

### Appendix 3

#### *Informational Letter to be Sent to District Directors/Coordinators of RtI or Special Education Services to Identify Mature Schools*

[DATE]

Dear [Name],

MDRC and SRI are conducting a study for the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences that will 1) describe mature *Response to Intervention* (RtI) practices that are currently being implemented in elementary school reading, and 2) investigate the impacts that RtI practices have on student outcomes such as reading achievement, grade promotion, and identification for special education. At least forty schools in approximately 8 states will have an opportunity to participate at no cost in this national research project.

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?**

We are happy to inform you that [name of school] has been nominated by national experts as a possible site for this study, on the basis of this school's relatively mature implementation of promising RtI practices. These practices are likely to include: universal screening (benchmarking) administered in reading at least two times a year; at least three levels (tiers) of instruction, comprising a system of increasingly intensive interventions; monitoring the progress of students who do not meet benchmark; 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).

We will be reaching out to this school in the near future to confirm their use of RtI practices and to gauge their interest in participating in this study. Once we do this, we would like to schedule a phone call with you to discuss the prospect of your district's participation in this study and to learn more about district-wide RtI policies and practices.

Participation in these site selection conversations 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 participating districts or schools, district or school staff, or students to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at any time using the information provided below.

Sincerely,

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