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## Improving Reading Skills: A School Improvement Project

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**Improving Reading Skills: A School Improvement Project**

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A School Improvement Plan Project Presented

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### **Abstract**

Reading proficiency in American schools has been a topic of conversation for over a quarter of a century. Although much focus and funding has been put towards this topic, many students are still not able to read proficiently. As students progress through their academic careers, lack of reading proficiency becomes more detrimental and more difficult to remedy. This school improvement plan was created to restructure MTSS in a newly formed upper elementary building serving 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This restructuring will clearly define the roles of each Tier, ensure data-based decisions are being made, and support students with research-based interventions.

*Keywords:* Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS), science of reading, reading proficiency, upper elementary, reading interventions, Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3

**Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Literature Review.....	6
School Profile.....	13
Needs Assessment.....	15
Data Analysis .....	16
Action Plan.....	18
Implementation of School Improvement Plan .....	20
Conclusion .....	22
References.....	23

## **Improving Reading Skills: A School Improvement Project**

The National Reading Panel was created in 1997 as an effort to identify the state of reading among schoolchildren in America by creating a research review process and protocol. After a meta-analysis evaluating phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency, vocabulary instruction and text comprehension, teacher education and reading instruction, and computer technology and reading instruction, as well as an in-depth overview of *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow et al., 1998), the Panel made several suggestions to create independent readers. Close on the heels of the National Reading Panel was the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) and the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. This piece of legislature was based on “accountability for results; an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility” (US Department of Education, 2005). In their 2000 report, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found only 32% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders could read proficiently in American schools (US Department of Education, 2005). Nineteen years later, NAEP showed the number of fourth grade students who could read proficiently had increased to only 35% (NAEP, 2019).

Reading proficiency has been a main concern for a quarter of a century, yet our gains are lackluster. Although the science of reading was first discussed nearly 25 years ago, outdated methods of learning how to read are still being taught in teacher prep programs and used in classrooms throughout the United States. This problem has become apparent at Sioux Center Intermediate School located in Sioux Center, IA. This problem impacts the students who do not have the foundational reading skills to support them during their academic careers and beyond. It also impacts the school staff: because many students are not proficient readers, we see an

increase in interventionist positions such as special education and Title I. Using MTSS, the school can use their available resources to effectively target the needs of each student and, in theory, should improve the outcomes for all students involved (Kim et al., 2010). It is necessary to examine the way reading interventions are being managed and to methodically interpret the data to adjust our instruction.

The purpose of this school improvement plan is to introduce the science of reading to reading interventions and to empower teachers to interpret and respond to the data produced from reading interventions, thereby improving students' results on FastBridge CBM-R progress monitoring. It is the author's goal that this school improvement project will provide guidance for Sioux Center Intermediate School and schools in a similar context to make data-based decisions while supporting students to become independent readers.

Research for this project's literature review was conducted using journals available through the DeWitt Library at Northwestern College and Google Scholar. All of the articles were peer-reviewed, and a majority were published within the past ten years. The author focused on articles about the impacts of different reading interventions, specifically for students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Due to the limited number of studies focused on the impact of interventions at the upper elementary level, studies of other grade levels were included as well. This scope of research allows us to consider the continuum of reading interventions at different grade levels and highlights the importance of evidence-based interventions in all the elementary grades.

The belief is students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Sioux Center Intermediate School will make larger gains on FastBridge CBM-R progress monitoring when teachers are using methods from the science of reading and incorporating data-based decision-making to drive their instruction. This change will happen because teachers will be using evidence-based practices to support

learning how to read as well as interpreting testing data to adjust practice as needed. When teachers incorporate the science of reading components into their reading interventions and then use the progress monitoring data to drive instruction, the interventions will be more effective and allow students to become better readers. Evidence-based methodologies and data-driven instruction will support students in becoming independent readers.

### **Review of the Literature**

When reviewing the literature, it becomes apparent schools can better support students by improving reading instruction, analyzing data to make informed decisions, and utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to allocate school resources.

### **Improving Reading Instruction**

While American classrooms have been engaged in the “reading wars” for several decades, students have continued to struggle to read proficiently. On one side of the battle of teaching reading is whole language, where students are taught to use context strategies and other cues to read words (D’Orio, 2020). On the other side of the reading wars is phonics. Using the phonics approach, students are taught the relationship between graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds). In the 1980s, Peter Gough and William Tunmer introduced the Simple View of Reading, which was the precursor to the science of reading. Their formula for reading proficiency was  $D \times C = R$  where D stands for decoding words, C represents listening comprehension, and the resulting R is reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Hollis Scarborough built on this work in 2001 when she created the “Reading Rope” model, where the upper strands gave an in-depth look at listening comprehension and the lower strands broke down the decoding portion of Gough and Tunmer’s equation.

Close to 15 years after the National Reading Council compiled *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, a publication that was supposed to put an end to the “reading wars,” Duke and Block (2012) completed a meta-analysis to better understand how the suggestions had been implemented in lower elementary classrooms around the country. Researchers found K-1 classrooms were spending anywhere between 23-33 minutes of their hour-long reading block on phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. There is less available data on the impact of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction in the upper grade levels as many universal screeners do not cover these skills after early elementary. However, in a study performed with students aged 7-12 who had been diagnosed with dyslexia, it was noted phonics instruction helped students decode irregular words, increase reading fluency, and improve comprehension (McArthur, et al., 2015), suggesting these areas should not be ignored with older students and would warrant further research. One area Duke and Block (2012) found to be severely lacking was vocabulary instruction. Although students with better vocabulary, syntactic awareness, and morphological awareness have better reading skills (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Jongejan et al., 2007; Muter et al., 2004; Nagy et al., 2006; Nation & Snowling, 1998), Donaldson (2011) found 63% of teachers did not actively teach vocabulary and vocabulary instruction comprised less than five percent of literacy instructional time. In 2009, Connors et al. observed limited comprehension strategies being explicitly taught in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms. This observation was followed up by Donaldson (2011) who noted comprehension accounted for approximately 23% of literacy instructional time in kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms, but explicit comprehension instruction occurred in less than a quarter of the classrooms.

To address the varied needs of learners, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) are now being put into practice in schools across America. The Every Student Succeeds Act



reauthorization (2015) even goes as far as to identify MTSS as “a school-wide general education approach that has additional benefits for some groups of students, including those with disabilities and English language learners.” In the tiered level of supports, students are frequently screened for early identification, interventions of graduating intensity are provided based on an individual’s data, and student growth is monitored. If students are continually making insufficient progress despite explicit and systematic interventions, the student may be referred for further evaluation (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009). Effective and specific interventions are necessary to help students be successful.

MTSS is broken down into three areas that are often visualized as a pyramid. At the base of the pyramid is Tier 1. This is the core instruction most students are receiving. Some students will not respond to the more general interventions provided at this level and may be graduated to Tier 2. At this Tier, students meet with the teacher in smaller groups with more frequency and intensity than Tier 1. At the very top of the pyramid is Tier 3. Tier 3 serves the smallest number of students. These students require more frequent and intensive interventions to make progress. Based on data, students should be allowed to move vertically amongst the tiers. When data shows a student has met their intended goals, the student may be exited from the interventions. Although the research base following students who have exited literacy interventions is small, Nelson et al. (2018) cautions while many students go on to successfully meet benchmarks in future screenings, a sizable portion of students may show some regression. However, a Canadian study following students over the first eight years of their education, 22% of students were identified as being at-risk for reading in kindergarten. By the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, only 6% of the same students had reading difficulties, even when other risk factors such as ESL or low SES were

present (Partanen & Siegel, 2014), confirming early literacy interventions are successful for most students.

### **Screening and Data-Based Decisions**

Most schools start with universal screening data, where all students are given norm-referenced, grade-level materials at various intervals throughout the school year. The students' results are compared to a benchmark. Based on these scores, students may be recommended for additional support such as a Tier 2 intervention or a talented and gifted program (Compton et al., 2010). Compton et al. (2010) also found many universal screeners provided a false positive between 20-60% of the time and false negatives from 10-50% of the time and some universal screeners with more accurate rates took too much time to efficiently use for an entire class or grade level. Ideally, grade-level teams are given time to meet, discuss student data, and collaborate to find ways to meet individual students' needs. However, there is little guidance on how grade-level teams can use this data to adapt Tier 1 instruction (Burns et al, 2015): whereas general education teachers were aware of MTSS, they were unsure of how to implement it in their classrooms (Al Otaiba et al., 2019), and many teachers faced the challenge of trying to manage interventions on their own (Ross & Begeny, 2015). In turn, many students are unnecessarily referred to Tier 2 supports or get stuck in a "wait to fail" model before being evaluated for special education identification (Al Otaiba, 2014).

Burns et al. (2015) suggested the following guiding questions to help lead grade-level teams make data-based decisions for students in a timely and efficient manner:

Question 1: Is there a class-wide problem?

Question 2: Which students fall within the at-risk range and need a Tier 2 intervention?

Question 3: Are there any surprises or students that we missed?

Question 4: Among students identified as needing an intervention, what is the skill area in which the student needs additional support (phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)?

Question 5: Are there any students for whom we should immediately develop a Tier 3 intervention?

To make screeners more efficient, Compton et al., (2010) suggests using a two-gate screener. With this model, students who are within risk range of a screener's benchmark are given an additional screener. This process is more efficient due to reducing the number of students requiring additional testing and provides additional data about the skill area(s) the student needs additional support in so teachers can provide more specific interventions. Once the appropriate interventions have been identified and taught with fidelity, students are progress monitored on a regular basis to determine if the intervention is meeting the intended target. Progress monitoring is crucial to the process because it provides the data to determine if the intervention is helping the student improve their skills or if a different intervention is needed (Jung et al, 2018). Denton et al., (2013) found students benefited from differentiated instructional content and delivery depending on their current performance and the ideal instructional approach could change across time.

### **Tiers of Supports**

In the MTSS system, much focus is placed on the students who need Tier 2 interventions to make progress, but the Tier 1 level is often unexamined and unchanged (Burns et al., 2015). When a majority of students qualify for Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports, it is crucial the school team re-evaluates the core instruction being provided in Tier 1 (Burns et al., 2015). Jung et al. (2018) notes special educators often analyze data to determine a student's responsiveness to an intervention and use this data to modify the intensity of the intervention. However, this approach is often not used when applied to the Tier 1 setting, where many teachers are using a universal

curriculum. Research has shown little instructional time was devoted to foundational reading skills such as phonics and fluency in 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms, key components necessary for many struggling readers to make progress in their reading skills (Kent et al., 2017). Instead, students are expected to independently read more challenging texts to gain knowledge across subject areas (Miciak et al., 2018). Supporting students at Tier 1 puts less strain on the MTSS system, helps identify students in need earlier on, and supports the school financially by avoiding salary and benefits for additional interventionists, an increased budget to provide and replenish instructional materials, and the time and staffing needed for ongoing professional development (Roberts et al., 2013).

According to Burns et al., (2015), the first step in determining if there is a class-wide problem is to analyze the data to find the class's median score on the benchmark assessment and compare the score to the provided benchmark standard. If the median score falls below the benchmark, a class-wide problem exists, and adjustments need to be made to the core instruction at Tier 1. According to the Pathways to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS) program, after two weeks of a class-wide intervention involving partner reading and paragraph shrinking, the number of students recommended for a Tier 2 intervention decreased from 23 students below the grade level benchmark to 10 students (Burns et al., 2015). This number of students would be more manageable for the grade-level team to discuss moving on to a more intensive intervention. When teachers are aware of the specific needs in the classroom by analyzing available data, they can tailor instruction to meet those needs more efficiently.

There are times when the most intensive support is needed for students to make progress in their goals. Students with reading difficulties often benefit from reading interventions provided in smaller groups (Vellutino et al., 1996). In a multi-year study on multi-tiered levels of

support for students in grades 6-8, it was found students in the intervention groups made more progress than their peers who did not receive any type of intervention or curriculum adjustment based on their data (Roberts et al., 2013). Wanzak et al. (2017) also found 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who received a yearlong supplemental multicomponent reading intervention made progress in closing the gap with their peers in terms of reading comprehension. More recently this study was replicated, and the findings were supported by Daniel et al., in 2022. A Dutch study found students receiving special education support even improved in their nonsense word reading and reading fluency in as little as nine 15-minute sessions of playing a multicomponent reading-based computer game (van de Ven et al., 2017). However, Partanen and Siegel (2014) found approximately 1.58% of students do not respond or show a low response to the interventions put in place. Studies by Vellutino et al., (1996) and Denton et al., (2013) found a majority of these students showed a lack of phonological awareness skills and language skills underscoring the importance of those skills for all readers. Denton et al., (2013) also noted whereas several of the students labeled as non-responders made adequate progress in the Tier 3 interventions, their pretest score was so low that it was impractical for the students to meet the grade-level benchmark by the end of the intervention. Research supports grade-level teams considering a longer-term intervention for these students or having the student referred for a special education evaluation to determine if there are other factors affecting the student's learning (Donegan et al., 2020; Miciak et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the review of the literature supports students' needs can be more effectively met when teachers focus on improving their reading practices, analyze data to support decision-making, and utilize the MTSS Tiers efficiently use the school's resources.

### **School Profile**

The setting for this school improvement project is the Sioux Center Community School District, a public school district in the city of Sioux Center, population 7,500 (Sioux Center, n.d.), located in the northwest corner of Iowa. The community also supports a private preschool, a TK-8<sup>th</sup> grade private Christian school, and Dordt University. Sioux Center Community School District has healthy relationships with many community partners, who supports their mission of “Educating whole student for a whole lifetime” (Sioux Center CSD, n.d.).

Due to growth in the district and the building of a new high school building in 2021, the district realigned the grades in their buildings for the 2021-2022 school year. Little Warriors Preschool remained in the same location. The fourth grade moved from Kinsey Elementary School (which currently serves transitional kindergarten to third grade) to join the fifth graders in the Sioux Center Intermediate School. Sixth through eighth grade moved to a different building to form Sioux Center Middle School, and ninth through twelfth grade moved into the newly built high school.

Based on data from the 2020-2021 school year, Sioux Center School’s student population is almost 55.9 percent White/Caucasian, 39.8 percent Hispanic, and less than 2 percent each for Black/African American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Asian, and Multi-Racial (State of Iowa, 2018). District wide, 10.3 percent of the student population has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 19.9 percent of the students are serviced by the English Learners (EL) program, and 37.5 percent of students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (State of Iowa, 2018). During the 2020-2021 school year, students in the district were just below the state average for growth in English Language Arts and above the state average for growth in Math, but overall performed above the state average for proficiency in both areas (State of Iowa, 2018).

During the 2012-2022 school year, the school district moved away from the traditional professional development and instead used the CBE-IC Map offered through the Area Education Agency (AEA). With this resource, teachers took a survey at the beginning of the year to identify where they would rate themselves and the systems put in place by the school district in Mastery Learning, Deeper Learning, Authentic Assessment, Personalized Supports, and Anytime/Anywhere Learning. Each building was then able to identify which area they would benefit the most by addressing. Sioux Center Intermediate School determined Personalized Supports would be the best category on which to focus. During professional development times throughout the month, teachers were able to complete self-directed professional development or follow a provided learning pathway under the Personalized Supports umbrella. Additionally, the special education staff participated in trainings on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy.

For this school improvement plan, focus will be placed on the Sioux Center Intermediate students. The 2021-2022 year was a large adjustment due to 4<sup>th</sup> grade moving from the elementary school and 5<sup>th</sup> grade moving from the middle school to create the Intermediate School. A large focus was put on creating a building identity and community amongst staff and students. Sioux Center Intermediate School served about 250 students in its initial school year. Approximately 25 students had academic IEPs and were supported by special educators in some capacity. Three of these students qualified for Alternative Assessment as a part of their IEP and therefore did not participate in universal screenings. Of the remaining 22 students on IEPs, 16 of the students had at least one goal focused on reading.

As these two grades have come together to form a new building, there has been a learning curve as each grade brings their own unique way of operating. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade team uses a packaged curriculum for reading (Reading Streets) and math (GoMath). On the other hand, the

5<sup>th</sup> grade team has developed their own reading and math curricula based on grade-level standards. For the 2022-2023 school year, a packaged curriculum will be used for part of the year in 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading.

One of the goals set forth by the Building Leadership Team is to “analyze student data on a monthly basis and focus on how we can positively impact student learning.” The intention has been to analyze data at monthly grade level meetings, but it has proven difficult to establish a regular routine. Student concerns are brought to the team and noted on the agenda without much analysis of data or a concrete plan to move forward. This delay has caused some students to not receive supports in a timely manner and deviated from the intended structure of MTSS.

### **Needs Assessment**

Now that Sioux Center Intermediate School is established and has had their flagship year, an area of need is curriculum and instruction. The current application of an MTSS system has not reached its potential and should be re-examined.

Revising the MTSS system would ensure more students are getting support at the appropriate levels to achieve success. Currently, many students are mentioned at grade-level teams, but their data is not analyzed, and interventions are not being instituted to help students gain necessary skills. Very rarely are Tier 1 interventions being applied based on data. When Tier 2 interventions are used, they are often used as a “means to an end” (i.e., to show the student should be evaluated for an IEP). This system puts undue stress on support staff, does not adequately support enough students, and creates imbalance in the school’s application of the MTSS pyramid. If the current practice continues, more support staff will need to be hired to support the number of students being referred, and students who would qualify with a learning disability risk getting lost in the crowd, delaying their support. Based on the building goal of



analyzing data every month to improve student outcomes, a more efficient system of making data-based decisions and structuring MTSS support needs to be established.

### **Data Analysis**

Evidence that a better approach to assisting struggling readers is needed can be found in the fourth and fifth graders' reading fluency scores. Most students, except for those who qualify for Alternative Assessment, take part in a universal screener for fluency in the fall, winter, and spring. The universal screener is through FastBridge; it consists of the student reading three grade-level passages for one minute. Their results are compared to the grade level benchmark, and students are sorted as College Pathway, Low Risk, Some Risk, or High Risk. If students fall into the Some Risk or High Risk range, they are progress monitored by reading a grade level passage for one minute, ideally once a week. A student may exit progress monitoring if they meet the benchmark on the subsequent two universal screeners.

To meet the MTSS structure, 80% of students should be meeting grade level proficiency. This level coordinates with Tier 1 on the MTSS pyramid, where most students receive their reading instruction in the general education classroom. Analyzing Sioux Center Intermediate's data from the 2021-2022 school year, students meeting the grade-level benchmark on the fall, winter, and spring universal screeners were 71%, 69%, and 66% respectively. These numbers support further investigation into our Tier 1 structure as we would expect the number of students meeting the benchmark to increase as the year goes on rather than decrease. Additionally, the number of students categorized into the College Pathway and Low Risk paths decreased from fall to spring. In the same period, the number of students qualifying as Some Risk increased from 18% to 23%. The only group to remain consistent was the High Risk group, which remained at 10% from the fall to the spring, although the winter data did show an increase to 12%.

Upon further analysis into the data regarding students categorized as Some Risk or High Risk, it became apparent progress monitoring procedures vary widely. Many students in these categories were consistently progress monitored on a weekly basis, while other students were being progress monitored inconsistently, then given several probes on the same day or not at all. For students who were progress monitored with fidelity, a closer look at the data often showed their scores were maintaining or declining, suggesting the interventions in place were not successful for those students and should have been adjusted.

**Table 1**

*FastBridge Universal Screening Data for 2021-2022 School Year*

<b>FastBridge CBM-R English</b>	<b>Fall Screening</b>	<b>Winter Screening</b>	<b>Spring Screening</b>
<b>Students at Benchmark, Schoolwide</b>	71%	69%	66%
<b>Students at Benchmark, 4<sup>th</sup> graders</b>	71%	70%	71%
<b>Students at Benchmark, 5<sup>th</sup> graders</b>	71%	69%	62%

**Table 2**

*4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Group Breakdown of Universal Screening Data for 2021-2022 School Year*

<b>FastBridge CBM-R English</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>
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<b>College Pathway</b>	40%	39%	37%
<b>Low Risk</b>	31%	30%	28%
<b>Some Risk</b>	18%	18%	23%
<b>High Risk</b>	10%	12%	10%

### **Action Plan**

To make data-based decisions and better support the MTSS system at Sioux Center Intermediate School, the following steps will be implemented in the 2022-2023 school year:

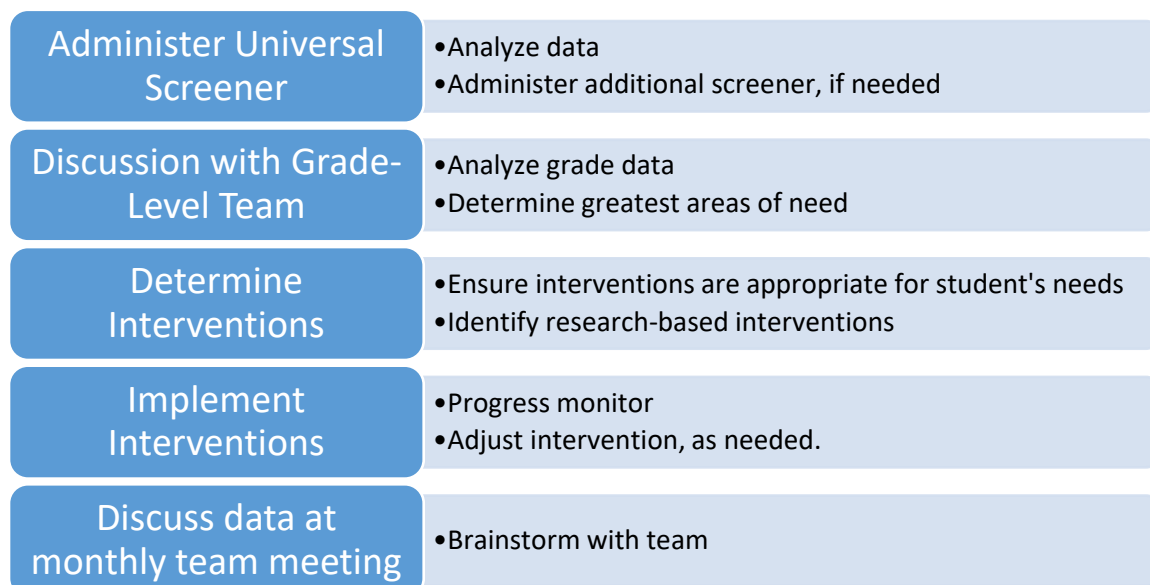
1. After the FastBridge universal screening takes place, students categorized as “Some Risk” or “High Risk” will be given an additional screener (e.g., PRESS, Really Great Reading) by their general education teacher to determine what skills are lacking and/or missing. In some cases, support staff may administer the additional screener. If a student scores in the “College Pathway” or “Low Risk” categories, additional screeners may be administered if teachers have concerns about a student’s skills.
2. The grade-level team, administration, support staff, data coach, and instructional coach will meet to analyze grade-level data from the additional screeners, determine the greatest areas of need, and assign staff to take agreed-upon steps.
3. Both grade levels will have a designated Small Group Reading time. The purpose of this time is to use research-based reading interventions based on data. During this time, some students will be receiving push in or pull out reading services led by support staff. Students who do not qualify for supplementary programming will remain with a general education teacher to receive interventions. Based on the identified areas of need, grade-level teams may determine if it is beneficial to keep

students requiring interventions in their homeroom classrooms or more efficient to distribute students based on intervention needed.

4. Teachers will implement a research-based intervention with fidelity. They may reach out to the instructional coach, data coach, or AEA for support and guidance.
5. For each intervention, progress monitoring will happen, at a minimum, every other week. If the probe is relatively short (i.e., fluency probes), weekly progress monitoring is strongly encouraged. The student's name, date, and score will be recorded, and the records will be maintained by the teacher. These records should be easily accessible when requested by parents, team members, or administration and be available to discuss at monthly grade-level meetings.
6. If a student is not showing progress after three data points, an adjustment to the intervention will be considered. If students are making progress and demonstrating proficiency in the current intervention, they may be transitioned to a different level.
7. At the monthly grade team meetings, there will be dedicated time to discuss student data and progress monitoring data. Teachers will give a brief update of how identified students are progressing on interventions. If there are concerns about a student's progress, they will be noted on the agenda. By the next meeting, the student's team will determine a plan of action for the student.
8. If there are significant concerns about a student, a General Education Plan may be started at any time. The intervention and data collected from the intervention may be used for the plan. Starting and maintaining the General Education Plan is the responsibility of the teacher. AEA or Special Education teachers may assist with questions.

**Figure 1**

*Summary of Sioux Center Intermediate School's restructuring of interventions*



*Note.* If significant concerns arise, a General Education Plan may be started at any time.

### **Implementation of School Improvement Plan**

During the service days prior to the 2022-2023 school year, staff will be introduced to the MTSS plan through a presentation and document provided by the data coach and instructional coach. Intervention resources will be shared with teachers, and progress monitoring procedures will also be clarified at this time. Teachers can access ongoing support from the data coach and/or instructional coach throughout the year.

The structure of the 2022-2023 schedule will also change. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade's small group reading/intervention time will take place in the morning before their large group reading block instead of in the middle of the afternoon. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade will also add a small group reading/intervention time to give students and staff the time to work on necessary skills. A part-

time interventionist has also been hired to assist both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and work with small groups of students on dedicated interventions.

After the FastBridge universal screening is completed in the fall, the grade-level teams will meet to determine what students need additional screening and what interventions need to be put into place. FastBridge universal screening will take place again mid-school year, approximately late December or early January. Grade-level data will again be examined, and students may receive additional screening as needed. Universal screening will again be completed towards the end of the school year. This data point will be compared to the beginning of the year and mid-year data points to determine if the restructured MTSS plan was successful.

Teachers will receive ongoing support and coaching through professional development times, typically held on Wednesdays. Due to the teachers adjusting to the new structure, interventions will be active, and teachers will have begun progress monitoring on a consistent basis by the end of the first quarter. When possible, progress monitoring will take place within the FastBridge system, but other probes may be used if FastBridge does not have a suitable alternative. Grade-level teams will meet monthly with the data coach and instructional coach to discuss progress monitoring and make necessary adjustments to interventions and programming. The data coach, instructional coach, and administration will have an additional monthly meeting to discuss current data trends, progress towards our building goals, and identified areas of need.

In the 2022-2023 school year, Sioux Center Intermediate School will expect the following goals to be met:

1. By the end of the first quarter, students who need extra support will be identified and served with appropriate interventions.

2. During the spring screening, the number of students at benchmark will increase from the fall and mid-year screenings.
3. The number of students at benchmark will be at or above 80%.

### **Conclusion**

At Sioux Center Intermediate School, 66% of students were considered proficient at their grade-level for fluency in the spring of the 2021-2022 school year, which falls short of the 80% benchmark suggested by MTSS structure. Additionally, many students who fell short of the benchmark were progress monitored throughout the year and did not show the expected rates of growth. By implementing this school improvement plan, Sioux Center Intermediate School will re-examine the MTSS structure within the building to effectively use school resources, use data-based decision making, and implement research-based interventions to support student growth in reading fluency.

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