

Appendix 7

Initial Contact Letter to be Sent to District Directors/Coordinators of RtI or Special Education Services in Adjacent Comparison Districts/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 contacting districts and schools that may or may not have implemented RtI practices to address the educational needs of students who struggle reading. These practices are likely to include administration of 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 would like to schedule a phone call with you to learn about your district or schools initiatives implementing RtI practices, if any, and gauge your district's interest in participating in this study. If the district seems like a good fit for the study and the district is interested in participating, we'd discuss next steps.

Participation in this phone conversation 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.

Sincerely,

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