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Intervention Playbook for Homeschool Families

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Capstone Project: A School Improvement Plan

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Abstract

The growing trend of homeschooling has led to the rise of independent charter schools in California by providing families with the flexibility to tailor their children's education while aligning with state standards. This school improvement plan focuses on assisting educators at Blue Ridge Academy, an independent charter school in Los Angeles, California, by providing a toolkit of interventions to help homeschooled students achieve grade-level proficiency in language arts and mathematics. The intervention playbook, developed by using evidence-based research and action studies, simplifies interventions in ELA (English Language Arts) and math for early and upper elementary students. The aim of the playbook is to fill gaps and cater to different curriculums and learning styles.

Keywords: elementary intervention, reading intervention, writing intervention, math intervention, Tier 1

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Intervention Playbook for Homeschool Families

Every year, more families are choosing to homeschool their children. According to Houston, Peterson, and West's 2022 survey, 6.6% of students in the United States are homeschooled (Ray, 2022). In the state of California, independent charter schools have grown out of the need to support the demand for homeschooling. Independent charter schools provide an alternative to traditional public schools by providing homeschool families' funds to spend on the curriculum, classes, and extracurricular activities of their choice giving each student a tailored educational experience. Working with an independent charter school gives families autonomy and flexibility to homeschool their children while aligning with state standards by having a state certified teacher join them on their homeschool journey. The certified teacher meets with the family monthly to track progress of approved curriculum and classes the independent charter school provides. The certified teacher also acts as a coach to the parent homeschooling their students, providing ideas and resources whenever a student needs intervention.

The purpose of this school improvement plan is to assist the independent charter school educators working with Blue Ridge Academy located in Los Angeles, California, with a toolkit of diverse interventions. These interventions aim to support homeschooled families in achieving success by helping students perform at their grade level in language arts and mathematics. Research shows traditionally homeschooled students score 15-25 percentile points above public-school students on standardized achievement tests (NHERI, 2023). However, independent charter schools are witnessing an increased need for intervention among several students. This is primarily due to the influx of families transitioning from brick-and-mortar schools to homeschooling, lacking the homeschool skills and strategies commonly possessed by traditional

homeschool families. The newer homeschooling families seeking intervention rely on certified teachers within the independent charter schools to provide Response to Intervention (RTI), and fortunately, abundant resources are available. A clear and organized playbook will serve as a valuable tool in supporting the success of homeschooling families.

The research conducted for the intervention playbook involved a thorough examination of peer-reviewed action research from journals obtained through the DeWitt Library at Northwestern College. The selected articles, spanning the last ten years, specifically addressed a wide range of reading, writing, and math interventions applicable to students in the early and upper elementary school age range. This comprehensive research scope serves as a guide for determining the interventions included in the playbook, ensuring they are evidence-based. By incorporating these evidence-based interventions, homeschool families will have the necessary tools to effectively enhance their performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. The author's focus primarily revolved around articles presenting action research, which vividly showcased the most effective interventions for reading, writing and mathematics.

Having a strong foundation in ELA and mathematics is a main concern for new homeschool families and the certified teachers at independent charter schools. Because there are so many options for intervention in both ELA and mathematics, the playbook will help simplify what interventions will be best for the students at the independent charter school, Blue Ridge Academy. During the 2022-2023 school year, Blue Ridge Academy had 6,547 students enrolled (California School Dashboard, 2022). Among the students who took the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) there was a performance gap of 25.8 points below the standard in ELA and 69.4 points below the standard in other subjects (California School Dashboard, 2022). These statistics indicate the need of a playbook enabling certified

teachers to systematically outline intervention steps. Teachers can effectively address the academic needs of their students by utilizing Google spreadsheets and shared folders to organize and record data for each student on their roster. In turn, the certified educators will be able to share Tier 1 resources with the homeschool learning coach, which is the parent directly teaching homeschool students, and guide the learning coaches by helping them use schedules to bring structure and organization to the homeschool family.

The belief is students at Blue Ridge Academy in first grade through sixth grade will benefit from the structure and organization of the playbook. Providing targeted evidence-based resources in reading, writing, and mathematics will effectively address the specific skill gaps of homeschool students, enabling them to demonstrate improvement during annual state testing while avoiding overwhelming content. Ultimately, the intervention playbook will serve as a valuable resource for Blue Ridge Academy, addressing any potential gaps that may exist among homeschool student. This is particularly crucial considering the diverse range of curricula and learning styles adopted by these students. By catering to individual needs and variations, the playbook aims to provide comprehensive support to ensure a well-rounded educational experience for all homeschool students.

Review of the Literature

Upon reviewing the literature on interventions, it becomes evident that meeting the needs of students requiring RTI cannot be approached with a one-size-fits-all strategy. To effectively address these needs, independent charter schools must have a comprehensive understanding of the various tiers of support within the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) framework and identify areas that require greater attention. By doing so, these schools can better cater to the diverse needs of the families they serve.

Intervention Strategies

After almost 20 years of research on RTI, educators have the advantage of knowing what has been successfully implemented in the classroom and what needs to be modified. In 2015, one study found there were no statistical benefits to implementing RTI in third and fourth grade classrooms across the country because student's test results were not improved when RTI was implemented in 2004 (Berkeley et al., 2020, p. 333). Furthermore, in another large-scale study, data collected from 20,450 first grade through third grade students attending 146 different schools in the USA found RTI was again showing no statistical different outcomes (Balu et al., 2015). The results of these studies reveal educators without adequate training in RTI are ineffective and have not offered a solution for assisting students who require additional intervention support.

A study conducted by Otaiba et al. (2019) showed the insufficient implementation of RTI was largely attributed to inadequate training received by educators on successful RTI implementation. Similarly, Barrio et al. (2015) found in general education classrooms, proficient training of educators in the correct implementation of RTI is needed. While RTI has proven to be difficult to be implemented successfully as a one size fits all approach, a study conducted by Hite

and McGahey (2015) proved RTI can be successfully implemented and showed students performed better on state mandated tests and had higher perceptions about their academic ability after RTI (p. 38). Tailoring RTI to each individual situation is the difference between success and ineffectiveness for classrooms across the USA.

One problem with RTI is the lack of individualized details for the range of students being taught in the USA. Though success is possible with RTI, more support was created by using MTSS, which was implemented in 2015 and introduced more variability within RTI (Otaiba et al., 2019, p. 35). Often overlooked are the Tier 1 intervention strategies, which are at the base of the intervention pyramid. Tier 1 intervention encompasses the instructional approach delivered to the majority of students in the classroom, providing instruction in a full class setting. Progressing up the MTSS pyramid, is Tier 2, which focuses on a smaller group of students and offers them more targeted intervention. Finally, at the pinnacle of the pyramid, Tier 3 delivers the most intensive intervention to a select number of students, surpassing the lower tiers in terms of intensity and individualization. A Canadian study showed an example of implementing MTSS correctly. In this study, 22% of students considered high risk in kindergarten were followed through 7th grade (Partanen & Siegel, 2014). By 7th grade, the number of students in the original group identified as high risk in kindergarten and receiving the correct tier of support was reduced to only 6% (Partanen & Siegel, 2014). The results from this study show early intervention, starting at the lowest tier and identifying who needs high tier support, will be the most effective.

Reading Intervention

Tier 1 reading intervention techniques are used in the enclosed classroom setting. The use of multiple approaches is necessary since a classroom is full of diverse learners. Learning and implementing different intervention techniques will be necessary; what works for one class may

not work for another and vice versa. Typically, Tier 1 interventions incorporate an initial screening to evaluate the individual progress of each student (Donegan & Wanzek, 2021; Vaughn et al., 2019; Wanzek et al., 2017; Young et al., 2015). Similarly, evaluations are administered throughout the year to check for progress and growth.

Passport to Literacy is a reading intervention with multiple components and is widely used as a Tier 1 intervention. In a study conducted by Wanzek et al. (2017), 451 fourth grade students scored below the 30th percentile in reading comprehension implemented the Passport to Literacy program. The Passport to Literacy program is a targeted reading intervention specifically designed for students in grades K-5. Its primary goal is to enhance decoding abilities, word reading, reading comprehension, and vocabulary skills. After one complete school year, there was a significant effect of improvement in reading comprehension and students needing Tier 2 intervention in the program were identified, which gave them more specialized instruction (Wanzek et al., 2017). Passport to Literacy proves to be a beneficial Tier 1 intervention to be considered.

A six-month study conducted by Vaughn et al. (2019) looked at 280 students with significant reading difficulties in the southwestern USA. Students in the study were working 5 days a week for 30-45 minutes each day throughout the study. Different measures taken at the beginning and end of the study were the Woodcock-Johnson III Letter-Word Identification, Experimental Word Reading List, Test of Silent Reading, Efficiency and Comprehension, and the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (Vaughn et al., 2019). Multiple times throughout the study, AIMSweb Reading, Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test-Fourth Edition, WJ-III Passage Comprehension, and WJ-III Spelling were administered to check for progress (Vaughn et al., 2019). Following three distinct phases during the six-month study, Vaughn and colleagues

reached the conclusion students demonstrated the greatest improvement in Experimental Word Reading and AIMSweb. By the study's end, students in the treatment group exhibited "standard score gains between 2 and 7 points higher" (Vaughn et al., 2019). Although this study did not reveal significant growth, it effectively identified students requiring Tier 2 and 3 interventions.

A successful study by Young et al. (2015) found Reading Together was a successful reading intervention for grades 3-5. In this study, 52 students participated in the Reading Together program for a duration of one month. They received tutoring sessions that lasted 20 minutes each day, resulting in a total of 400 minutes of tutoring over the course of the study. In this program, the teacher reads slightly ahead of the student, which helps students with reading difficulty gain confidence and improve in word recognition. The findings revealed a substantial impact on students' improvement in word recognition automaticity. The treatment group experienced a significant increase in the number of words read correctly per minute, accompanied by enhanced expression, volume, smoothness, phrasing, and pace during oral reading (Young et al., 2015). Reading together, a brief intervention, proves effective in assisting upper elementary students with reading intervention within a matter of minutes per day over a short period of time.

A comparative study by Toste et al. (2019) found multisyllabic word reading intervention was successful for fourth and fifth grade students. In this study, 109 students throughout the southeastern USA were taught in small groups for four 40-minute sessions over 4 weeks. Intervention included a 3-minute warm up which involved practicing reading different target vowel patterns, 3 minutes teaching high frequency affixes, 5 minutes of focused word games, writing words with two or more syllables for 5-8 minutes, and 5 minutes of speedy reading (Toste et al., 2019, p. 49). The students who participated in the intervention achieved

significantly better results in reading compared to the control group, making multisyllabic word reading intervention a valuable addition to an educator's toolkit.

Writing Intervention

Writing interventions are closely interconnected with reading interventions as they contribute to the enhancement of reading skills. Numerous studies have argued incorporating reading instruction and fostering students' engagement with textual material not only enhances their writing skills but also contributes to improved writing performance (Graham et al., 2017; Limpo & Alves, 2018; Teng, 2019). Writing is an integral component for cultivating and enhancing students' reading ability. In a study conducted in Portugal over a 10-week period for 60 sessions once a week, grade 2 students received either self-regulation strategy development plus transcription intervention (SRSD+TR), self-regulation strategy development intervention (SRSD), or standard curriculum (Limpo & Alves, 2018). SRSD introduced a planning strategy assisting students in generating and organizing ideas based on the narrative structure. Additionally, students utilized a progress sheet to self-monitor their writing process. SRSD+TR added an alphabet warm-up activity preceding the writing process which was followed by the practice of copying single words or sentences as part of the writing instruction. Results of the study show both interventions increased students' composing skills (Limpo & Alves, 2018, p. 391). However, students who utilized the SRSD+TR approach exhibited increased efficiency in producing written text by demonstrating greater writing fluency and sustained longer bursts of writing (Limpo & Alves, 2018, p. 391). This study demonstrates that the implementation of SRSD and SRSD+TR would be beneficial for Tier 1 intervention.

Expanding on writing strategies, in a randomized control study in Hong Kong, one group of 45 students received Text Structure Instruction (TSI), while another group of 45 students

received Self-regulation Writing Strategies (SRSI; Teng, 2019). TSI emphasized the development of learners' awareness regarding reading strategies, note-taking techniques, and organizational skills (Teng, 2019, p. 285). The aim was to enable students to synthesize ideas and details effectively, leading to improved planning and enhanced written production. SRSI primarily focused on teaching self-regulation writing strategies, including planning, goal setting, self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-reinforcement which created ownership of written work. Both groups demonstrated superior writing outcomes compared to the control group. However, SRSI proved to have a more significant influence on the overall quality of writing, whereas TSI had a greater impact on the development of main ideas in written summaries (Teng, 2019, p. 288). These findings highlight the value of both TSI and SRSI as effective Tier 1 intervention strategies that can be implemented for whole-class instruction.

Similarly, enhancing the writing process has been found to positively impact the reading abilities of elementary-age students. In a study conducted by Koutsoftas (2018), a group of eighty students in grades four to six from different regions of the United States participated in a writing intervention program consisting of four sessions over a ten-day period. During the intervention, students were provided with guidance on planning, writing, and revising their stories (Koutsoftas, 2018, p. 640). They were given a model to assist them in organizing their stories using bullets and an outline. Subsequently, they received support in creating a rough draft and producing a final copy. The study yielded positive correlations in three significant areas: reading scores, the relationship between planning, translation, and writing quality scores, and the relationship among the six translation measures derived from students' final copies (Koutsoftas, 2018, p. 646). By implementing these interventions, educators have the opportunity to cultivate students' reading and writing skills, fostering their growth and proficiency in both domains.

Math Intervention

Recently, there has been a notable debate surrounding the correlation between low scores in mathematics and math anxiety. Numerous studies have argued once math anxiety is established in a student, due to low performance at one time, it is very difficult for a student to have a positive attitude towards mathematics (Dowker et al., 2019; Namkung et al., 2019; Ramirez et al., 2018). Research shows negative attitudes toward math increase as students experience failure while performing math problems (Dowker et al., 2019). This negative attitude will only snowball and hinder children from advancing in mathematics. Building a firm foundation in math is a must so students can have success, which will give them positive attitudes toward mathematics. A study conducted with students in China and the United States where students were given a mathematics attitude questionnaire and an arithmetic calculation test shows students in the United States had a higher self-rating of unhappiness at failure than children in China (Dowker et al., 2019, p. 225). The study suggests it is desirable to focus in the early years on "reducing distress at failure, and on preserving confidence in the ability to solve mathematical problems" (Dowker, et al., 2019, p. 225). Implementing mathematics intervention strategies promptly upon detecting initial signs of difficulty is of utmost importance to foster and sustain a positive mindset among students regarding mathematics.

As previously mentioned, early intervention yields the most favorable outcomes. In a study conducted by Berkowitz et al. (2015), 587 first grade students in Chicago implemented math intervention using an iPad app called Bedtime Learning Together. Parents were asked to utilize the app multiple times each week with their child. The app involved reading a passage and answering five accompanying questions, which caried in difficulty from preschool to late fifth-grade levels (Berkowitz et al., 2015, p. 196). A positive correlation was observed between frequency of parents and their children's usage of the app and the subsequent increase in

children's math achievement by the end of the school year. Optimal results were achieved when families utilized the app three or more times per week. This straightforward Tier 1 intervention, which can be easily implemented, plays a crucial role in instilling confidence in children's mathematical abilities from the early elementary years onward.

Research demonstrates working on automaticity with math facts can contribute to building a stronger foundation in mathematics for students (Poncy, et al., 2013). One Tier 1 intervention is called Detect, Practice, and Repair (DPR), which uses differentiated math facts for every individual student in the class. Poncy et al. (2013) explains that in the detect phase, a paced pre-test is used to identify what each student will need to practice (p. 212). Once a student has done the "detect" phase, they move to the "practice" phase. In the case of math facts, if they pass the test, they move on to the next fact in the program. If they do not pass, they will do the same fact again the next day. One strategy suggested for the detect and practice phases is the Cover, Copy, and Compare (CCC) procedure (Musti-Rao et al., 2015; Poncy et al., 2013; Riccomini et al., 2017). CCC is a common strategy used in all subjects to help learn and retain information. While using CCC with math facts, the first step would be to copy the next day's math facts for the number they are working on. This will help reinforce the facts by using visual and kinesthetic senses and will aid in learning and retention. After the copy phase, students will "cover" what they just wrote and practice skip counting with a partner for their next fact, or they will rewrite what they wrote during the copy phase if a partner is not available. This leads students to the last step of CCC, which is "compare". Students will practice the "copy" and "cover" steps to self-assess their understanding of the next day's facts. After they complete the practice phase in DPR, they move the "repair" phase, which gives them immediate feedback (Poncy et al., 2013, p. 219). When used consistently in the classroom, this process takes less than

ten minutes a day and is a great intervention to help build background knowledge to help students succeed in a Tier 1 intervention.

One important step of the repair phase is immediate feedback. Research shows immediate feedback gives students higher performance when using explicit timing (ET; Duhon et al., 2014). In a research study done by Duhon, 48 second-grade students utilized a web-based computer program to practice math problems for 20 sessions, each lasting 2 minutes (Duhon et al., 2014, pp. 78-80). Students were placed into three groups. The control group only participated in the pretest and posttest performance assessments (Duhon et al., 2014, p. 79). The second group used ET with goal setting and rewards and students would earn prizes on Fridays when data collection was complete, meaning they did not receive immediate feedback (Duhon et al., 2014, pp. 79-80). The third group was given ET with goal setting, a reward, and immediate feedback. The third group used DPR by implementing the practice phase. All three groups "completed the pretest assessment with an average fluency of 97% accuracy and fluency of 20.7" (Duhon et al, 2014, p. 82). The control group's posttest had a fluency of 19.75, the second group with only ET and goal setting had a fluency of 32.85, and the third group with ET, goal setting, and immediate feedback performed the highest with 44.25 (Duhon et al., 2014, p. 82). This demonstrates the implementation of immediate feedback would be an effective Tier 1 intervention.

Additionally, a successful Tier 1 math intervention should focus on goal setting to help motivate students for Tier 1 class wide intervention. When a student sets a goal, studies show performance is enhanced and the likelihood of achieving goals is increased (Sides & Cuevas, 2020). A goal needs to be attainable; if a goal is unreachable, motivation to reach the goal will be challenging. Having smaller goals with rewards will foster motivation and in turn, increase mastery of math facts. In a study conducted in the state of Georgia with 70 third and fourth-

graders, students were given two questionnaires to measure motivation and self-efficacy toward math facts (Sides & Cuevas, 2020, p. 7). Students were split into two groups: the control group had 33 students and the experimental group had 37 students. Students took a pretest and posttest where they answered as many mathematical problems as they could in 5 minutes. The experimental group was given probes where their progress was tracked twice a week and every Friday, these students used personalized folders which contained goals, reflection sheets, and self-monitoring sheets. The control group did not use personalized folders or probes. The findings indicated while student goal setting did increase student's performance in multiplication fact fluency and accuracy, students may be too young in third and fourth grade to be motivated by goals (Sides & Cuevas, 2020, p. 13).

In summary, the literature review provides strong support for prioritizing enhancements in reading, writing, and math practices as crucial in effectively meeting students' needs. Additionally, implementing MTSS enables educators to identify students who may require additional assistance in Tiers 2 and 3. By focusing on these areas and implementing evidence-based interventions, teachers can better support students' academic growth and achievement.

School Profile

The school in focus for this school improvement plan is Blue Ridge Academy, a non-classroom-based charter school catering to homeschool students across Los Angeles, Kern, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties in southern California. At Blue Ridge Academy, students have sought an alternative to the conventional public school system. This unique institution provides a "safe, collaborative and individualized learning experience" and supportive environment where students can pursue their education from the comfort of their own homes, guided by credentialed educators (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023). Recognizing each homeschool

student possesses their own distinct learning style, the academy guides the homeschool family to create a highly personalized instructional plan, tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. As stated on the academy's website, "the vision of Blue Ridge Academy is to support and empower students to demonstrate the values and skills that promote knowledge and critical thinking" (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023). The academy prepares students to "thrive in and contribute to their communities with kindness, respect, integrity and purpose" (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023).

In the 2022-2023 academic school year, Blue Ridge Academy had an enrollment of 6,547 students (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023; California School Dashboard, 2022). Moving forward, the school is expected to maintain a similar student population as it is not actively seeking to fill vacant spots. The academy primarily serves Caucasian students, which accounts for 51.6% of the population. The remaining students are comprised of Hispanic (35.9%), African American (9.1%), Asian (3.2%), and those whose race was not reported (3.2%). 1.2% of the students at the academy have English as a second language. Additionally, 11.7% of the student population have an Individualized Education Plan. Graduation rates have decreased since 2019, which is due to students enrolling in private schools or relocating to other states (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023).

Students actively engage in standardized testing to assess their proficiency in math and ELA at Blue Ridge Academy. They undergo Star 360 testing at the beginning and the end of each calendar school year. Additionally, students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 participate in the CAASPP, which is a statewide assessment employed by all public schools in California. Although families in independent charter schools often express reluctance towards school and state testing due to social stigma, Blue Ridge Academy has made significant strides in increasing participation. The school has achieved a consistent 10% annual increase in state testing

participation rates. Results from state testing indicate notable progress. Among the students who participated in state testing, 48% have met or exceeded the standard in ELA, demonstrating a 12% improvement since 2017. In math, 31% of students have met or exceeded the standard, showcasing a commendable 13% increase over the same period (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023). The certified staff working with the homeschool families have taken a proactive approach in educating parents about the advantages of school and state testing, fostering a supportive environment to help their children thrive academically. Through gentle and informative discussions, the staff has emphasized the benefits testing can offer in terms of gauging students' progress, identifying areas of improvement, and ensuring comprehensive educational growth.

At Blue Ridge Academy, the school's independent format involves credentialed educators who take on the role of educational coaches for parents, referred to as learning coaches (LC). These LCs serve as the primary teachers who work directly with their homeschool students daily. They hold responsibility for establishing organization and structure, delivering instruction, and conducting assessments for their child's education. To support the LCs, Blue Ridge Academy provides certified teachers known as homeschool teachers (HST). These HSTs offer valuable assistance by offering curriculum choices, suggesting interventions, providing school-related support, and reviewing and approving all requests for educational services and products. The HST is the LCs first point of contact and by implementing this collaborative approach between LCs and HSTs, Blue Ridge Academy ensures homeschool students receive comprehensive support, guidance, and access to a diverse range of educational resources to enhance their learning experience.

Two goals Blue Ridge Academy have focused on are to "develop and implement a plan to enhance reading and writing across the curriculum" and "provide consistent support for

students in mathematics" (Blue Ridge Academy, 2023). This school improvement plan serves as a valuable resource, offering Tier 1 interventions in math and ELA to support this objective. To ensure no student has gaps in their education, Blue Ridge Academy recognizes the importance of providing targeted interventions in ELA and math for grades 1-6. While HSTs currently refer to the Blue Ridge Academy Handbook for resource navigation, the implementation of a streamlined system would significantly enhance their ability to identify and implement interventions tailored to these subjects. By streamlining the system, HSTs would have improved access to a comprehensive range of resources, enabling them to identify and address the specific needs of each student. This living and active spreadsheet will be shared with all HSTs to use for every student they serve and resources can be shared through this spreadsheet as well. This proactive approach ensures students receive the necessary support and interventions at the right time, minimizing the risk of any student being overlooked or experiencing gaps in their education.

The implementation of this plan ensures HSTs are equipping the LCs with necessary tools and support to effectively address students' needs in reading and writing across various subject areas. Among the numerous responsibilities entrusted to the HST, a critical aspect is conducting comprehensive assessments of students at the beginning of the academic year to get a full picture of the student and provide interventions as necessary to the LC. Furthermore, over the course of the year, HSTs diligently uphold their commitment to organizing monthly meetings in the presence of both LCs and homeschool students. These meetings serve as crucial opportunities to review and adjust interventions based on students' progress and evolving needs. By thoroughly analyzing students' abilities and needs at the outset, the HSTs can identify specific areas requiring targeted interventions. This proactive approach allows for early identification of potential challenges and enables timely intervention implementation to address

any gaps or difficulties. Through ongoing monthly meetings, HSTs maintain close communication with LCs, fostering a collaborative environment where interventions can be continuously evaluated and tailored to suit the students' individual requirements. By streamlining the intervention process, HSTs can efficiently identify and utilize targeted resources, promoting a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to literacy and numeracy education.

Needs Assessment

Every school, including Blue Ridge Academy, possesses areas for improvement. The current school improvement plan places focus on Tier 1 intervention while implementing curriculum and instruction. To ensure ongoing progress and quality, the academy undergoes a renewal of its WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation every six years. During this accreditation process, the WASC team evaluates the school's performance and improvement efforts across various domains, including intervention, curriculum, and instruction. This constant evaluation provides opportunities for refinement and growth in these areas. Blue Ridge Academy recognized ongoing growth in intervention, curriculum and instruction is vital for meeting and surpassing its goals. By placing a strong emphasis on continuous improvement, the academy aims to enhance the educational experience for its students and help HSTs be prepared and trained to share their insight with the LCs.

Blue Ridge Academy already possesses a wealth of resources available for HSTs. However, the abundance of information can sometimes become overwhelming for both HSTs and LCs. To address this challenge, the academy would greatly benefit from implementing a streamlined system organizing resources for both the HST and LC. This system would enhance resource accessibility and organization, ensuring essential materials are readily available and easily navigable. By implementing this streamlined system, Blue Ridge Academy aims to be

well-prepared and organized for their next WASC visit, while also improving overall intervention, curriculum, and instruction.

This proactive approach highlights the academy's commitment to continuous improvement and its dedication to creating a more efficient and effective learning environment. By refining resource organization and accessibility, Blue Ridge Academy strives to enhance the educational experience for both HSTs and LCs, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for all students.

Data Analysis

At the beginning of every school year and the end, students at Blue Ridge Academy participate in STAR 360 testing and students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 also participate in CAASPP testing. These tests provide valuable insights into students' academic progress and serve as an indicator of their need for intervention. Once testing is complete, HSTs analyze the results and share the reports with families.

The CAASPP scores are sent to families and uploaded into the student's school dashboard before the start of the next school year. HSTs are strongly encouraged to review scores and identify any students who may require additional support.

Table 1

Blue Ridge Academy's CAASPP data in ELA and Mathematics

ELA CAASPP Data	2021-2022	Desired 2023-2024
Met or Exceeded Standard	48.69%	62% goal
Standard Nearly Met "On Watch"	24.35%	
Standard Not Met "At Risk"	26.96%	
Mathematics CAASPP Data	2021-2022	Desired 2023-2024
Met or Exceeded Standard	31.11%	42% goal
Standard Nearly Met "On Watch"	26%	
Standard Not Met "At Risk"	42.89%	

Note. Data is for grades 3-8 and grade 11

The STAR 360 test results are color-coded, providing a clear indication of students' performance levels. Students who score at or above grade level are not flagged for intervention. Those who score in the blue area, slightly below grade level, are considered "on watch," indicating the need for discussions about potential intervention strategies. Students who score in the red area are deemed "at risk," requiring immediate action and targeted interventions.

Table 2

Blue Ridge Academy's Star 360 Data since 2021/22 school year

Star 360 Reading	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
At or Above	74%	74%	71%	74%
On Watch	10%	10%	10%	10%
Intervention	8%	8%	9%	8%
Urgent	8%	8%	10%	8%
Star 360 Mathematics	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
At or Above	74%	72%	74%	73%
On Watch	9%	10%	10%	9%
Intervention	10%	10%	9%	10%
Urgent	6%	8%	7%	8%

Note. Data is for grades TK-12

The charts clearly indicate Blue Ridge Academy has set a goal to increase the number of students who meet or exceed the standard in both ELA and mathematics. Achieving this goal requires enhanced communication and collaboration with families, as well as the implementation of effective interventions and organizational strategies within the homeschool setting.

To address this need, Blue Ridge Academy recognized the importance of engaging in meaningful conversations with families. These discussions provide an opportunity to understand students' individual needs, identify potential challenges, and jointly develop intervention plans.

By fostering open lines of communication, the academy can gather valuable insight from families and work together to create a supportive and conducive learning environment. In addition to communication, the implementation of targeted interventions and organizational strategies within the homeschool setting is needed. This involves providing resources, tools, and guidance to HSTs and LCs to effectively address the specific needs of students in ELA and mathematics.

This data serves as a valuable tool for identifying areas where students may require additional support and intervention. By closely monitoring student performance through Star 360 and CAASPP assessments, Blue Ridge Academy ensures appropriate measures are taken to address any academic challenges and promote student success.

Action Plan

Blue Ridge Academy has developed handbooks to support HSTs and LCs in curriculum development and instruction. However, the current system places the responsibility on HSTs to independently create and track their plans, which can inadvertently result in missed opportunities for certain families. To address this, it would be highly beneficial for the academy to implement a centralized tracking system for interventions, housed in a shared folder accessible to all members of the school community.

By incorporating a tracking system for interventions, Blue Ridge Academy can ensure no student falls through the cracks and all necessary support is provided in a timely manner. This shared folder would serve as a comprehensive repository of intervention-related information, enabling easy access and collaboration among staff members. With such a system in place, HSTs, LCs, and other stakeholders can stay informed about the progress and interventions of each student, facilitating a coordinated and cohesive approach to student support.

Already within this collaborative environment, a valuable shared resource called the Roster Checklist exists. The Roster Checklist is comprised of various tabs HSTs follow throughout the year. However, the addition of an intervention tab would offer a significant enhancement. This intervention tab would provide each HST a snapshot of their student's current progress and would indicate if additional intervention is necessary. A link is provided within the intervention tab heading for reading, writing, and math interventions. The HST can track what interventions are being used within the Roster Checklist.

Table 3

Intervention tab example embedded in Roster Checklist for Blue Ridge Academy

Student Name	Grade Level	CAASPP 2023 ELA	CAASPP 2023 Math	Fall STAR Reading	Fall STAR Math	Fall Reading Intervention	Fall Writing Intervention	Fall Math Intervention
John Doe	3	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	2.5	3.5	-daily explicit reading instruction -repeated reading	-writing paragraphs (picture/paragraph)	n/a
Jane Doe	5	Standard Met	Standard Not Met	5.1	3.2	n/a	n/a	-timed tests -mathletes a-c

Note. Intervention tabs have links in the Roster Checklist

Within the reading, writing and math intervention websites, are a number of research-based strategies for HSTs and LCs to use:

- Under "Reading Fluency Strategies and Resources" in the reading intervention link, HSTs and LCs are given opportunities to develop a fluency routine, practice repeated reading, and use anchor charts provided to track progress.
- HSTs and LCs are given examples of how to incorporate daily explicit reading instruction including 5 parts: warm up, review/focus sounds, tracking practice, games and

activities, and daily reading. These components go along with programs like Read Together and multisyllabic word reading intervention, which are research-based strategies that improve reading confidence in young readers.

- The writing intervention resources link brings HSTs and LCs to writing expectations and guidelines, which includes states of writing, guidelines for 1st-4th and 5th-8th, tricks to remembering reversals, grip and pressure, letter formation, grammar, sentence practice, and the writing process. When students work on writing, they are also improving their reading skills.
- HSTs and LCs are given resources on the math intervention link to work on DTR. The link brings HSTs and LCs to a site hosting minute math timed tests, math games, and a worksheet generator. The site also has a progression of mathletes activities for beginners all the way to students working on algebra.
- A shared Google document will be hosted in the shared Blue Ridge Academy Drive, serving as a dynamic resource continuously updated throughout the school year. It will contain a wide range of intervention resources to support different Tier 1 intervention ideas. The document is organized with dedicated sections for reading, writing, and mathematics interventions, providing space for descriptions and references to locate each intervention. This collaborative document is accessible to all HSTs, fostering teamwork and enabling them to contribute content.

Implementing a shared tracking system reflects Blue Ridge Academy's commitment to enhancing student outcomes and ensuring equitable access to resources and interventions. By streamlining information and promoting transparency, the academy can effectively address the unique needs of every student and foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Implementation of School Improvement Plan

Timeline

To successfully implement the intervention playbook at Blue Ridge Academy, a systematic approach involving various stakeholders is necessary. The following steps outline the process:

1. Approval: The intervention playbook would first require approval from the Regional Coordinator the summer before the pilot team implements the intervention, ensuring alignment with the team's guidelines and standards. Subsequently, the Administrative Director would review and grant approval for its use in the upcoming school year.
2. Pilot Phase: A pilot phase of the intervention playbook would be initiated, starting with one team. This team would utilize the playbook and follow its guidelines for tracking interventions. This phase allows for practical testing and observation of the playbook's effectiveness in real-world scenarios. The team would partake in an online zoom training on how to implement the intervention during team meetings before the school year starts and at monthly professional development meetings, time would be set aside to address and questions or concerns.
3. Feedback Collection: Feedback surveys would be administered to every member of the pilot team three times throughout the year. The first survey would be after learning period 1, the second would be after learning period 4, and the last feedback survey would be after learning period 8. These surveys play a crucial role in ensuring the accountability of HSTs while also enabling them to collect invaluable insights, suggestions, and recommendations for potential enhancements to the intervention playbook. The feedback

received from the pilot team helps refine and enhance the playbook's functionality and effectiveness.

4. Student Progress Monitoring: Throughout the pilot phase, the pilot team would closely monitor student progress, observing the impact of the intervention playbook on student outcomes. This assessment provides crucial data to determine the effectiveness of the playbook's implementation and its contribution to student growth and success.
5. Iterative Improvement: Based on the feedback received and the observed results, necessary changes and enhancements would be made to the intervention playbook. This iterative process ensures the playbook is continuously refined and aligned with the specific needs and goals of Blue Ridge Academy.
6. Full Implementation: Following the pilot year, with the necessary adjustments incorporated, the intervention playbook would be ready for implementation across the entire school for the 2024-2025 academic school year. This comprehensive implementation ensures consistent use and maximizes the benefits of the intervention playbook for all teams and students.

By following this step-by-step approach, Blue Ridge Academy can effectively implement the intervention playbook, leveraging feedback, data-driven decision-making, and iterative improvements to create a robust and impactful system for tracking and implementing interventions.

Challenges and Barriers

Insufficient time and overwhelming workloads can contribute to the failure of intervention plans in education. This challenge is particularly evident in the independent charter school realm, where educators often experience heightened demands at the beginning of the

academic year. Adding another task, such as tracking and implementing intervention plans, can amplify the burden and hinder teachers' ability to ensure effective interventions and support for students.

To overcome this obstacle, developing a helpful and user-friendly intervention playbook becomes crucial in maintaining accountability for homeschool families. The playbook should be designed to simplify the process, enabling teachers to easily input data and access relevant resources. By streamlining the intervention framework and providing clear guidelines, the playbook empowers teachers to efficiently track student progress and identify appropriate interventions.

Simplicity is crucial, ensuring the playbook provides practical tools and resources HSTs can share with LCs so they can be readily implemented. By offering accessible interventions and resources within the playbook, HSTs and LCs can effectively support students in their academic journey and increase their likelihood of success. In acknowledgment of the time constraints faced by educators and with a focus on simplicity and user-friendliness, Blue Ridge Academy is dedicated to crafting an intervention playbook. This playbook will equip LCs with the necessary knowledge to identify areas in their students' education that require attention, facilitate effective intervention, and ultimately improve student outcomes.

Conclusion

The number of families choosing to homeschool in California continues to rise, making the demand of independent charter schools greater. While schools like Blue Ridge Academy offer freedom and flexibility to tailor to veteran and new homeschool families, there is a subset of students who require additional intervention. HSTs play a crucial role in helping LCs provide

interventions and necessary resources to bring homeschool students up to grade level. By providing evidence-based resources, the intervention playbook offers a comprehensive and organized approach to support the academic growth of students at Blue Ridge Academy.

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