

Appendix 2

Letter to Individuals and Organizations for Nominations of Mature RtI Sites

[DATE]

Dear [Name/Organization],

MDRC and SRI are conducting a study for the U. S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to describe the design, implementation, and - when feasible - impacts of school-based Response to Intervention (RtI) models for elementary school reading.

Our study will address the following questions:

- 1. What are the characteristics of mature RtI implementation for elementary school reading? What is the range of practices in terms of universal screening and progress monitoring, the nature of the reading interventions provided, and school-wide coordination?**
- 2. How do these RtI practices compare with those in other, demographically comparable schools in the districts that are not considered to be mature or sophisticated implementers of RtI practices in reading in K-5?**
- 3. What are the impacts of mature RtI practices on student outcomes such as reading achievement, grade promotion, and rates of referral for evaluation for special education and eligibility determinations for special education? What are impacts for key subgroups of students?**

An important step under this task is to identify schools that have mature RtI models in place. We are seeking nominations of such schools and districts.

We are contacting RtI experts who are researchers, practitioners and leaders of organizations supporting RtI initiatives for the purpose of seeking nominations of schools and districts. Your name was recommended as one of these experts.

Our definition of a mature RtI site is based on whether they have implemented core RtI practices for at least two years. These core RtI practices include:

- At least three levels (tiers) of instruction, comprising a system of increasingly intensive interventions;
- Administration of universal screening in reading at least twice a year;
- Progress monitoring of students who do not meet the grade level benchmarks initially and who are identified for additional interventions;
- Procedures for presenting data on student reading performance, evaluating student's performance using these data, and making decisions based on these data about students' response to interventions, and

- Processes for determining eligibility of children for special education services that include data from the students' responsiveness to the intervention(s).

Once sites are selected for the study, we will describe in detail how their RtI models are implemented in practice and – where feasible – estimate their impact on student academic outcomes such as reading achievement, grade promotion, and identification for special education services.

We are primarily seeking nominations of mature RtI schools and districts in 14 states: Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, and West Virginia. These states have been selected because they began to fund schools to pilot the implementation of an RtI model by 2007. If you know of a mature RtI school or district outside of this list of states that in your opinion has distinguished itself, however, please nominate the school or district.

If you could, please provide us with the names of three to five schools and/or districts that have mature RtI systems in each of the following states or regions:____(name of states or regions)____. It is our intention to call the nominated schools and districts to better understand their RtI approach and, if the match with study requirements seems right and the school/district agree to participate, we would then make site visits to obtain more in-depth information. When you submit the list, please rank the nominated sites from 1 (most mature) to 5 (less mature) for each state/region, and indicate in a couple of sentences the strengths or distinctiveness of the school's or district's RtI model.

Participation in the site selection process and the national study is voluntary. Information gathered during the site selection process and any subsequent data collection will be used only for broadly descriptive and statistical purposes. The reports prepared for the study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. In no instances will the study team provide information that identifies nominating individuals or organizations or nominated districts or schools to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you for your assistance in this process.

Sincerely,

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