auspices of the IES and promoted for systems to utilize when implementing the types of reforms encouraged by the accountability systems.

In conducting a document review, Clark (1967) identifies crucial questions to address when considering appropriate documents to analyze. Clark's (1967) suggests that researchers first examine the location, history and acquisition of the documents used

in the study to ensure authenticity. The documents in this study were created by district

and school improvement teams in order to focus the improvement efforts or as required

by ESEA (2001). All of the documents are public domain. The district strategic plan and

school improvement plans were downloaded from the district's website. The Title I

focus school plans were accessible through the North Carolina Comprehensive

Continuous Improvement Plan (NCCCIP). NCCCIP is an online planning tool used by

the North Carolina Department of Instruction for Title I related planning requirements.

The Title III plan was obtained from district personnel as a request for public

information. Clark's next set of questions considers the timeliness, appropriateness,

integrity and potential for alteration of the documents. All of the plans were downloaded

from the district and school websites between January and March 2014. They were the

current plans in place for the 2013-2014 school year. The documents were posted based

on state requirements and open meetings regulations. Furthermore, the documents were

what state and federal monitors held the district and schools responsible for

implementing. Thus, it was in the best interest of the school and district to provide

authentic access to the plans. Clark's (1967) final set of questions refer to the intentions

behind the creation of the document, the sources used to develop it and checking

additional sources to support the information within the document. With the exception of

the district's strategic plan, all of the plans were required by either state or federal statute.

Part of the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among the separate

plans to look for alignment or congruence.

Study Design

The study was conducted in three phases. The first phase of the study collected the requisite plans of the identified school system. Districts and schools within North Carolina may use different planning formats to meet federal or state requirements. The first plan that was searched for from the district is a system-wide strategic plan or district improvement plan. This would be a planning document typically developed by the system to address identified issues with measureable goals and utilized to drive overarching efforts system-wide. The second district plan that was gathered and analyzed was the required district Title III improvement plan that had to be submitted to NCDPI. Then school improvement plans from the focus schools were collected. Finally, focus schools were to identify interventions to address the achievement gaps within the school. These may be part of the school improvement plan or a separate plan. These plans, if separate from the school improvement plan, were also collected.

The plans were public documents and required no special permission to obtain. The researcher conducted a search to determine if the plans were available and most of the plans were available online. A request was made to collect any plans that were not available online at the time. The Eastmill plan was not available online, but after an email request for the plan from the principal it was posted online. The ESL Director responded to a request and emailed the district Title III Improvement plan, which was not available online. The initial plan was to review the Title III Improvement Plan that was written in response to not meeting AMAOs, but that plan was limited in scope as it only reflected changes to the overall Title III plan based on receiving AMAO data in 2011-2012. Those changes would be reflected in the current Title III plan, which would

include all efforts to meet the needs of ELLs. An additional request was made for the full

Title III plan, a public document, and that was used for the overall analysis.

The second phase of the study was the analysis of the plans. The analysis of the

plans had three parts. The first was to examine whether the plans were designed to be

responsive to ELLs particular literacy needs. In order to conduct this analysis the

researcher examined the plans utilizing templates from the DWW website. The analysis

required using two different templates. The first template focused on district plans

utilizing a district tool and the second focused at school level plans with a school version.

The researcher examined each plan and rated it based on the areas of responsibility

identified on the template. The second part of the analysis was to collate the results to

look for trends and potential alignment across the district level plans and then across the

school level plans. The analysis looked for trends in the plans across levels to determine

if the plans and strategies identified by the district were reflected in the school level

plans. Furthermore, this analysis looked for potential gaps, where either the strategies

were not carried across plans or areas on the templates that were not addressed at all.

Phase three consisted of a descriptive analysis of the student outcome data on

End-of-Grade tests for the ELL subgroup at the district and school level. The

identification of focus schools considered the size of the achievement gap, without

examining whether or not the districts or schools were making significant progress with

their ELLs. This analysis examined the progress made in closing the achievement gap

between ELLs and the highest performing subgroup in the district or school. Using

disaggregated subgroup data available on NCDPI's website, the difference in the

achievement gap over the past three years was averaged to determine if the schools are

closing the gap. This average was compared to the state average to determine if the schools were making progress towards exiting focus school status.

Selection Criteria

Each year the NCDPI analyses accountability data and identifies districts that do not meet AMAOs for Title III. Districts that do not meet AMAOs for two years are identified for Title III Improvement and are required to write a plan to improve outcomes for ELLs. The initial selection criteria examined this list and selected districts in Title III improvement that were identified by the National Center of Educational Statistics as a city system with locale code of either 11, 12, or 13, which identified them as middle to large size urban districts. After the potential districts were identified, elementary schools within those districts were identified from the focus schools list. Elementary schools were considered if the achievement gap for the ELL subgroup was larger than the state average in at least one of the three years calculated which contributed to the school being identified as a focus schools in the North Carolina ESEA flexibility waiver. A list of focus schools and how they were identified was emailed to all Title I directors in the fall of 2012.

Three school systems met the requirements of being urban and in Title III improvement. As a case study it was necessary to select one system. The selection was made to use the Adams County School System (ACSS) as the primary focus. Adams was at the time of the study the largest school system in North Carolina. The documents required for the study were mostly available and the Title III administrators were agreeable to share their Title III plan for use in the study. One of the other districts did

not have school improvement plans publically available. The other district had few elementary schools identified as focus schools due to achievement gap for ELL subgroup.

Description of the School District

Adams County School System (ACSS) is the largest public school system in North Carolina. ACSS serves over 150,000 students in 168 schools (WCPSS, n.d.). ACSS is located in the research triangle park region of North Carolina and is home to the capital of the state of North Carolina. In the 2009-2010 school year, ACSS identified 12,281 ELLs. This was an increase of 387.3% from 1999-2000 (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011). According to NCDPI (2012), ACSS had been in Title III improvement for four years or longer. ACSS had six elementary schools identified as focus schools due to a significant achievement gap with the ELL subgroup.

Data Collection Methods

The primary data collection method was document analysis or record examination. This was a qualitative process in which the researcher reviewed the district and school plans generated through requirements of ESEA. The plans were downloaded from the district and school websites and reviewed using templates from the DWW website. In addition to this analysis, disaggregated End-of-Grade data was collected from the NCDPI website from the past five school years.

Instrumentation of Data Collection

For the purpose of conducting the analysis, templates were selected that were designed to support states, districts and schools in implementing the research of Gersten at al. (2007). These templates were designed to provide technical assistance to ensure that districts and schools implemented plans that were strategic and coherent (USDOE,

n.d.). The resources at DWW were designed to help districts and schools implement research-based practices supported by the IES (WestEd, 2012). The templates identified areas of responsibility at the state, district and school level. The district responsibilities include district leadership, setting standards and expectations for achievement, providing research based and effective instruction that supports standards, recruiting, retaining and supporting highly qualified teachers, using data for planning and accountability, promoting equity/adequacy of fiscal resources as well as family and community engagement. The school areas of responsibility are similar but add supporting instruction in the classroom, supervision and monitoring of instruction and ensuring safe and supportive learning environment for all students. The templates provided the opportunity to rate several indicators under each area of responsibility as already in place, not feasible/ inappropriate or potential areas to develop. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on what was already in place in the plans.

The researcher compiled the data while examining each plan and completing the appropriate level tool provided in Appendix A. Each section of the plan was reviewed and annotated to determine which elements were in place. Once each plan was examined, the researcher looked for patterns and trends at the school level, the district level and vertically from schools to the district level. Each indicator was rated evident in the plan or not evident.

Disaggregated end of grade reading data for the past three years was collected from the NCDPI website. The researcher determined the highest performing subgroup and subtracted the difference from the ELL subgroup performance to determine the percentage point gap for each year. The gap for the mean from the past three years was

compared to determine if the schools were making progress towards exiting focus school status.

<div align="center">Role of the Researcher</div>

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is to collect data and organize it into meaningful patterns (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). In this study, the researcher was responsible to collect the plans, review the data utilizing the selected tools and organize the results into meaningful clusters. Clark (1967) suggests that the role of the researcher in reviewing documents is to analyze the data in the context of the situation. In the case of this study, the context is primarily district and school response to accountability provisions of ESEA. A key role the researcher plays is in interpreting the data. Gay et al. (2006) underscore the importance of the researcher to practice reflexivity in analyzing qualitative data. Reflexivity refers to the concept of identifying and revealing underlying beliefs and assumptions so that the researcher does not bias the work (Gay et al., 2006). The overarching responsibilities of the researcher in this study were to collect the data, analyze and interpret it then report the findings. Another crucial role was to practice reflexivity to ensure the findings were not biased or inaccurately reflecting the reality.

<div align="center">Subjectivity Statement</div>

The researcher has had extensive training and experience in school reform and English language learners. Because of his role at the time of this study, his school district partnered with the Education Laboratory at Brown University in a study to examine CSR components and their effectiveness with ELLs, which lead to a three year partnership to build capacity within the district and inform the research on CSR and ELLs.

Data Analysis

The district level plans were examined with the district level tool and the school improvement and focus plans were reviewed with the school level version. The first level of analysis simply lies in each plans potential for responsiveness and considered alongside the descriptive analysis of the End-of-Grade reading data.

Once all of the plans have been analyzed individually, the researcher looked for trends within and among the district and school plans. The responses from each area of responsibility and the descriptors which support it were compiled for the district plans, the school plans and then for district and school plans where possible. This analysis identified potential alignment, such as the district and schools using similar strategies or the district supporting schools efforts. Additionally, school achievement data for the past three years was reviewed to determine if any changes have occurred in the achievement gap between ELLs and the highest performing subgroup. This was calculated by district and by school.

Student Achievement Data

Focus schools were identified as having an average achievement gap between the highest performing subgroup and the lowest performing subgroup, higher than the state average over three year period. As the focus of this study is ELLs and literacy, the same method of calculation was used but modified to gauge only the gap between ELLs and the highest performing subgroup in reading. The initial identification of focus schools used composite data for reading and math. In order to view progress in reading, the data was recalculated using only reading scores. This data was not presented to suggest a correlation between the planning efforts and student achievement. Rather it is descriptive

analysis to determine whether or not the schools are moving toward closing the achievement gap and potentially exiting focus school status. Additionally, it should be noted that North Carolina moved to the Common Core State Standards in the 2012-2013 school year. Standards and the correlating assessments changed with significant impacts to overall proficiency.

Alignment

Alignment was identified when indicators from similar areas of responsibility were consistent across plans. Additionally, researchers searched to determine if similar strategies or structures were evident in different plans to support implementation. The data from each level of plan was combined at the district and then school level to determine which indicators were most frequently evident in the plans at a particular level and then across levels.

Potential Gaps

Potential gaps at the district level were identified when an indicator from the DWW was not addressed on either plan. Potential gaps at the school level were identified in two ways. The first identification was when an indicator was not addressed on any school improvement plan or the focus school plan. The second identification was if an indicator was identified in the focus school plan, but not included in the majority of the school improvement plans. Potential gaps at the district to school level were identified if related indicators were not addressed between the district and school level plans. Once again, the district or school may be addressing this indicator through another plan or process.

Trustworthiness

Gay et al. (2006) state in order for qualitative researchers to maintain the quality of their data they must ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data. In order to establish trustworthiness of the data sample, the researcher worked with a second rater to develop inter-rater reliability on the templates from DWW. Both the researcher and the second rater have strong backgrounds in regards to English language learners and literacy programs. The researcher has extensive training and experience in school improvement planning. The second rater has extensive experience as a project director and evaluator.

The process included first reviewing the district template and discussing the indicators to clarify common understanding, then randomly selecting a strategic plan from another similar school system. The researcher and second rater independently reviewed the plan and then compared results by measuring the percent of indicators in which the two raters concurred. After identifying areas of agreement, the researcher and second rater reviewed indicators that were different and came to consensus on the indicator. Some indicators required a level of assumption, as they were developed for reflection at the district level. The researcher and second rater discussed each indicator to determine if a level of assumption was needed or not. The raters agreed to identify if an assumption was made if they identified an indicator as responsive. This process was repeated four times until inter-rater reliability between the two raters was sufficient. The process of developing inter-rater reliability was conducted in one day with the raters working side by side for eight hours. Due to the established level of inter-rater reliability, the researcher rated the Adams Title III Plan independently.

A similar process was used to establish inter-rater reliability on the school level template. The researcher selected school improvement plans from focus schools outside ACSS. One plan was randomly selected. The results from the inter-rater reliability are presented in chapter four.

Limitations

The first limitation is that the researcher assumed the district was aware of the evidenced-based strategies in literacy that were recommended by Gersten et al. (2007) and supported by the DWW tool. Furthermore, the findings were mainly relevant to the contexts of the particular school system and schools that were involved. Potential bias based on the researchers' background knowledge and experience was possible. Particular sensitivity may result in that the researchers had been strongly involved in school improvement efforts and invested in literacy instruction for ELLs at the elementary level. As a control, externally developed tools were used and data in which district information, that had no immediate relevance to the researcher's life or employment was also used.

The DWW templates used in this study, as a tool for examining district and school plans, were initially developed for self-reflection. Therefore, when using them to examine the plan the researcher had to assume that if a particular strategy or practice was mentioned that it was being implemented with fidelity. Furthermore, if an indicator or area of responsibility was not evident on the plans it might not mean that the district or school was not working appropriately in that area. It was possible that it was not specifically addressed in that particular plan. The possibility existed that the indicator was being addressed within the school or department or by a different type of plan.

Finally, districts and schools have options in design and format of these plans in North Carolina. This provided a level of challenge as the amounts and types of information vary significantly between districts as well as between schools within particular districts. The potential exists that one plan may appear more responsive, but it could simply be based on the information expected to be included in the plan.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter provides the findings from the single bound descriptive case study of the responsiveness of district and school plans based on the DWW template. The chapter begins with the results of inter-rater reliability and then moves to the findings from the examination of district plans including the strategic plan and the Title III plan. Findings will be presented in the framework of the DWW template for six district areas of responsibility and then the indicators for each area. Next, the findings of school improvement plans will be provided using the school template. The focus will be on the school areas of responsibility as well as the indicators under each area. Then, the findings from the focus school plans will be presented, framed around the indicators of the school level template. From there, the alignment between district efforts and school efforts that were analyzed as well as the potential gaps that were identified will be presented. The findings will then move on to student achievement, specifically in regards to schools making progress in closing the achievement gap and exiting focus school status.

The results within this chapter may reflect a specific school system. However the results do not intend to suggest either positive or negative connotations toward the district or any of the identified schools. Rather, the results are simply indicative of the particular plans at a given time. The potential exists that the district or schools may have been addressing the indicators identified, but within another plan or process.

In order to assist in following direct references from the different plans the following abbreviations will be used when making specific page references within the results. The ACSS strategic plan will be noted as ASP. The Title III plan will be noted as ATTP. The school improvement plans will be noted by the first letter of the school name and followed with SIP. For example, the Eastmill school improvement plan will be ESIP. Table 2 displays the overall findings for the number of indicators met under each area. The data is presented as a percentage of indicators rated responsive for each area of responsibility.

Inter-Rater Reliability

The process of inter-rater reliability began with reviewing district plans and then moved to school plans. Over the four outside district samples, the average inter-rater reliability was 80%. However, the inter-rater reliability for the final plan was rated at 93%. The results for the outside district plans are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: District inter-rater reliability ratings

District	Agreement of Indicators	Percentage
District 1	19/27	70%
District 2	22/27	81%
District 3	20/27	74%
District 4	25/27	93%

After reaching this level of inter-rater reliability, the researcher and second rater went on to independently rate the ACSS plan and had 93% inter-rater reliability. After establishing reliability at the district level the raters moved to school level.

The researcher and second rater achieved 100% inter-rater reliability on the first outside plan and proceeded to review a plan from Adams. Inter-rater reliability was maintained at 88%.

<div align="center">District Strategic Plan</div>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the DWW template identifies for school districts seven areas of responsibility; district leadership; setting standards and expectations for achievement; providing research-based and effective instruction in support of state and district standards; recruiting, retaining, supporting high-quality staff; using data for planning and accountability; promoting equity/adequacy of fiscal and human resources; and engaging families and community (see Appendix A). The data in Table 2, page 56, show that at least one indicator was responsive in each area of responsibility. Appendix B provides details as to which indicators in each area were identified responsive. A more detailed analysis of each area will follow.

District Leadership

The district leadership portion of the DWW template had three indicators. Under this area, the plan had evidence of two out of the three indicators (67%). ACSS strategic plan communicated the district policy about teaching reading to all stakeholders in a number of ways. ELLs were specifically mentioned throughout the plan and included in targeted groups to improve achievement. The progress and challenges were specifically stated. Furthermore, the key processes and action steps specifically mentioned the need to coordinate services in order to receive core instruction and needed support services. The coordination included ESL, Title I, intervention services and special education. The coordination of pre-school service also referenced the need for the multiple program

Table 2: Percentage of indicators by plan and area of responsibility*

District Plans

	District Leadership (2)	Standards & Expectations (4)	Research-Based Instruction (6)	High-Quality Staff (6)	Using Data (4)	Promoting Equity (2)	Engage Families (2)
Strategic plan	67	25	83	33	100	50	100
Title III plan	67	75	67	50	100	100	50

School Improvement Plans

	School Leadership (2)	Standards & Expectations (2)	Research-Based Instruct. (6)	Supporting Instruction (6)	High-Quality Staff(3)	Supervising Instruction (2)	Use Data (3)	Engage Families (1)	Learning Environments (1)
Eastmill	0	50	83	67	33	0	67	0	0
Rosewood	50	50	83	67	33	50	67	0	0
Wayford	0	50	83	67	33	50	67	0	0
Wellport	50	50	83	67	33	50	67	0	0
Whiteton	50	50	100	83	67	50	67	100	0
Brookdale	0	50	83	67	33	0	33	100	0

Focus School Plans

	School Leadership (2)	Standards & Expectations (2)	Research-Based Instruct. (6)	Supporting Instruction (6)	High-Quality Staff (3)	Supervising Instruction (2)	Use Data (3)	Engage Families (1)	Learning Environments (1)
Eastmill	50	100	100	67	67	50	67	100	100
Brookdale	50	100	100	67	67	50	67	100	100
Wayford	50	100	100	67	67	50	67	100	100
Wellport	50	100	100	67	67	50	67	100	100
Whiteton	50	100	100	67	67	50	67	100	100
Rosewood	0	100	83	50	0	50	67	100	0

Note: * The number or indicators for each area of responsibility is provided in parenthesis.

areas to coordinate services. The provisions of core reading instruction, intervention processes and progress monitoring referred to the first two indicators of Gersten et al.'s (2007) progress monitoring and intervention through small group reading opportunities.

Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement

The setting standards and expectations for achievement portion of the DWW template had four indicators. ACSS' strategic plan had evidence of one out of the four indicators (25%). The first indicator addressed whether the LEA holds the same learning outcome expectations for ELLs that they do for all students. The strategic plan addressed this in its core beliefs with statements such as "All children, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances can be high achieving students" and "Academic achievement gaps can and will be eliminated" (ASP, p.17). Furthermore, it was addressed in the framework for success, "Excellence is achieved through establishing and maintaining high standards for all children" (ASP, p.19). This indicator was addressed again in the focus areas section of the plan "Provide all students with extensive opportunities, high expectations, and support in achieving high academic success" (ASP, p.21).

The other indicators under the setting standards and expectations area were not directly addressed in the strategic plan. These included establishing an LEA policy to use grade-level texts with ELLs rather than simplified texts, adopting standards addressing academic English and adopting standards to address vocabulary development across all grade levels.

Providing Research-Based Instruction in Support of Standards

The third area of the DWW template addressed providing research-based instruction in support or standards. This area had six indicators. Under this area the ACSS strategic plan had evidence of five out of six indicators (83%).

The first indicator addressed the selection and support of a core reading program that is aligned to the district standards and the second indicator identified the need to provide training in the core reading program. The plan addressed these two indicators in the first focus area of the plan through action steps such as "Develop system-wide structures to support research-based literacy and mathematics instruction" and "require teachers to use multiple research-based literacy mathematics instructional approaches to teaching which is supported by system-wide staff development and the on-line Curriculum Management system (C-MAPP)" (ASP, p.24). Additional evidence of a core reading program aligned to state standards exists in the following statement, "Implement the literacy strands of the Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts K-12" (ASP, p.25).

The strategic plan provided evidence of responsiveness to three additional indicators in this area. The indicators included a plan for progress monitoring, identifying reading interventions and resources, and providing training in reading interventions. These indicators were addressed primarily in second focus area of the strategic plan. Key statements from the plan that exhibited responsiveness to these indicators included "Support schools as they progress monitor students receiving reading interventions and assist schools to adjust instruction as appropriate" and "Develop and deploy professional development on the RtI framework and associated practices" (ASP,

p.26). Furthermore, additional statements that supported responsiveness to these indicators included "Deploy and support schools with the implementation of the EASi tool specifically Tier II (PEP) and Tier III (SST)" (ASP, p.26) and "Assist schools with identifying and deploying appropriate supports and interventions for identified at-risk students" (ASP, p.27).

The one indicator of responsiveness from this area that was not addressed required the district to select or develop a framework for teaching academic English. The researcher could not identify any particular framework within the plan that addressed teaching academic English as expected by the DWW template.

Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High-Quality Staff

The area of the DWW template addressing recruiting, retraining and supporting high quality staff included six indicators of responsiveness. The ACSS strategic plan addressed two of the six indicators specifically (33%). The first area that presented evidence of responsiveness was the district offered or funded training for teachers in progress monitoring. The statements that reflected training in progress monitoring were identified in the previous section. This indicator also mentioned training for sheltered instruction and academic English. Specific statements referring to this training or broader training including these strategies were not identified. The other indicator with evidence of responsiveness was hiring teachers or paraprofessionals fluent in languages represented by ELLs. A clear statement that supported this indicator was "Increase multilingual staff to provide targeted outreach and supports" (ASP, p.33).

Indicators not addressed within this area had specific references to ELLs or specific programming decisions. These included training principals in teaching reading

to ELLs, giving preference to hiring teachers with training in teaching in ELLs,

employing ESL teachers to provide instruction in academic English and using Title II-A

funds to support professional development in working with ELLs. Specific reference to

these indicators with this level of specificity was not found. Although references to

professional development for principals in regards to ELLs were evident, it lacked

specific reference to the particular recommendations such as vocabulary, developing

academic English and peer-based learning activities.

Using Data for Planning and Accountability

The using data for planning and accountability portion of the template included

four indicators. The ACSS strategic plan provided evidence for all four indicators

(100%). The first two indicators referenced including ELLs in the state reading

assessments as well as analyzing and reporting data by ELL status. This data was

presented within the plan (ASP, p.7). Furthermore, it should be noted that these are

requirements under ESEA and reported on district and school report cards annually as

part of the state's Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs). The third indicator

referenced analyzing performance on English language proficiency measures. The

second focus area of the strategic plan presented evidence of this by requiring that

schools "Track each student's progress toward proficiency, classroom teachers, principals

and senior leaders will monitor student performance by disaggregating data by race,

ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, and disability" (ASP,

pp.25-26). The final indicator in this area reflected the district's analysis of assessment

results to identify intervention strategies or weaknesses in the curriculum, including

progress monitoring. Evidence of this indicator was found in the first and second focus

areas of the ACSS strategic plan. These included statements such as "Implement and integrated, streamline assessment system to monitor student growth and inform instruction" (ASP, p.24) and as mentioned earlier, supporting schools in progress monitoring.

Promoting Equity/Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources

The DWW area of promoting equity/adequacy of fiscal and human resources included two indicators. The ACSS exhibited evidence in one of the two indicators (50%). The first indicator focuses on annually reviewing the progress of ELLs and identifying resource needs such as ESL or intervention teachers. The first indicator was addressed as previously mentioned in the disaggregated data analysis as well as through the walkthrough process mentioned in the first focus area to monitor instructional practices. The second indicator referred to including ELLs in Title I reading programs as needed. The second indicator was addressed through the coordination of services for intervention as mentioned earlier. This called for supplemental service providers to coordinate services to ensure students receive appropriate core instruction and needed intervention services.

Engaging Families and Community

The final area of district responsibility in the DWW template of engaging families and community had two indicators to indicate responsiveness. The ACSS strategic plan provided evidence for two of the two indicators (100%). The first indicator reflected the district communicating policy about teaching reading to parents of ELLs and the second looked for establishing partnerships with community agencies to support ELLs. The core beliefs referenced "Supportive and passionate parents, families, student mentors and

other members of the multi-cultural Adams County Community are active participant in the education of our students" (ASP, p.17). Focus area five envisions increasing family and community involvement which include strategies such as "Engage our diverse community by building strategic partnerships and platforms for communication" (ASP, p.32) and action steps such as "Build partnership with organizations that are targeted toward the needs of particular students, schools and ACSS" (ASP, p.33).

Overall the district strategic plan exhibited evidence for responsiveness on 19 of the 27 indicators on the DWW template (70%). Each of the seven areas of responsibility had at least one indicator addressed through the plan. Areas in which most or all indicators exhibited evidence included district leadership, providing research-based and effective instruction, using data for planning, promoting equity an adequate resources and engaging families and communities. All of the indicators that lacked evidence had a specific reference to a particular strategy, intervention, resource or approach linked specifically to ELLs.

<center>Title III Plan</center>

The Title III plan is required by NCDPI in order to receive Title III funds under ESEA. In order to address the supplemental nature of the funding source, the plan first described efforts to address English language acquisition as required under local, state and federal civil rights requirements. Then the plan described how Title III funds are being used to supplement those services. The plan was approved by NCDPI on September 5, 2013, for the 2013-2014 school year. A summary of indicators by area was presented in Table 2 and the data on individual indicators can be found in Appendix B.

District Leadership

The district leadership portion of the DWW included three indicators. The Title III plan demonstrated evidence for two out of three indicators under district leadership (67%). The two indicators that presented evidence included having access to expertise on teaching ELLs and identifying resources such as state and federal grant monies to support recommended practices. These indicators were evident in the staffing resources and budget information in the plan. To support the programming for ELLs the district employed a Director, a Senior Administrator, a Senior Administrator for LEP Parent Outreach and a Communications Specialist through state or local funds. The system hired 165 ESL teachers to serve approximately 11,500 ELLs out of state and local funds as well. Additional support was provided through Title III funds or a combination of funds and included a Lead Teacher, two Center for International Enrollment Coordinating Teachers, two Title III Coaches, four Title III Coordinating Teachers and two Title III Pre-K Coordinating teachers. Funding also supported curriculum development, professional development, clerical staff and travel expenses. The indicator not addressed was communicating a district policy in regards to teaching reading to ELLs. Although the plan does provide a detailed description of the continuum of language support services provided to students and text used it did not specifically address policy for teaching reading to ELLs.

Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement

The portion of the DWW template on setting standards and expectations for achievement included four indicators. The Title III plan exhibited evidence of three out of the four indicators in this area of responsibility (75%). Evidence of the first indicator,

that the district holds the same learning outcomes for ELLs as all students, was described

in the annual review of AMAO data across stakeholders and the expectation to meet

accountability goals. The second indicator was not explicitly identified, as the plan did

not state that the district policy is to use grade-level texts with ELLs rather than

simplified text. The third indicator focused on adopting standards that address the

development of academic English. Similarly the fourth focused on adopting standards

that address vocabulary development. The district has adopted standards that address

academic English and vocabulary development at all levels as evidenced through the

adoption of the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English

Language Proficiency standards. The plan stated "Our ESL teachers incorporate the

WIDA ELP standards by building their lessons based on Vocabulary Usage, Linguistic

Complexity, and Language Forms and Conventions while focusing on the language of the

content" (ATTP, p.6). The plan further described that ESL teachers use local curriculum

through C-MAPP that is based on the WIDA standards.

Providing Research-Based Instruction in Support of Standards

The area of providing research-based and effective instruction in support of state

and district standards included six indicators. The Title III plan supported evidence in

four out of the six indicators (67%). The first two indicators lacked evidence within the

plan, which included adopting a core reading program for the first indicator and

providing training in the core reading program for the second. The plan did not identify a

core reading program or provide training for it. Although, the plan did identify programs

to support the implementation of the ELD standards, this is different from the core

reading program for the system. Additionally, the plan included professional

development in the Common Core; the description reflects a broader sense of ELL related issues with the Common Core rather than training in a literacy model.

The third indicator required that the plan address progress monitoring. The plan identified the formative assessments utilized for progress monitoring, which included mCLASS, PAST, K-2 Assessments, assessments from textbooks and teacher created assessments. The professional development plan included training for K-2 teachers on mCLASS, ELD standards, Common Core, effective teacher framework.

The final three indicators had areas that overlapped in the evidence. The fourth indicator addressed the selection or development of a framework for teaching academic English. The fifth indicator focuses on identifying reading interventions and the sixth on providing training in reading interventions. The SIOP model (Echevarria et al., 2013) and WIDA provide frameworks for teaching academic English as well as potential reading interventions. The continuum of services outlines materials and structures for intervention. Additionally, the plan mentions that ESL teachers participate in Professional Learning Teams to ensure that students receive appropriate interventions.

Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High-Quality Staff

The DWW template identifies six indicators under recruiting, retaining and supporting high-quality staff. The Title III plan had clear evidence of three of the six indicators (50%). The first, second and sixth indicator lacked evidence to support responsiveness. The first indicator required the provisions of leadership training for principals in teaching reading to ELLs. The plan has direct reference to training administrators in the Effective Teacher Framework that systematically meets the needs of all students. Potentially, this could indicate that principals have leadership training in

teaching reading to ELLs, but no direct evidence supports that indicator. The second

indicator looked for a preference in hiring teachers with expertise in working with ELLs.

As the plan addressed the programs that serve these students, it is implied that they are

licensed in the field. What cannot be inferred is if a preference existed for hiring teachers

outside of the ESL program who have expertise in ELLs. The sixth indicator referred to

Title II-A funds supporting professional development in working with ELLs. No

mention of Title II-A funds was referenced in the Title III plan.

Evidence supported three indicators. The third indicator referred to the LEA

employing ESL teachers to provide instruction in academic English. The budget

reflected 165 ESL teachers providing instruction to develop academic English. The

fourth indicator referred to the provision of funds or professional development in

sheltered instruction, program monitoring and academic English. The professional

development plan lists training in SIOP, mClass, and the WIDA standards (pp.9-10). The

fifth indicator reflected hiring teachers or paraprofessionals who are fluent in the native

languages of ELLs to support the administration of progress monitoring. Positions such

as Communication Specialist, Director of Interpretation Services and Senior

Administrator LEP Parent Outreach indicated that the district hires personnel fluent in the

languages represented by ELLs.

Using Data for Planning and Accountability

In the area of using data for planning and accountability the DWW template

identified four indicators. The Title III plan presented evidence that four of the four

indicators were responsive (100%). The first indicator referred to including ELLs in

required state reading assessments and English language proficiency assessments. The

plan identifies collaboration with ESL teachers and testing coordinators as a key strategy

to ensure all students are tested as well as collaboration at the district level. The second

indicator referred to reporting reading data by ELL status at the district and school level

and the third indicator was similar but focused on English language proficiency

assessments. The Title III plan required districts to explain how AMAO results are

shared, which included ELL performance on reading assessments and English language

proficiency assessments. The plan specifically stated that AMAO data is reviewed

annually. Data was shared through email and district meetings with teachers,

administrators and the LEP Advisory Committee. The data included performance on both

reading assessments and English language proficiency assessments. The fourth indicator

reflected the LEA analyzing district results, including progress monitoring, to identify

needs for intervention and potential weaknesses in the curriculum. As mentioned earlier,

PLTs implemented progress monitoring utilizing a multitude of assessments to identify

needs for intervention.

Promoting Equity/ Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources

The DWW template identified two indicators in the area of promoting

equity/adequacy of fiscal and human resources. The ACSS Title III plan exhibited

evidence in two of the two indicators (100%). The first indicator focused on providing

for the needs of ELLs based on an annual review of the data and the second required that

ELLs were included in Title I reading programs. The plan provides a clear description of

the annual review of learning progress. Furthermore the process for development and

review of the Title III plan provides opportunity for parents, principals, teachers and

district personnel to provide feedback through the LEP Advisory Committee. The

evaluation information is shared with Title I department. Furthermore, as the Title I schools identified are all schoolwide programs all students in those schools are eligible for service.

Engaging Families and Community

The engaging families and community portion of the DWW included two indicators. Only one of two indicators in this area of responsibility was supported by evidence in the Title III plan (50%). The first indicator addressed communication about policy teaching reading to parents of ELLs. The plan identified a Senior Administrator LEP Parent Outreach to facilitate training for parents throughout the year (ATTP, p.5). The plan also mentioned the Center for International Enrollment providing supplemental services such as describing typical school concepts within North Carolina and sharing strategies to help children succeed in school (ATTP, p.14). The Title III plan did not mention any partnership with relevant community agencies, which addressed the second indicator.

Summary

Overall the Title III plan had clear evidence of 18 of the 27 indicators of responsiveness in the DWW template (67%). All seven areas of district responsibility had at least one indicator with evidence to support current implementation. The majority of indicators that lacked clear statements or strategies to support current implementation involved specific references to the district's core reading program. Indicators with specific information in regards to supporting ELLs, vocabulary, developing academic English, using data and accountability requirements typically were addressed specifically in the plan.

School Improvement Plans

The DWW template for working with schools had nine areas of responsibility at the school level and 26 indicators. The nine areas of responsibility include school leadership, setting standards and expectations for achievement, providing research-based and effective instruction in support of state and district standards, supporting instruction in the classroom, recruiting, retaining, supporting high-quality staff, supervision and monitoring of instruction, use data for planning and accountability, engaging families and community, and ensuring safe and supportive learning environments for all students. Although ACSS uses a centralized system for creating school improvement plans, schools published varying degrees of their overall plan. Rosewood, Wellport and Whiteton published plans to their website with comprehensive needs assessment and intervention plans, while three other schools published more limited versions. Eastmill and Brookdale had relatively short synopsis of the goals, key processes and action steps. Wayford's plan had a more extended summary of goals, key processes and action steps. The ratings in regards to the indicators reflect only what is in the plan. If something is not addressed in the plan it does not imply it did not happen through another venue.

School Leadership

The school leadership portion of the DWW template had two indicators. The Eastmill, Wayford and Brookdale plans provided evidence for zero of the two indicators (0%). The Rosewood, Wellport and Whiteton plans provided evidence for one of the two indicators (50%). The first indicator referred to the principal communicating and discussing policy about teaching reading to ELLs. None of the six school plans exhibited

evidence to suggest that the principal had communicated reading policy in regards to ELLs.

The second indicator identified if the school had access to expertise related to teaching ELLs. Three of the school plans addressed the second indicator. Wellport Elementary specifically identified consulting with ELL support teachers at least quarterly when making decisions about intervening with ELLs. Additionally, they made reference to access to a SIOP coach. Whiteton also mentioned that 100% of teachers had training in SIOP and monthly collaboration between classroom teachers, Title 1 and ESL. Rosewood identified the concern that ELLs were not meeting targets and the need to place the ESL teacher on the school improvement team. The three school improvement plans, which did not address this indicator, only posted summaries of their plans and may have included additional information in the broader plan.

Setting Standards and Expectation for Achievement

The second area of school responsibility, setting standards and expectations for achievement had two indicators. All six school improvement plans demonstrated evidence in one of the two indications (50%). The first indicator referred to the school leadership communicating an expectation that ELLs will meet the same learning outcomes as all students and using grade-level texts with ELLs. All six schools provided evidence of communicating that ELLs are expected to meet the same learning outcomes in reading. Typically, this was done through the goals in the plan. Eastmill stated that all students would make expected growth and provided specific targets for ELLs (DSIP, p.1). Rosewood specified a goal that all students would make AMO targets in reading and that subgroups would increase at least 5% on the EOG reading. ELLs were identified

as a targeted subgroup. Wayford targeted growth for subgroups at 8% and included that all groups would meet AMO goals (SSIP, p.1). Wellport stated that all subgroups will show high growth and that 80% of the school will demonstrate proficiency in reading. Whiteton had two goals in reading. The first goal is to increase the percentage all K-2 students meeting reading benchmarks by 1.54% and for the achievement gap for ELLs to decrease by 2.8%. Similarly, the percentage of all students in grades 3-5 would increase by 2.33% with the achievement gap for ELLs closing by 4.4%. Brookdale's goal was for student proficiency to increase to 85% and make high growth.

The second indicators specified that schools used grade-level texts with ELLs. None of the schools referenced using grade-level texts with ELLs.

Providing Research-Based Instruction in Support of Standards

The portion of the DWW template dedicated to providing research-based and effective instruction in support of state and district standards has six indicators. The Eastmill, Rosewood, Wayford, Wellport and Brookdale plans exhibited evidence in five out of the six indicators (83%). The Whiteton plan exhibited evidence in six of the six indicators (100%).

The first indicator focused on the implementation of a core reading program. All six schools exhibit evidence to support the consistent implementation of a core reading program. Four schools, Rosewood, Wellport, Whiteton and Brookdale, referenced the Daily 5 Café as the core reading program that uses a balanced literacy approach. Similarly, Wayford added a balanced literacy approach based on the Common Core Standards and Eastmill identified a Reader's Workshop as their approach. Rosewood

also identified Wilson Fundamentals as an additional program to support core reading instruction.

The second indicator focused on the provision of training to implement the core reading program. Each of the six plans identified that all teachers would receive training in the core reading program, which supports the second indicator. Every plan mentioned that some level of training through PLTs. Eastmill included training in the development of mini-lessons, conferencing, small group instruction, rigor, and text complexity. Rosewood included training on Wilson Fundamentals for K-3, ESL and intervention teachers. Brookdale included training in Words Their Way. Only one plan included evidence to the third indicator that is providing instruction to all students in vocabulary and academic English. Whiteton explicitly stated using the SIOP strategies to build vocabulary. The other schools did not mention potential instructional models in building vocabulary and academic English that were recognizable to the researcher.

The fourth indicator focused on the teachers administering progress monitoring at least every six to eight week and the fifth indicator focused on the provision of training for teachers around progress monitoring. All plans discussed the use of progress monitoring and training for teachers in regards to progress monitoring. All school plans identified the use of mClass and benchmark data to progress monitor students and the need to train or support the use of the data through PLTs. Rosewood added the use of reading response journals and Wilson Fundamentals. Wayford, Whiteton, and Brookdale included AIMSweb as an additional diagnostic and progress monitoring tool. Wellport, Whiteton and Brookdale identified Study Island as an additional progress monitoring

tool. All schools identified the training around progress monitoring included the PLT process.

The sixth indicator referenced whether teachers had access to repertoire of reading interventions and support materials. All but one school, Eastmill, included specific references to this indicator. Although not specifically mentioned in the Eastmill plan, it is implied in the action step which references small group instruction and mini-lessons to meet the specific needs of individual students. Rosewood focused its intervention strategies around Wilson Fundamentals. Wayford identified AIMSweb and the Florida Center for Reading Research as primary sources for intervention activities. Wellport references daily guided reading groups supporting the individual's current text level. Whiteton focuses on flexible grouping and tiered interventions based on progress monitoring results. Brookdale utilizes a Team Time model to differentiate reading objectives.

Supporting Instruction in the Classroom

The portion of the DWW template that focused on the area of supporting instruction in the classroom had six indicators. The Eastmill, Rosewood, Wayford, Wellport and Brookdale plans exhibited evidence for four out of six indicators (67%). The Whiteton plan demonstrated evidence for five out of six indicators (83%). The first indicator focused on organizing the schedule to ensure ELLs have a daily specific block of instructional time dedicated to developing academic English. None of the schools specifically mentioned this in their plans.

The second indicator addressed organizing the daily schedule so that students who need reading interventions could receive small group instruction. All six schools

addressed this indicator. Four of the six schools made specific references to ensure that daily small group instruction for interventions were scheduled. The plans from three schools, Rosewood, Wellport and Whiteton provided detailed descriptions of student identification, intervention structure, instructional services provided, assessments and curriculum resources provided. Whiteton and Wellport included 20 to 30 minutes of daily intervention in either a push-in our pull-out model. Rosewood created a schedule where intervention teachers are scheduled into the reading block. Eastmill identified small group instruction and Reader's Workshop as a key process and action step. Wayford and Brookdale make references to intervention and differentiated reading lessons, but do not specifically state that daily small group instruction is provided.

The third indicator in this area referred to the principal scheduling weekly planning time for grade-level teachers and specialists to collaborate and plan for teaching vocabulary and academic English lessons. Only one school, Whiteton, fully described meeting weekly and with a focus on SIOP to build vocabulary. The key process had action steps that included "Each grade level will meet one hour weekly as a PLT to discuss struggling readers:" and "We will use SIOP strategies to build vocabulary as we plan and implement lessons" (WSIP, p.19). All of the other schools mentioned teachers meeting with varying degrees of frequency, but did not specifically reference a focus on vocabulary and academic English.

The fourth indicator addressed if the school leadership ensured a process for review of progress monitoring results. All school plans had evidence around the fourth indicator. Each plan referred to the PLT process and progress monitoring students. Eastmill planned to progress monitor through PLTs using mClass data at least quarterly

and to provide interventions based on the data. Rosewood planned to create common formative assessments twice each quarter and to use the PLT process to analyze the data and plan for interventions. PLTs would also progress monitor using mClass data. The intervention plan indicated biweekly progress monitoring using multiple criteria and student assessments to determine level of intervention. Wellport's plan referred to quarterly formative assessments to monitor achievement as part of a reading goal within the plan. The intervention plan stated that students would be progress monitored every three weeks using iReady, anecdotal notes, teacher observation and other measures. Wayford's plan called for monthly progress monitoring using data from AIMSweb. Whiteton planned for quarterly assessments with teachers meeting weekly to discuss struggling readers. The intervention plan identified specific frameworks for supplemental literacy lessons based on students' text levels. Brookdale's plan included teachers meeting biweekly in PLTs and using Case 21 data and AIMSweb to monitor student performance. Teachers would use the Team Time model to differentiate reading objectives to ensure mastery of curriculum.

The fifth indicator focused on principals providing a process for reviewing the progress monitoring results and ensuring a process for determining interventions needed. The Rosewood, Wellport and Whiteton plans included an intervention component. Each school had a clear intervention plan in place that covered student identification, intervention structure, instruction, assessment and curriculum resources. The Eastmill, Wayford and Brookdale plans were summaries and did not contain that level of detail, but addressed a process for interventions. All of the schools referenced PLTs and

collaborative meetings and the provision of interventions or differentiated reading lessons to address students' needs.

The sixth indicator in regard to supporting instruction addressed if teachers had access to support for implementing peer based instruction. All schools exhibited evidence around this indicator. Eastmill utilized Reader's Workshop and small group instruction that provides opportunities for peer-based learning. In order to support teachers in this model the plan called for professional development and the use of PLTs. Rosewood also identified PLTs and professional development as supports for implementing potential peer based learning opportunities such as reading response journals, balanced literacy and small group instruction. Similarly, Wayford supported teachers using a balanced literacy approach through PLTs and professional development. That plan also identified a Literacy Coach as a resource and the use of a learning walk team to provide feedback. Potential peer-based instruction opportunity for Whiteton included SIOP strategies, shared reading and strategy groups. To support teachers in implementation, Whiteton mentioned weekly grade level PLTs and included specialists such as ESL, Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG) or intervention teachers joining the meetings on a monthly basis. In addition, Whiteton created a model classroom for in-house staff development using a model classroom. Brookdale's plan to support teachers in implementing their balanced literacy approach included a Literacy Coach, PLTs and Team Time.

Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High-Quality Staff

The portion of the DWW that focused on the recruitment retention and support of high-quality staff had three indicators. The Eastmill, Rosewood, Wayford, Wellport and

Brookdale plans exhibited evidence on one of the three indicators (33%). The Whiteton

plan demonstrated evidence on two of the three indicators (67%). The first indicator

reflected the efforts of school leadership to provide feedback to teachers on the

implementation of instructional techniques used with English language learners that

includes opportunities to share with peers. All of the schools demonstrated some level of

evidence on the first indicator. As mentioned previously, all schools had processes in

place for regularly scheduled PLTs or other collaborative meetings to review data and

interventions for students. The researcher assumed that these meeting included

discussion of ELLs along with other students. Rosewood and Whiteton specifically

mention the inclusion of ESL teachers in these meetings.

The second indicator addressed principals and school leadership providing

ongoing access to staff on emerging research in regards to ELLs. None of the schools

presented evidence in this indicator. No plan referenced principals sharing research on

ELLs with staff.

Only one school indicated evidence within the plan that the principal ensured all

teachers were included in professional development opportunities for teaching ELLs that

cover vocabulary development, academic English, interventions with highly interactive

teaching and peer assisted learning. Due to the specificity of the indicator and the types

of professional development required five of the schools did not indicate sufficient

evidence that all teachers received training in the exact types of instructional strategies

identified. Whiteton specifically noted that all teachers were trained in SIOP, which is an

instructional model that covers all of those components.

Supervision and Monitoring of Instruction

The sixth area of school responsibility, the supervision and monitoring of instruction, had two indicators. The Eastmill and Brookdale plans exhibited evidence in none of the two indicators (0%). The Rosewood, Wayford, Wellport and Whiteton plans demonstrated evidence in one of the two indicators (50%). The first indicator addressed whether the principal included feedback on the use of the recommended ELL practices in teacher feedback and evaluation. None of the plans included a specific process or actions step that reflected principal feedback on evaluations in regards to ELL instructional strategies. Four of the six schools provided evidence that the principal and leadership discussed interventions with recommended interventions based on progress monitoring results with teachers at least three times a year. Rosewood stated that school leadership would be involved at least twice quarterly in PLTs to review progress monitoring data. Wayford stated these meetings would happen monthly. Whiteton and Wellport planned quarterly meetings. Eastmill did not specifically mention a frequency for progress monitoring or if school leadership would be involved. Brookdale indicates that the administration will provide training in strategies, but does not mention this tied to progress monitoring or with any type of frequency.

Use Data for Planning and Accountability

The seventh area of school responsibility, use of data for planning and accountability, had three indicators. The Eastmill, Rosewood, Wayford, Wellport and Whiteton plans exhibited evidence in two of the three indicators (67%). The Brookdale plan had evidence in one of the three (33%). The first indicator addressed if the

principals review schoolwide progress of ELLs and least annually using assessment and progress monitoring data. Eastmill, Rosewood, Wayford, Wellport and Whiteton plans presented annual student performance data for the ELL subgroup either directly in a goal or in the comprehensive needs assessment preceding the plan. Brookdale did not include any direct data on ELLs in the plan or an indication to present that data as part of the plan. For the second indicator, principals needed to ensure that ELLs are included in state reading assessments and English Language Proficiency Assessment. As a matter of state policy, 95% of students must be included in state testing for both read and English proficiency. It was initially assumed that this indicator was in place. Further follow up on NCDPI's accountability reports demonstrated that each school met this goal (http://www.ncaccountabilitymodel.org). Wellport did not have enough students to make a subgroup, but all 10 eligible students were tested. The third indicator for this area addressed if the principal engages adults who speak the native language of ELLs to provide directions for progress monitoring. Although two plans, Whiteton and Brookdale specifically identified the use of interpreters with families, there was no mention of using them to ensure students understand the directions for progress monitoring.

Engaging Families and Community

The eighth area of school responsibility, engaging families and communities, had one indicator. Whiteton and Brookdale exhibited evidence in the indicator (100%). Eastmill, Rosewood, Wayford and Wellport did not exhibit evidence for the indicator (0%). The one indicator under this section referred to schools developing and communicating policy about teaching reading to the parents of ELLs. Two school plans exhibited evidence of communicating policy about teaching reading to ELLs. Brookdale

clearly stated that interpreters would be requested for all school functions and parent

involvement meetings would be held in several areas including a curriculum fair, parent

tutoring and parent reading. Similarly, Whiteton addressed providing interpreters and

holding literacy night to inform parents of reading strategies and research-based

practices. The other schools may identify parent involvement strategies but lack

indicators of specifically involving parents of ELLs.

Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for All Students

The ninth area of responsibility for schools, ensuring safe and supportive learning

environments for all students, had one indicator. None of the school plans exhibited

evidence for the indicator (0%). The indicator addressed teachers creating climates

within the classroom that encourage consistent participation in oral discussions and

learning activities. None of the schools highlighted learning activities that promoted oral

discussion within their plan as a priority. Although, Whiteton included the use of SIOP

strategies, it specifically referred to building vocabulary. The plan does not suggest the

full implementation of SIOP or the incorporation of oral discussions or learning

activities. The other plans do not address creating a climate that encourages oral

discussion.

Summary

The different schools demonstrated slightly different levels of responsiveness in

total. Eastmill and Brookdale exhibited evidence in 13 of 26 indicators (50%).

Rosewood and Wellport exhibited evidence in 15 of the 26 indicators (58%). Wayford

exhibited evidence in 14 of the 26 indicators (54%). Whiteton exhibited evidence in 19

of the 26 indicators (73%). The school improvement plans indicated consistent areas of

responsiveness around implementation of core reading programs, professional development in core reading instruction, data gathering, progress monitoring and interventions for struggling readers. Additionally, the plans, in general, lacked specificity in regards to ELLs in the area of vocabulary, academic English and oral language development.

<div align="center">Focus School Plans</div>

The focus school plan was generated through the Title I application process and is required for approval of the Title I application. The ACSS focus school plans appeared to have been populated at the central office level as the sections are exactly the same word for word. However, some level of choice may have been granted to schools as minute differences appear within a plan that indicated a level of choice at the school level. Five of the plans were essentially identical and the findings are presented as such. Eastmill, Wayford, Wellport, Whiteton and Brookdale plans presented the exact same information and action steps. Rosewood diverged in that it did include the strategies and action step around implementing the SIOP model. The comprehensive needs assessment was unique to each school and reflected specific data to that school.

School Leadership

The first area of the DWW template addressed school leadership and had two indicators. The five identical plans exhibited evidence in one of the two indicators (50%). Rosewood exhibited evidence in zero of the two indicators (0%). The first indicator under school leadership referenced the principal communicating and discussing policy about teaching reading to ELLs. None of the plans exhibited evidence on this

indicator. The plans did not make specific reference to what ELLs may need differently in reading.

The second indicator addressed the school having access to expertise related to teaching English learners. The schools with the identical plans exhibited evidence in this indicator, but Rosewood did not. Five schools had action steps related to implementing SIOP and utilization of a SIOP coach, which would indicate access to expertise. Rosewood specifically stated that it would not be implementing SIOP. No other reference was made to potentially indicate access to expertise related to ELLs.

Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement

The second area addressed setting standards and expectations for achievement and had two indicators. All six schools exhibited evidence in two of the two indicators (100%). The first indicator described the need for the principal to communicate that learning expectations for ELLs are the same for all students. The goal of the plan was to facilitate high achievement and growth for all students. The second indicator addressed the use grade level text with ELLs. The plan called for all students to be involved in the core curriculum in order to meet standards and for intervention services in addition to core instruction. Furthermore, the plan describes the need to keep students in mainstream instruction to have access to grade level curriculum in order close achievement gaps. The researcher assumed that the explicit references to exposure to core curriculum and grade level content included exposure to grade level texts.

Providing Research-based Instruction in Support of Standards

The third area addressed providing research-based instruction in support of state and district standards and included six indicators. The five identical plans exhibited

evidence in 6 of 6 indicators (100%). Rosewood exhibited evidence in 5 of the 6 indicators (83%). The first indicator referred to the implementation of a core reading program and the second addressed that teachers receive training in the core reading program. In these areas all six plans were identical. The focus school plan described the need for all students to receive core instruction and for teachers to receive training in the core program. Repeated references to core instructional program, differentiated core instruction, tiered instructional intervention and professional development to support teachers indicated an expectation that a core reading program is in place and that teachers had been trained.

The third indicator addressed teachers providing instruction to all students in vocabulary and academic English. As the five identical plans described implementing SIOP, they exhibited evidence at the model covers both aspects. It was assumed that SIOP is being implemented with fidelity, as stated in the plan. The Rosewood plan did not indicate instruction in vocabulary or academic English.

The remaining three indicators of implementing progress monitoring, training teachers in the administration and interpretation of progress monitoring, and teachers having access to reading intervention and support materials were all explicitly spelled out in the plans. The plans called for teachers to be trained in Responsiveness to Instruction which includes administration of both universal screeners and Curriculum-Based measures. Specifically the plan mentions the need for teachers to use mClass/Reading 3D and other assessments to monitor progress. Also, explicit reference was made to ensure that interventions align to academic deficiencies.

Supporting Instruction in the Classroom

The fourth area of school responsibility, supporting instruction in the classroom, had six indicators. The five identical school plans supported evidence in 4 of the 6 indicators (67%). Rosewood demonstrated evidence for 3 of the 6 indicators (50%). The first indicator addressed the organization of instruction to create a daily block in the schedule to focus on academic English. None of the plans described creating a block of time for academic English.

The second indicator described creating a block of time to provide daily small group instruction for struggling readers. All of the plans described the organization of instruction to ensure students received interventions. Specifically, they described the identification of both short term and long term students who need different levels of support and the provisions of targeted interventions or creating extended day opportunities to address more serious gaps.

The third indicator focused on the principal planning weekly planning sessions for teachers and specialist to plan vocabulary and academic English lessons. None of the plans included direct reference to weekly planning sessions with that specific focus.

The fourth indicator addressed the provision of progress monitoring and the fifth indicator focused on the process for determining interventions. These indicators were addressed in the plans together through the implementation of RtI. As mentioned previously, the schools identified on going assessments to determine interventions and decision making around short and long term interventions.

The sixth indicator addressed the support for teachers implementing peer based instruction. The five school plans that were implementing SIOP exhibited evidence for

support for teachers implementing peer-based learning strategies. The provision of professional development and a SIOP coach were evidence that the teachers received support and SIOP includes peer-based learning components. Again, this assumed implementation with fidelity. The plan for Rosewood did not specifically mention another strategy that provided peer-based learning opportunities.

Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High-Quality Staff

The fifth area of the DWW template focused on recruiting, retaining and supporting high-quality staff and included three indicators. The five identical plans exhibited evidence for 2 of the 3 indicators (67%). The Rosewood exhibited evidence for 0 of the 3 indicators (0%). The first indicator addressed school leadership providing feedback on the instructional techniques used with ELLs. The role of the SIOP coach was to provide teachers feedback on the implementation of instructional techniques used for ELLs. Additionally, the plan described the use of PLTs for teachers to work with peers. The second area was not addressed in any of the plans as none described leadership providing ongoing access to emerging research on ELLs. The third indicator addressed the implementation of professional development to support the instructional recommendations for ELLs. As mentioned previously, the SIOP model includes components for highly interactive teaching, vocabulary development, academic English, progress monitoring and peer assisted learning. The plan for Rosewood did not exhibit evidence for any of the indicators in this area.

Supervision and Monitoring of Instruction

The sixth area, supervision and monitoring of instruction, had two indicators. All of focus school plans exhibited evidence in 1of 2 indicators (50%). The first indicator

addressed the principal providing feedback to teachers, including in evaluations, in regards to the recommended EL practices. No action step in the plan suggests that is happening. The plan described data the regular use of data monitoring teams to monitor student progress throughout the year. The goal in reducing the achievement gap included universal screening and progress monitoring and specifically mentions benchmark assessments three times a year. It also described professional development for teachers and administrators on instructional and intervention strategies for Tier I and II. All of this suggested responsiveness to the second indicator that leadership discusses recommended interventions based on progress monitoring at least three times a year.

Use Data for Planning and Accountability

The seventh area focused on the use of data for planning and accountability and had 3 indicators. All of the plans exhibited evidence in 2 of the 3 indicators (67%). The first indicator addressed the principal reviewing ELL progress at least annually. The focus school plans described regular universal screening and progress monitoring of all students. Furthermore, state and federal reporting requirements mandated annual dissemination of disaggregated test data. The second indicators required that schools include ELLs in state reading and English proficiency assessments. As mentioned with the school improvement plans, state and federal policy required schools to test at least 95% of students in each subgroup. Based on these requirements, the plan exhibited evidence that the principal reviewed progress of ELLs at least annually with assessment and progress monitoring data and that ELLs are included in required testing. The focus school plans did not indicate whether or not native language speakers are utilized to ensure that ELLs understand the directions for assessments.

Engaging Families and Community

The eighth area had one indicator. All focus school plans exhibited evidence for the indicator (100%). The indicator in this section referred developing and communicating policy about teaching reading to parents of ELLs. The plan called for parents to be regularly informed on their child's progress in meeting standards and ways in which the parent can support the child. Although, it did not specifically mention ELLs, it is assumed that they would be included and this indicator met.

Ensuring a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment for All Student

The final area in school responsibility had one indicator. The five identical focus school plans exhibited evidence for the indicator (100%). The Rosewood focus school plan did not exhibit evidence for this indicator (0%). The indicator involved teachers creating a climate where students are consistently encouraged to participate in oral discussions and learning activities. For the five schools that included SIOP in the plan, it specifically stated the implementation of the model with fidelity. The SIOP model implemented with fidelity requires teachers to plan and execute lessons that incorporate meaningful activities that require students to listen, speak, read and write (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013). The schools implementing SIOP met this indicator. Rosewood did not include any strategies or action steps around this indicator.

Summary

The five schools that included SIOP in their focus school plan met 20 out of 26 indicators (77%). Out of the nine areas of school responsibility, these schools met indicators in every area. Rosewood met 14 out of the 26 indicators in six areas of school responsibility (54%). Setting standards, and expectations and providing research-based

instruction were areas of strength overall. The indicators most likely to have the least

support typically reflected a specific recommended practice for ELLs.

<div align="center">Student Achievement Data</div>

The table below displays the data in regard to changes in the three-year average

achievement gap between the ELL subgroup and the highest achievement gap.

Table 3: Three-year average achievement gap for ELLs

	2009-2011	n	2011-2013	n	Difference
State	43.80	46,725	46.37	41,402	2.57
Adams County	52.23	4,981	57.20	4,555	4.97
Eastmill	58.07	56	54.13	32	-3.93
Rosewood	52.27	42	59.57	49	7.30
Wayford	58.80	43	51.50	28	-7.30
Wellport	58.60	55	43.97	10	-14.63
Whiteton	56.70	48	51.20	51	-5.50
Brookdale	58.53	35	49.60	45	-8.93

As presented in the table above, the achievement gap increased at the state level

by 2.57 percentage points. For ACSS the achievement gap in reading also increased for

by 4.97 percentage points. During the 2011-2012 school year, the highest achieving

subgroup changed to Asian in ACSS and has remained that way.

The three-year average achievement gap between ELLs and the highest achieving

subgroup reduced in all but one school. Eastmill reduced 3.93 percentage points moving

from a gap of 58.07 percentage points to 54.13 percentage points. Wayford decreased the

gap by 7.30 percentage points from 58.8 percentage points to 51.5. Whiteton also

demonstrated progress by reducing the gap 5.50 percentage points. The three-year gap

was 56.7 percentage points in 2011 and 51.2 percentage points in 2013. Brookdale also demonstrated progress in closing in the gap by 8.93 percentage points. The three-year average gap in 2011 was 58.53 percentage points and reduced to 49.6 percentage points in 2013. The greatest percentage point decrease was at Wellport moving from 58.6 percentage points to 43.97 percentage points which is a 14.63 percentage point difference. Wellport noted in the school improvement plan that the reassignment plan in 2012 significantly impacted their student enrollment. In 2009 the school had 55 ELLs included in the subgroup, which reduced to 10 in 2013. The achievement gap at Rosewood increased 7.3 percentage points from 52.27 to 59.57 percentage points.

Focus schools were identified by having an achievement gap greater than the state average. Five of the identified focus schools within in ACSS have made progress in closing the gap ranging from 3.93 to 14.63 percentage points. Only one school, Wellport, had an average below the three-year state average in 2013, which could indicate a potential to exit focus school status. However, the size of the ELL subgroup may remove the subgroup from the calculation as subgroups in North Carolina currently require 30 students.

Summary

All plans demonstrated areas of responsiveness as outlined on the DWW template. The ACSS strategic plan demonstrated responsiveness to 63% of all indicators and the Title III plan exhibited evidence for 70%. School improvement plans demonstrated responsiveness in a range from 50% to 73% of the indicators. The five identical focus school plans exhibited evidence of responsiveness on 77% of indicators while the Rosewood focus plan reflected 54% of indicators.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter is organized by first discussing responsiveness in the areas of responsibility shared by both the district and school templates and then moves on to areas of responsibility unique to each level. From there the discussion focuses on alignment and potential gaps and then addresses potential challenges with the instrumentation. The discussion will move to student achievement data and then to recommendations. The recommendations will first focus on potential opportunities for the district or schools to capitalize upon and then focus on opportunities for improving the resources used to the conduct the study, primarily the DWW template and potential use in the future. The discussion will move to recommendations for further research.

Although, the focus of the research was a case study of a particular school system, it should be noted that the intent of the study was to examine the responsiveness at that current time and within the particular plans. The following discussion should be considered within context and with recognition that within all likelihood other plans and improvement processes are taking place.

Simultaneous to the conclusion of this study, an IES evaluation brief was released that examines similar concepts in School Improvement Grant (SIG) with percentages of ELLs (Golden, Harris, Mercado-Garcia, Boyle, Le Floch & O'Day., 2014). Although, Golden et al. (2014) utilized different methodology and focuses on a different set of schools, the study demonstrated similar findings to this study. In particular that many of

the school improvement efforts demonstrated moderate levels of responsiveness to the

particular needs of ELLs (Golden et al., 2014). In addition, the areas in which the efforts

demonstrated responsiveness typically focused on areas that were supported in research

for all students, rather than areas that addressed the particular needs of ELLs (Golden et

al., (2014).

<div style="text-align:center">District and School Leadership</div>

The district and school plans exhibited levels of responsiveness around

leadership based on the DWW templates. In particular, ACSS clearly had staff and

expertise around teaching English learners. The Title III plan indicates several staff

members with expertise to provide direction and support for ELLs. Resources are

identified and targeted towards meeting the needs of ELLs. Schools have ESL teachers

and intervention teachers to support classroom teachers. Coaches are identified to

support the professional development of teachers. An overall strength of the plans is that

they attended to the required accountability provisions and focused on achieving the

outcomes expected.

A common indicator frequently missed in the leadership area is communicating

policy in regards to teaching reading to ELLs. Further discussion of the indicator is in

the instrumentation section, but the intent of the indicator is communicating the

recommendations from Gersten et al. (2007). Gersten et al. recommend five specific

practices to improve literacy outcomes for ELLS which include screening for reading

problems and progress monitoring, intensive small group reading intervention, extensive

and varied vocabulary instruction, developing academic English as well as peer assisted

learning opportunities. The ACSS strategic plan and school improvement plans address

the first two recommendations through their core reading program and progress monitoring, but an opportunity exists to strengthen the specificity for ELLs.

Elmore (2004) asserts "policy is unlikely to result in improvement if it doesn't focus and deliver a coherent message about the purposes and practices that exemplify them" (p. 64). Miramontes et al. (2011) highlight that attempts at reform often falter when schools fail to consider the wide range of needs of their students. Although the ACSS strategic plan sends a message about reading and ELLs, it does not specifically identify research-based practices demonstrated to be effective for them. In turn, plans at the school level do not communicate practices that ELLs need specifically in their reading instruction.

Within the plans a clear example exists of how this communication can create a coherent message. Although related to Gersten et al.'s (2007) recommendations, it does not focus solely on ELLs. The ACSS strategic plan clearly outlines expectations for core reading instruction, progress monitoring, interventions and the support needed for teachers to implement. This expectation is clearly mirrored in all other plans. Schools may make different choices in how they meet the expectations, but each plan reflects the implementation. Clearly communicating how the core reading program, progress monitoring and interventions needed adjustments for ELLs could have a similar effect across the district creating a coherent message.

Through the Title III plan, the district identifies the SIOP model to enhance instruction for ELLs. The model includes instruction in vocabulary, academic English; peer based learning activities, small group instruction and progress monitoring (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013). The ACSS strategic plan makes no direct reference to

SIOP and only one school improvement plan includes it. The potential exists for SIOP to become the communicated means of enhancing instruction for ELLs, but based on the plans presented in this study the message does not appear to have permeated to all levels.

Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement

The district and schools plans clearly held the same academic expectations for ELLs. Each plan demonstrated targets for ELLs to meet reading proficiency targets and make appropriate growth. The district and schools were clearly aware of the achievement of ELLs. The Title III plan referenced the adopted World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English language proficiency standards that include developing vocabulary at all levels. The plans did not address using grade-level texts with ELLs. Further discussion of this indicator will follow.

Providing Research-Based Instruction in Support of Standards

Based on the DWW template, several indicators of responsiveness provided strong evidence across the different plans. As mentioned earlier, implementation of a core reading program, progress monitoring and the provision of interventions presented evidence of responsiveness. Areas to examine focus on the framework for teaching vocabulary, academic English and adjustments to core reading instruction based on the needs of ELLs.

The Title III plan, the focus school plans and Whiteton school improvement plan all identify the SIOP model to impact the achievement of ELLs. The ESL/Title III section at NCDPI has invested significant resources in this model across the state since 2003 to support implementation within school districts across the state (Lachance & Marino,, 2012). The SIOP model emphasizes vocabulary instruction in the second component,

building background (Echevarria et al., 2013). Additionally, the development and use of

language objectives both in the lesson planning component and lesson delivery

component support students learning academic English by explicitly teaching the

language needed to successfully demonstrate mastery of the content material (Echevarria

et al., 2013). Furthermore, the review and assessment component calls for ongoing

assessment of these concepts throughout the lesson (Echevarria et al., 2013). If

implemented with fidelity, the SIOP model could support the indicators around

vocabulary and developing academic English. The incongruent representation across

plans suggests the need for further follow-up to determine whether the model is actually

being implemented and the level of fidelity of implementation.

<div align="center">Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High-Quality Staff</div>

The district and school plans had indicators of responsiveness in this area. The

district planned to provide resources and training through a variety of sources. Training

was identified around progress monitoring, interventions and administration and

interpretation of assessments. Often the training identified was job embedded with

support through PLTs. The district provides approximately 165 ESL teachers and other

support staff to meet the needs of ELLs. The Title III and Title I focus school plans also

identified training in SIOP, which addresses the recommendations of Gersten et al.

(2007). As was noted earlier, this training was only identified in one school improvement

plan. Title II-A funds were not discussed as a potential for paying for professional

development, but sufficient resources appeared to be available for the training outlined.

A clear opportunity at the district level exists to provide training on teaching reading to

ELL principals. As instructional leaders expected to provide leadership and feedback to

teachers, this specific knowledge could assist them in efforts to close the achievement gap. At the school level, responsiveness was primarily found through supporting teachers through coaching and PLTs. One school included the creation of a model classroom. No plan suggested that school leadership provided updates in regards to emerging research about ELLs. The data around ensuring all teachers are included in professional development around teaching reading to ELLs varies. Based on the implementation of SIOP, many schools demonstrate responsiveness with the focus school plans, but it is not reflected in the school improvement plans.

Using Data for Planning and Accountability

At the district and school level, the indicators under this section were largely considered responsive based on accountability data. ACSS demonstrated through accountability data that ELLs participated appropriately in all elementary reading and English language proficiency assessments. These may only be identified in an improvement plan if they were not met. Additionally, all plans presented at least annual data regarding performance of ELLs. At the school level, the use of native language interpreters to ensure students participate effectively was not necessarily addressed. However, use of interpreters to support family involvement was included.

Engaging Families and Community

The strategic plan, Title III plan, and the focus schools plan had significant indicators of responsiveness in regards to engaging parents. The focus school plans identified engaging parents in meetings to make sure they understood their students' progress and potential areas to support learning outcomes. The district strategic plan and the Title III plan also identified strategies to engage families. The Title III plan included

a Senior Administrator for Parent Outreach and the district strategic plan reflected

responsiveness through the core mission, as well as specific key processes and action

steps in the fifth focus area of the plan. In particular, the strategic plan referred to

building positive connections that overcome linguistic and cultural barriers as well as

providing meaningful training opportunities for parents to increase parent involvement

and student achievement.

Promoting Equity and Adequacy of Resources

This represents an area of responsibility solely under the district level. Only two

indicators represented responsiveness to ELLs. The first focused around the provision of

adequate resources including ESL and intervention teachers provided to schools. The

second reflected the inclusion of ELLs in Title I reading programs. This indicator is

somewhat antiquated. Title I shifted to the use of a schoolwide program model for

schools with greater than 40% of students in poverty. Schoolwide models identify all

students as Title I students. In 2010-2011, North Carolina had 2,044 Title I schools and

1,909 were schoolwide programs (USED, 2012b). During the same school year, 73.5%

of Title I schools implemented a schoolwide program nationally (USED, 2012b). These

programs must implement research-based programs to support students, but it does not

need to be a pull-out program targeted toward a group of students. Broadening the scope

of the indicator could better reflect the current implementation of Title I.

Supporting Instruction in the Classroom

This area of responsibility resides at the school level. School improvement plans

generally demonstrated responsiveness to areas related to scheduling and provision of

interventions and the process for progress monitoring. The full version of the plans

published by the three schools included specific detailed plans for the provision of interventions on both a short-term and long-term basis. The summary versions of the plans published by the other three schools also referenced these indicators. The indicators that were not directly referenced in the plans related to specific recommendations for ELLs. In particular, indicators not noted related to organizing a daily block for academic English and scheduling weekly planning for vocabulary and academic English. Coady et al. (2003) recommend schools select "strategies and reforms that explicitly address cultural and linguistic differences" (p. 72). Opportunity may exist for schools to improve identification and implementation of research-based strategies with strong evidence to impact ELLs.

<div align="center">Supervision and Monitoring of Instruction</div>

Another area of school responsibility is supervision and monitoring of instruction. This was one area in which the use of a summary of the school improvement plan may have influenced the evidence of responsiveness for two schools. This indicator focused on the school leadership discussing progress monitoring and interventions at least three times annually with teachers. Due to the brevity of the plans, progress monitoring and interventions were mentioned, but lacked any type of specificity in how regularly they occurred. The schools that used longer versions had more specificity around this indicator and provided specific information about the frequency of discussions between leadership and teachers. The recommendation in terms of further study in each case would be a follow-up to determine if the leadership was ensuring progress monitoring and intervention happened at regular intervals. For the other indicator, none of the school

plans referenced principals including information on the recommended practices for ELLs in teacher evaluation or other feedback.

Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

The sole indicator in this area of school responsibility focused on creating classroom climates conducive to oral discussion and learning activities. The focus school plans addressed this for five of the schools through the implementation of the SIOP model with fidelity. The school improvement plans did not specifically address this indicator and only one of the five included information about implementing the SIOP model. Although in the Whiteton plan made a specific reference to SIOP, it was in utilizing SIOP strategies to build vocabulary. This suggests less than full implementation of the model and does not necessarily include activities for oral language development.

Alignment

Alignment summarizes how the plans supported each other at the district level, the school level and across levels. Although it provides a summary of data, it also presents areas in which school and district efforts support each other and gain momentum or potential areas for refinement. Furthermore it provides a synthesis of the data.

District Plans

Several key areas aligned between both district level plans. Both plans demonstrated that they held the same learning outcomes for ELLs as all students. Both plans identified resources at the local, state and federal level to carry out their plan. Other strong indicators of alignment were plans for progress monitoring, identifying interventions and providing training for interventions. Additionally, both plans identified

funds to provide training in sheltered instruction, progress monitoring, developing academic language, and to hire native language speakers.

Other key areas of alignment focused on the use of data, accountability and engaging families. Both plans addressed sharing reading data for ELLs at the district and school level as well as examining English language proficiency data. Furthermore, they both discussed the need to analyze assessments, including progress monitoring for providing interventions for ELLs. Both plans described the need to provide appropriate information to parents of ELLs.

It should be noted that some areas that did not demonstrate an alignment might be due to the difference in focus and requirements of the plans. For example, the district strategic plan was addressing all students and all program areas within the district, and may not target ELLs as specifically as the Title III plan. Conversely, the Title III plan may not have addressed resources or programs outside of the control of the department. An example is the indicator that addresses including ELLs in Title I reading programs. The district strategic plan specifically calls for Title I, ESL and other intervention services to coordinate the provision of services, whereas the Title III plan does not mention the provision of Title I services as it may not have control over those resources.
School Plans

Similar to the district plans, a key area of alignment for the school plans was leadership communicating the same learning outcomes for ELLs as other students. All of the schools described the implementation of a core reading program and providing professional development for implementation. Although all schools described the provision of a core reading program, it is not necessarily the same program. Similar to

the district plans as well, strong alignment exists in the school plans around progress monitoring, training for administering and interpreting progress monitoring measures and access to reading interventions. Principals across the schools planned for organizing daily opportunities for intervention for students who required it. The processes for progress monitoring and provision of reading intervention were evident across all of the plans. School leaders review progress of ELLs at least annually and ensure ELLs are included in required state assessments. Another clear area of alignment is the participation for teachers in PLTs.

Alignment Between District and Schools

Across the different levels, all plans provided evidence that stakeholders held the same expectation for ELLs as all children. According to evidence in each plan, implementation of a core reading program is expected as well as the training to ensure teachers know how to implement it. Furthermore, the plans suggest that regular assessment, including progress monitoring, is expected and teachers need to be trained in the administration and interpretation of the results. Additionally, evidence of planning for reading intervention is evident across all of the plans. Evidence across all of the plans suggests that teachers are supported through multiple means, such as PLTs, provision of a literacy coach, models of best practice, and/or feedback from walkthroughs. Each plan identified the use of data from assessment results of ELLs. Evidence suggests that the district and schools are appropriately including ELLs in required assessments.

Potential Gaps

District Plans

Several potential gaps presented in the district's strategic and Title III plans.

Neither plan included any potential evidence that the LEA policy is to use grade level

text with ELLs rather than simplified texts. Additionally, the plans did not indicate any

leadership training for principals specifically related to reading and ELLs. The plans also

did not indicate a preference in hiring to teachers who have training or expertise in

working with ELLs. Finally, neither plan identified the use of Title II-A funds to support

professional development in working with ELLs.

School Improvement and Focus School Plans

The first identification of potential gaps was through noting which indicators were

not included in any of the school improvement plans or the focus school plan. Five

potential gaps were identified in this manner. The first potential gap was in the area of

leadership related to the principal communicating policy about teaching reading to ELLs

with all staff. The second potential gap was the principal providing ongoing access for

staff around emerging research on ELLs. The third potential gap was around the

organization of the daily schedule to ensure ELLs have a specific block of time daily

addressing academic English. The fourth potential gap was the principal including

feedback and evaluation for teachers on the use of the recommended practices for ELLs.

The indicator for principals to engage native language speakers to explain directions for

progress monitoring was the fifth potential gap.

The second identification of potential gaps at the school level targeted differences

between the focus schools plan and the school improvement plans. Specifically, the

researcher looked for indicators that were included in the focus schools plan that were missing from the majority of the school improvement plans. Four potential gaps became apparent in this manner. The focus school plan focused on instruction in grade-level concepts with all students in their core instruction. None of the school improvement plans made direct reference to ensure exposure to the grade-level content. The focus school plan addressed providing vocabulary and academic English through implementation of the SIOP model. Only one school, Whiteton, references building vocabulary through the SIOP model. The other schools do not reference the model in the school improvement plan. Similarly, another indicator focused on providing professional development for teachers in regards to teaching vocabulary, academic English, progress monitoring, interventions and peer assisted learning. The focus school plan included professional development on SIOP which addressed this indicator. Again, only one school references professional development in SIOP within the school improvement plan. Another potential gap was communicating about teaching reading to parents of ELLs. The focus school plan had clear action steps in regards to this and only two school improvement plans referenced it. The final potential gap is the focus school plan provided evidence of creating a climate where children were encouraged to participate in oral discussions and learning opportunities. The evidence was through the implementation of SIOP model as oral language development is a component, if implemented with fidelity. Only one school identified the use of SIOP for building vocabulary in the school improvement plan. The school improvement plans lacked evidence for developing a climate that encourages oral language development.

District and School Gaps

Several potential gaps were identified from the district level to the school level. One potential gap identified at both the district and school level as using grade level texts rather than simplified texts. The district plans do not identify providing training to principals specifically in regards to reading and ELLS. Related gaps at the school level could include principals organizing the daily schedule to ensure ELLs receive instruction in academic English, principals including use of recommended practices in teacher feedback and evaluation and the principal ensuring all teachers have professional development around the recommended practices.

Summary

The district and school plans had clear areas of alignment and some potential gaps. Implementation of a core reading program with progress monitoring and interventions based on analyzing student data were evident across plans. Potential gaps focused around the specific provision of the recommended practices for ELLs, the training provided to implement those practices and the use of grade level texts in English.

Overall the district and schools plans suggest a relatively strong alignment in regards to implementation of a core reading program with progress monitoring and processes for intervention. Further alignment exists around responsiveness to instruction and the job-embedded professional development to support these instructional approaches. The use of PLTs, coaches and model classroom provide peer support to teachers in implementing the strategies from their plans. These activities support Gersten et al.'s (2007) first recommendation of screen for reading problems and monitoring progress as well as the second of providing intensive small-group interventions. These

particular recommendations are frequently part of any core reading program and not necessarily unique to ELLs.

Elmore (2007) suggests that reform efforts gain a comparative advantage when leaders at different levels are acting in the appropriate roles and performing the appropriate functions. Each level supports the others, but remains focused on its essential function which frees the focus and energy of the other levels to focus on their functions. An example found in this case study would be with the core reading processes described. The district developed curriculum around the set standards and created district maps through C-MAPP as a resource for the schools. The district also defines and provides training for surrounding processes. Within certain parameters, schools identified particular resources or supports to implement the core reading program, monitor progress and intervene when students were struggling.

The particular gaps identified focused around implementing the remaining recommendation for ELLs in Gersten et al. (2007), particularly vocabulary, developing academic English and providing 90 minutes of peer-based learning opportunities each week. Although, indicators existed in specific plans, they were inconsistent and not necessarily supported in other plans. For example, the focus school plans provided key indicators through the implementation of SIOP, but that strategy was not necessarily supported in the school improvement plans. Another example is the lack of specific training on teaching reading to ELLs for principals. Without that training, principals may have a difficult time supporting instruction and providing appropriate monitoring and supervision.

Without a clear and coherent message of the practices needed to support ELLs, the potential exists to lose any comparative advantage as the different leaders from the classroom to the policy setters are unclear about what they need to be doing. Coady et al. (2003) argue that when creating plans that are responsive to ELLs, schools should try not to select reform efforts for all students and adjust for ELLs; rather they should select strategies responsive to ELLs and then adjust for other students. In working this direction, the district could have created a clear and coherent message that still included all of the core instructional practices, but would have clearly communicated the needs of ELLs. Coady et al. (2003) suggest a potential benefit is that the instructional reforms responsive to ELLs are often responsive to other struggling students.

<div align="center">Student Achievement</div>

In order to exit focus school status, each of the schools needs to close the achievement gap. As part of this study, the researcher examined the progress the schools have made in the past two years in closing the gap in reading for grades three through five. All of the schools, with the exception of Rosewood, demonstrated progress in closing the gap in the current three-year average. The current three-year average only includes two years of new data. The gap reduction ranged from 3.93 percentage points to 14.63 percentage points. Wellport, the school with the highest percentage point decrease, also mentioned a significant change in demographics due redistricting. Currently, the subgroup size is too small and would no longer be included in the gap analysis at the state level. The achievement data for the 2012-2013 presents a slight challenge as they represent new standards and assessments with new norms. Although new assessments may cause shifts in overall proficiency and impact gap sizes, the comparison to the state

would even out the overall impact in determining focus school status. Additionally, focus schools were identified for a three-year period, which means the schools will be identified for at least one additional year. Currently, Wellport is below the state achievement gap for ELLs. If the state achievement gap remains constant, and schools continue to make progress at the current rate four schools could potentially exit focus school status in the next four years. However, the state achievement gap for ELLs has not remained constant, but continues to increase.

Another finding is the one school that clearly stated it would not implement the SIOP model as part of the focus plan, experienced an increase in the achievement gap for ELLs. It was the only school to actually widen the achievement gap, although no statements were made to suggest why they would not implement SIOP. The leadership team at the school may want to look at available research-based practices in literacy and implement something that would be more responsive to ELLs.

Instrumentation

The templates were designed for self-reflection at the particular state, school or district level. This study used the templates outside of the intended purpose to examine plans from an outside perspective. Through the use of the templates, the researcher discovered potential opportunities to improve the templates for the current intention as well as for further research.

A common indicator frequently missed in the leadership area is communicating policy in regards to teaching reading to ELLs. The wording of this indicator (District Indicator 1 and School Indicator 1) may be a little confusing depending on the

governance structure of the school system. Policy is decided at different levels and through different processes depending on the governance structure.

The second indicator in regards to leadership at both the district and school level of the DWW template states that it is policy to use grade-level texts rather than simplified ones. The researcher did not recall that specific reference in Gersten et al. (2007). Upon further investigation, reference is made to using grade level text in the section discussing possible roadblocks for developing academic English. Of the five recommendations of Gersten et al. (2007) only one, academic English, had low evidence supporting it which means it was based on expert opinion or strong theories in related areas. The use of grade-level texts is to prevent ELLs from being cushioned and fed a diet of familiar texts (Gersten et al., 2007). No citation to any related study was made to support this recommendation. The recommendation suggests that exposure to familiar low level texts will not develop understanding of content bound unfamiliar texts (Gersten et al., 2007). The recommendation and the corresponding checklist to carry it out made no reference to districts creating policy to use only grade-level texts. The authors of the DWW template may have overstated the recommendation.

Fitzgerald and Graves (2004) recommend a balance between challenging and easy reading texts. Challenging texts help develop vocabulary and critical thinking, while easy reading helps developing automaticity, builds confidence and creates interest (Fizgerald & Graves, 2004). Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) identify the need for students to read text at their independent level and below their frustration level to consolidate their ability to read independently. Echevarria et al. (2013) argue to select

text at students' instructional level and provide scaffolding to ensure the text is accessible.

The indicator on the template does not necessarily reflect the intent of the original publication it is purportedly supporting. Additionally, if implemented at face value it implies that teachers should use only grade-level texts with ELLs. Research suggests (Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004; Snow et al., 1998) that teachers should select the text level based on the instructional intent of the activity. When developing academic English, scaffolding exposure to grade-level text provides opportunities to expose students to language not included in simplified texts. However, teachers may need to use instructional or independent level texts on other occasions. The indicators reflecting the use of grade-level text could be revised to using grade-level texts with scaffolding during the daily block for developing academic English.

Although the templates were designed for self-reflection, the challenge is finding staff at the district and school level that are in appropriate levels of leadership to provide expertise in understanding the indicators of the template and provide meaningful feedback to help formulate a plan that is responsive. Research should be conducted on districts and schools utilizing the DWW templates to determine if using them impacts students achievement. Furthermore, to what extent does a school or district need to implement the recommendations to impact student achievement? Further description into the development and testing of the templates should be provided.

<div align="center">Progress Monitoring</div>

The plans all described the use of progress monitoring and included processes for intervention. This aligns with the first recommendation from Gersten et al. (2007), which

calls for frequent progress monitoring. Additionally, the use of early screening measures in phonological awareness, alphabetic principal and reading single words were found useful in identifying ELLs who are struggling with reading in kindergarten and first grade (Gersten et al., (2007). For students in the later elementary grades measures of oral fluency are valid screening (Gersten et al., 2007). Most of the assessments identified within the plans, such as mClass, included these measures.

Gersten et al. (2007) argue that the performance benchmark should not be adjusted for ELLs and schools should not consider below-grade level performance normal. Additionally, schools should not wait for oral language to develop to start teaching early reading skills. However, Ecvhevarria et al. (2012) recommend that teachers understand that phonemic and orthographic differences between the child's native language and English which may be the cause for certain reading differences. Furthermore, Lesaux et al. (2006) noted that ELLs often performed similar to English-only peers on measures of phonological awareness and with sufficient exposure to English, word level skills can develop on pace with native-English speakers. However, text level skills, such as reading comprehension, are often a struggle (Lesaux et al., 2006).

<div align="center">District Recommendations</div>

Based on the findings of the study, clear indicators of responsiveness exist at the district level as well as opportunities to increase it. The district could leverage current efforts by providing a clear coherent message describing what ELLs need differently in literacy instruction and a level of expectation that it will be attended to in schools that need to improve achievement of this subgroup. Leveraging the current resources, the

district could provide professional development for district leaders, school leaders and teachers in regard to these practices. The opportunity is to be very specific to ELLs, rather than generalize to all students. As Coady et al. (2003) suggest, focus the plan for reform on efforts responsive to ELLs and adjust for all students. A clear focus on providing training to school leadership in focus schools may help.

<div align="center">School Recommendations</div>

Similar to the district, the school plans have areas of responsiveness and opportunities to improve. The greatest opportunities exist in getting specific with the recommendations that relate to ELLs specifically and go beyond typical core reading implementation. Schools could provide clear goals and strategies around teaching vocabulary, developing academic English, creating a climate for oral discussion and providing opportunities for peer-based learning. Clear and explicit action steps with job-embedded professional development based on a coherent message could significantly impact efforts to close the achievement gap, not just dip below the state average.

<div align="center">Implications for Practice</div>

Districts and schools have been implementing reform efforts for decades and yet the achievement gap has remained for ELLs and other subgroups of students. Research suggests that a mismatch may exist between the reform strategies selected and the responsiveness to ELLs (Golden et al., 2014; Hamaan, et al., 2005; Miramontes et al,. 2011). As accountability efforts continue to focus on specific groups of students, matching reform efforts to instructional designs demonstrated to be effective with those students becomes even more important. Administrators and teachers spending time and energy trying to improve outcomes for ELLs could be better served if they had better

understanding of the research and instructional designs supported by evidence to impact

their learning, instead of selecting strategies demonstrated to be effective to the general

population.

<div align="center">Implications for Further Study</div>

Although the findings of this study relate to this district, opportunities exist to

expand the research both in this particular case and to use similar methodology across

other systems or in other subject areas. Based on the current findings, the potential exists

to further the understanding of responsiveness in ACSS through interviews, focus groups

and observations and in particular, using the results of this analysis to develop a plan for

further study within the district. The results could be used to develop questions for focus

groups, individual interviews, and observations could triangulate findings and identify

concrete steps to leverage reform efforts for ELLs. As an example, a focus group with

district personnel including Title I and Title III could potentially provide additional data

on the actual implementation of SIOP in the schools. Interviews with key central office

personnel may provide indicators of utilizing the expertise in ELLs to create plans at the

district level and review plans at the school level.

Considering that each district is a single bound case, opportunities exist to repeat

this study in other North Carolina districts to examine responsiveness to ELLs. While

this analysis centered on focus schools in this particular system due to accountability

requirements, a similar analysis could be done on any school particularly interested in

closing the achievement gap with this population. This study methodology could

potentially provide data to districts and school that could leverage school reform efforts.

Furthermore, the analysis does not necessarily need to hinge on the DWW template or

recommendations of Gersten et al. (2007) in regard to literacy. Other potential templates exist. For example, Coady et al. (2003) provide a more generic template that looks at ELLs more holistically, rather than with a focus on literacy.

Gersten et al. (2007) claim that the recommendations made do not address language of instruction, but could be effective based on instruction in English or both languages simultaneously. Considering the findings of Thomas and Collier (2012), that demonstrate students in dual language programs are the only group to truly close the achievement gap, comparison studies could provide meaningful data towards school improvement efforts. Schools providing instruction in English-only that are implementing the recommendations of Gersten et al. (2007) could be compared to similar schools implementing the recommendations with a dual language approach. This could provide valuable information to schools that have the potential to implement dual language, but currently provide an English-only model.

Potential opportunities exist to provide similar research to individual districts as a means of technical assistance to examine whether their processes and plans are responsive to ELLs, particularly in literacy. The use of these templates either through technical assistance or reflection at the appropriate level requires a clear understanding of the recommendations in Gersten et al. (2007). A potential avenue within North Carolina is to use the ELL support team to provide technical assistance in reviewing plans to ensure responsiveness. Although the majority of team members have extensive training in particular evidenced based strategies for ELLs, additional training would be needed around effective school reform. Additionally, potential exists to use a similar research process to examine responsiveness to mathematics instruction for ELLS.

Additional research could address the issue of alignment and gaps for ELLs and how well planning efforts meet their needs. The findings of Golden et al. (2014), Hamann et al. (2005), and Miramontes et al. (2011) suggest that planning efforts for school improvement efforts fail to address ELLs specifically. Efforts for reform may leave it up to chance as to whether the work will impact achievement of ELLS.

Conclusion

The single bound descriptive case study of ACSS analyzing district and school improvement plans found evidence of responsiveness to ELLs based on the DWW templates. Indicators or responsiveness trended around the implementation of core reading programs, progress monitoring, processes for intervention and professional development to support these strategies. These areas focus around the first and second recommendations of Gersten et al. (2007) around the need to screen and progress monitor reading problems and the provision of intensive small group instruction. Opportunities to increase potential responsiveness predominantly related to strategies more specific to ELLs. These included vocabulary instruction, development of academic English, peer-based learning opportunities and oral language development.

Although the findings relate to the circumstances of this one particular district, the study design provides potential opportunities for replication in other systems. Districts and schools looking to impact achievement gaps for ELLs could replicate the process internally or with external technical assistance. Additionally, the process could be utilized with other templates or subjects.

Based on current federal and state accountability standards, districts and states are mandated to create plans and processes for improving the outcomes of ELLs. Hamann et

al. (2003) and Miramontes et al. (1997) discovered a dichotomy of planning efforts in which plans and processes did not particularly address the needs of ELLs, even when they were a key target of efforts. In the case of this district, the plans exhibited indicators of responsiveness to ELLs, but opportunities exist to enhance planning for ELLs.

Other districts and schools could benefit from this research by taking concrete steps to determine if their improvement efforts focused on ELLs are supported by research-based practices specific to this group. ELLs are not a monolithic subgroup, but vary based on culture, language, educational experience, and other factors. The challenge to educators is to ensure that efforts to improve educational outcomes meet the specific needs of the population of ELLs the district or school serves.

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APPENDIX A: TEACHING LITERACY TO K-5 ENGLISH LEARNERS PLANNING TEMPLATE FOR WORKING WITH DISTRICTS

Planning templates are designed to help technical assistance providers work with educators. This template can help district-level personnel translate the recommendations of the IES Practice Guide *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades* into actions and policy options, encourage systematic identification of existing strategies or gaps, and establish a coordinated and coherent districtwide plan that addresses the needs of its schools.

AREA OF LEA RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
A. District Leadership				
1. LEA develops and communicates district policy about teaching reading to English learners to all administrators, specialists, and teaching staff, including Title I, Reading First.				
2. LEA has EL expertise on staff related to teaching EL students or access to EL experts.				
3. LEA has identified potential resources, including state and federal grant monies, to support recommended practices (e.g., professional development, interventions).				
B. Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement				
1. LEA holds same learning outcome expectations for English learners as for all students.				
2. LEA policy is to use grade-level (rather than simplified) texts with English learners.				
3. District-adopted standards address academic English at all grade levels, augmenting state standards as necessary.				
4. District-adopted standards address vocabulary development at all grade levels, augmenting state standards as necessary.				

APPENDIX A: (Continued)

AREA OF LEA RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
C. Providing Research-Based and Effective Instruction in Support of State and District Standards				
1. LEA selects core reading program(s) for consistent use within the district that is aligned to district standards.				
2. LEA provides training in core reading program(s).				
3. LEA requires plan for progress monitoring for beginning reading from each elementary school; plan includes names of assessments, schedule, use of results, monitoring by principal.				
4. LEA selects or develops framework for teaching academic English.				
5. LEA identifies reading interventions/materials for interventions.				
6. LEA provides training in reading interventions.				
D. Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High- Quality Staff				
1. LEA provides leadership training for school principals in teaching reading to English learners.				
2. LEA gives preference in hiring to teachers who have training/ expertise in working with English learners.				
3. As necessary, LEA employs ESL teachers to provide instruction in academic English.				
4. LEA offers/funds training for teachers in sheltered instruction techniques, use of progress monitoring instruments, academic English.				

APPENDIX A: (Continued)

AREA OF LEA RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
5. As necessary, LEA hires teachers/ paraprofessionals who are fluent in languages represented by EL students to support administration of progress monitoring.				
6. LEA applies Title II-A funds to support professional development in working with English learners.				
E. Using Data for Planning and Accountability				
1. LEA includes EL students in state reading assessments and English Language Proficiency assessments.				
2. LEA analyzes and reports state reading assessment data by EL status for district as a whole and by school				
3. LEA analyzes performance on English language proficiency measures for district as a whole and by school.				
4. LEA analyzes assessment results, including progress monitoring, to identify needs for intervention strategies/weaknesses in curriculum.				
F. Promoting Equity / Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources				
1. Based on annual review of learning progress and needs of EL population, LEA identifies needs for staff resources, including ESL teachers and intervention teachers.				
2. LEA includes EL students in Title I reading programs, depending on need.				
G. Engaging Families and Community				
1. LEA communicates policy about teaching reading to English learners to parents of EL students.				
2. LEA has established partnerships with relevant community agencies that have expertise to support EL students.				

APPENDIX A: (Continued)

TEACHING LITERACY TO K-5 ENGLISH LEARNERS PLANNING TEMPLATE FOR WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Planning templates are designed to help technical assistance providers work with educators. This template can help school principals and leadership teams translate the recommendations of the IES Practice Guide *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades* into actions to promote the identification of school needs and practices that meet the needs of all students and staff.

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS		Potential Areas to Develop	NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate		
A. School Leadership				
1. School principal communicates to and discusses policy about teaching reading to English learners with all staff.				
2. School has access to expertise related to teaching English learners.				
B. Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement				
1. School principal and school reading leaders communicate that learning expectations for English learners are same as learning outcomes for other students.				
2. School uses grade-level texts with English learners.				
C. Providing Research-Based and Effective Instruction in Support of State and District Standards				
1. School implements core reading program(s) consistently in all classrooms.				
2. All teachers receive training/orientation to core reading series.				
3. All teachers provide instruction to all students in vocabulary and academic English.				

APPENDIX A: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
4. Teachers administer progress monitoring assessments for beginning reading at least every 6-8 weeks and identify needs for additional instruction.				
5. All teachers receive training/orientation to administration and interpretation of progress monitoring measures.				
6. Teachers have access to repertoire of reading interventions and support materials. [Also see Section F below]				
D. Supporting Instruction in the Classroom				
1. Principal and teachers organize daily schedule to ensure that English learners have specific block of instructional time each day where academic English is focus.				
2. Principal and teachers organize reading block/daily schedule to ensure that students who require reading interventions can receive daily small group instruction.				
3. Principal schedules weekly planning time for grade-level teachers and specialists to work together on planning vocabulary and academic English lessons.				
4. Principal and school leaders ensure that there is a process for review of use of progress monitoring results.				
5. Principal and school reading leaders ensure that there is a process for determining when/whether/what type of interventions are required.				
6. Teachers have access to support for implementing peer based instruction (e.g., help in establishing routines).				
E. Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High- Quality Staff				
1. Principal and school reading leaders provide opportunities for teachers to receive feedback about their implementation				

APPENDIX A: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	Not Feasible/ Inappropriate	Potential Areas to Develop	
of instructional techniques used with English learners, including opportunities for sharing with peers and receiving peer feedback.				
2. Principal and school reading leaders provide ongoing access for staff to emerging research about English learners.				
3. Principal ensures that all teachers, including ESL teachers, are included in all professional development opportunities for teaching English learners that cover the following: vocabulary development, academic English, progress monitoring, interventions/ characteristics of highly interactive teaching, peer-assisted learning.				
F. Supervision and Monitoring of Instruction				
1. Principal includes use of recommended EL practices in teacher feedback and evaluation.				
2. Principal and school reading leaders discuss recommended interventions based on progress monitoring results with teachers at least three times a year.				
G. Use Data for Planning and Accountability				
1. Principal and/or other reading leaders review English learner progress schoolwide with all staff at least annually, using assessment and progress monitoring data				
2. Principal and teachers ensure that ELs are included in state reading assessments and English Language Proficiency assessments				
3. As necessary, principal engages adults who speak the native language of ELs to explain directions for progress monitoring assessments				

APPENDIX A: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	CURRENT STATUS			NEXT STEPS
	Already in Place	**Not Feasible/ Inappropriate**	**Potential Areas to Develop**	
H. Engaging Families and Community				
1. School develops and communicates policy about teaching reading to parents of English learners				
I. Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for All Students				
1. Teachers create climate in classrooms where all children are consistently encouraged to participate in oral discussions and learning activities				

APPENDIX B: DISTRICT RESULTS

AREA OF LEA RESPONSIBILITY	ACSS Strategic Plan	ACSS Title III Plan
A. District Leadership		
1. LEA develops and communicates district policy about teaching reading to English learners to all administrators, specialists, and teaching staff, including Title I, Reading First.	X	--
2. LEA has EL expertise on staff related to teaching EL students or access to EL experts.	--	X
3. LEA has identified potential resources, including state and federal grant monies, to support recommended practices (e.g., professional development, interventions).	X	X
B. Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement		
1. LEA holds same learning outcome expectations for English learners as for all students.	X	X
2. LEA policy is to use grade-level (rather than simplified) texts with English learners.	--	--
3. District-adopted standards address academic English at all grade levels, augmenting state standards as necessary.	--	X
4. District-adopted standards address vocabulary development at all grade levels, augmenting state standards as necessary.	--	X
C. Providing Research-Based and Effective Instruction in Support of State and District Standards		
1. LEA selects core reading program(s) for consistent use within the district that is aligned to district standards.	X	--
2. LEA provides training in core reading program(s).	X	--
3. LEA requires plan for progress monitoring for beginning reading from each elementary school; plan includes names of assessments, schedule, use of results, monitoring by principal.	X	X
4. LEA selects or develops framework for teaching academic English.	--	X
5. LEA identifies reading interventions/materials for interventions.	X	X
6. LEA provides training in reading interventions.	X	X
D. Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High- Quality Staff		
1. LEA provides leadership training for school principals in teaching reading to English learners.	--	--
2. LEA gives preference in hiring to teachers who have training/ expertise in working with English learners.		

APPENDIX B: (Continued)

3. As necessary, LEA employs ESL teachers to provide instruction in academic English.	--	X
4. LEA offers/funds training for teachers in sheltered instruction techniques, use of progress monitoring instruments, academic English.	--	--
5. As necessary, LEA hires teachers/ paraprofessionals who are fluent in languages represented by EL students to support administration of progress monitoring.	X	X
6. LEA applies Title II-A funds to support professional development in working with English learners.	X	X
	--	--
E. Using Data for Planning and Accountability		
1. LEA includes EL students in state reading assessments and English Language Proficiency assessments.	X	X
2. LEA analyzes and reports state reading assessment data by EL status for district as a whole and by school	X	X
3. LEA analyzes performance on English language proficiency measures for district as a whole and by school.	X	X
4. LEA analyzes assessment results, including progress monitoring, to identify needs for intervention strategies/weaknesses in curriculum.	X	X
F. Promoting Equity/ Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources		
1. Based on annual review of learning progress and needs of EL population, LEA identifies needs for staff resources, including ESL teachers and intervention teachers.	X	X
2. LEA includes EL students in Title I reading programs, depending on need.	--	X
G. Engaging Families and Community		
1. LEA communicates policy about teaching reading to English learners to parents of EL students.	X	X
2. LEA has established partnerships with relevant community agencies that have expertise to support EL students.	X	--

APPENDIX C: SCHOOL RESULTS

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rose-wood	Way-ford	Well-port	Whit eton	Broo kdale
A. School Leadership						
1. School principal communicates to and discusses policy about teaching reading to English learners with all staff.	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. School has access to expertise related to teaching English learners.	--	X	--	X	X	--
B. Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement						
1. School principal and school reading leaders communicate that learning expectations for English learners are same as learning outcomes for other students.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. School uses grade-level texts with English learners.	--	--	--	--	--	--
C. Providing Research-Based and Effective Instruction in Support of State and District Standards						
1. School implements core reading program(s) consistently in all classrooms.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. All teachers receive training/orientation to core reading series.	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. All teachers provide instruction to all students in vocabulary and academic English.	--	--	--	--	X	--
4. Teachers administer progress monitoring assessments for beginning reading at least every 6-8 weeks and identify needs for additional instruction.	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. All teachers receive training/orientation to administration and interpretation of progress monitoring measures.	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Teachers have access to repertoire of reading interventions and support materials. [Also see Section F below]	X	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX C: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rose-wood	Way-ford	Well-port	Whit eton	Broo kdale
D. Supporting Instruction in the Classroom						
1. Principal and teachers organize daily schedule to ensure that English learners have specific block of instructional time each day where academic English is focus.	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Principal and teachers organize reading block/daily schedule to ensure that students who require reading interventions can receive daily small group instruction.	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Principal schedules weekly planning time for grade-level teachers and specialists to work together on planning vocabulary and academic English lessons.	--	--	--	--	X	--
4. Principal and school leaders ensure that there is a process for review of use of progress monitoring results.	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Principal and school reading leaders ensure that there is a process for determining when/whether/what type of interventions are required.	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Teachers have access to support for implementing peer based instruction (e.g., help in establishing routines).	X	X	X	X	X	X
E. Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High- Quality Staff						
1. Principal and school reading leaders provide opportunities for teachers to receive feedback about their implementation of instructional techniques used with English learners, including opportunities for sharing with peers and receiving peer feedback.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Principal and school reading leaders provide ongoing access for staff to emerging research about English learners.	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. Principal ensures that all teachers, including ESL teachers, are included in all professional development opportunities for teaching English learners that cover the	--	--	--	--	X	--

APPENDIX C: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rose-wood	Way-ford	Well-port	Whiteton	Brookdale
following: vocabulary development, academic English, progress monitoring, interventions/ characteristics of highly interactive teaching, peer-assisted learning.						
F. Supervision and Monitoring of Instruction						
1. Principal includes use of recommended EL practices in teacher feedback and evaluation.	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Principal and school reading leaders discuss recommended interventions based on progress monitoring results with teachers at least three times a year.	--	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	--
G. Use Data for Planning and Accountability						
1. Principal and/or other reading leaders review English learner progress schoolwide with all staff at least annually, using assessment and progress monitoring data	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**--**
2. Principal and teachers ensure that ELs are included in state reading assessments and English Language Proficiency assessments	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
3. As necessary, principal engages adults who speak the native language of ELs to explain directions for progress monitoring assessments	--	--	--	--	--	--
H. Engaging Families and Community						
1. School develops and communicates policy about teaching reading to parents of English learners	--	--	--	--	**X**	**X**

APPENDIX C: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rose-wood	Way-ford	Well-port	Whit eton	Broo kdale
I. Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for All Students						
1. Teachers create climate in classrooms where all children are consistently encouraged to participate in oral discussions and learning activities	--	--	--	--	--	--

APPENDIX D: FOCUS SCHOOL PLAN

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rosewood	Wayford	Wellport	Whiteton	Brookdale
A. School Leadership						
1. School principal communicates to and discusses policy about teaching reading to English learners with all staff.	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. School has access to expertise related to teaching English learners.	X	--	X	X	X	X
B. Setting Standards and Expectations for Achievement						
1. School principal and school reading leaders communicate that learning expectations for English learners are same as learning outcomes for other students.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. School uses grade-level texts with English learners.	X	X	X	X	X	X
C. Providing Research-Based and Effective Instruction in Support of State and District Standards						
1. School implements core reading program(s) consistently in all classrooms.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. All teachers receive training/orientation to core reading series.	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. All teachers provide instruction to all students in vocabulary and academic English.	X	--	X	X	X	X
4. Teachers administer progress monitoring assessments for beginning reading at least every 6-8 weeks and identify needs for additional instruction.	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. All teachers receive training/orientation to administration and interpretation of progress monitoring measures.	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Teachers have access to repertoire of reading interventions and support materials. [Also see Section F below]	X	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX D: (Continued)

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rosew ood	Way-ford	Well-port	White -ton	Brook -dale
D. Supporting Instruction in the Classroom						
1. Principal and teachers organize daily schedule to ensure that English learners have specific block of instructional time each day where academic English is focus.	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Principal and teachers organize reading block/daily schedule to ensure that students who require reading interventions can receive daily small group instruction.	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Principal schedules weekly planning time for grade-level teachers and specialists to work together on planning vocabulary and academic English lessons.	--	--	--	--	--	--
4. Principal and school leaders ensure that there is a process for review of use of progress monitoring results.	X	X	--	X	X	X
5. Principal and school reading leaders ensure that there is a process for determining when/whether/what type of interventions are required.	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Teachers have access to support for implementing peer based instruction (e.g., help in establishing routines).	X		X	X	X	X
E. Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting High- Quality Staff						
1. Principal and school reading leaders provide opportunities for teachers to receive feedback about their implementation of instructional techniques used with English learners, including opportunities for sharing with peers and receiving peer feedback.	X	--	X	X	X	X
2. Principal and school reading leaders provide ongoing access for staff to emerging research about English learners.	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. Principal ensures that all teachers, including ESL teachers, are included in all professional development opportunities for teaching English learners that cover the following: vocabulary development, academic English, progress monitoring, interventions/ characteristics of highly interactive teaching,	X	--	X	X	X	X

AREAS OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	East-mill	Rosewood	Way-ford	Well-port	White-ton	Brook-dale
peer-assisted learning.						
F. Supervision and Monitoring of Instruction						
1. Principal includes use of recommended EL practices in teacher feedback and evaluation.	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Principal and school reading leaders discuss recommended interventions based on progress monitoring results with teachers at least three times a year.	X	X	X	X	X	X
G. Use Data for Planning and Accountability						
1. Principal and/or other reading leaders review English learner progress schoolwide with all staff at least annually, using assessment and progress monitoring data	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Principal and teachers ensure that ELs are included in state reading assessments and English Language Proficiency assessments	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. As necessary, principal engages adults who speak the native language of ELs to explain directions for progress monitoring assessments	--	--	--	--	--	--
H. Engaging Families and Community						
1. School develops and communicates policy about teaching reading to parents of English learners	X	?	X	X	X	X
I. Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for All Students						
1. Teachers create climate in classrooms where all children are consistently encouraged to participate in oral discussions and learning activities	X	--	X	X	X	X