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**IMPROVING PROGRESS MONITORING STRUCTURES TO IMPACT STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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## DIGITAL COMMONS DOCUMENT ORIGINATION STATEMENT

This document was created as one part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006). For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning. This program evaluation examined the impact of teacher efficacy on progress monitoring structures to impact student achievement. Teacher efficacy is an important factor in implementing progress monitoring structures with fidelity to impact student achievement.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006). When teachers implement the instructional cycle with fidelity, planning instruction, incorporating research based practices, assessing instruction, and analyzing data, the use of progress monitoring can shift from a mundane task needing to be completed for the administration, district, and/or state, to an integral component of teaching (Santi & Vaughn, 2007).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995). High quality school leadership is pertinent to improving school performance and raising student achievement. Implementing this policy could create a more equitable evaluation system to support, hire, and retain effective leadership in every school in Chicago.

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## ABSTRACT

This Change Plan paper is the second part of a three-part dissertation on improving the progress monitoring structures to impact student achievement. Progress monitoring is a powerful instructional tool within the instructional cycle to increase student performance. When teachers implement the instructional cycle with fidelity, planning instruction, incorporating research based practices, assessing instruction, and analyzing data, the use of progress monitoring can shift from a mundane task needing to be completed for the administration, district, and/or state, to an integral component of teaching (Santi & Vaughn, 2007).

Wagner et al's (2006) *As-Is* and *To-Be* charts were used for ABC Elementary School, a pseudonym for a charter school located on the South Side of an urban community in the Midwest, to identify and present the current status and future desired state of the school's competencies, conditions, culture, and context. As well, this research examined research-based strategies to implement progress-monitoring structures to impact student achievement.

## PREFACE

During the experience of crafting this change plan, numerous revelations by school staff were articulated. Some teachers felt that having to implement progress monitoring structures was a form of them being punished because students were not learning. Some teachers did not implement data driven instruction (DDI) cycles with fidelity. Still others indicated they felt that progress monitoring was not needed to determine if students were learning or not. These feelings impacted how progress-monitoring practices were implemented.

While student achievement was below expected levels, teachers did not seem to take ownership. Upon reflection regarding teacher ownership for student achievement, this researcher contemplated how leaders must balance accountability while nurturing teacher development. Teacher accountability should not just be aligned to high-stakes testing, but should also encompass teacher's job expectations being completed to a certain level. On occasion, teachers request they be treated as professionals—only to argue about being treated as such. This equivocal position leads to school leaders sometimes being confused as to how to balance holding teachers accountable while also trying to a) build staff efficacy, b) use data, c) increase instructional capacity, and d) increase classroom management skills.

The ability to determine when teachers are deciding not to perform (as opposed to not being able to perform), represents a vital skill that school leaders will need in order to impact student achievement. School leaders cannot allow school staff to consistently build their capacity while students are not improving. When is enough, enough?

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ..... i

PREFACE ..... ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... iii

LIST OF TABLES ..... iv

LIST OF FIGURES ..... v

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION ..... 1

    Statement of the Problem ..... 2

    Rationale ..... 3

    Goals ..... 5

    Demographics ..... 6

SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 CS (AS-IS)..... 8

    Competencies ..... 8

    Conditions ..... 10

    Culture ..... 11

    Context..... 12

SECTION THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ..... 13

    Participants ..... 14

    Data Gathering Techniques..... 15

    Data Analysis Techniques ..... 16

    Conclusion..... 17

SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE ..... 18

    Introduction ..... 18

    Progress Monitoring System..... 20

    Components of Progress Monitoring..... 22

    Core Components of Implementation..... 25

    Implementation Fidelity ..... 26

    Technology Enhanced Progress Monitoring ..... 29

SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION ..... 31

    Findings ..... 31

    Academic History ..... 31

    School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)..... 36

Questionnaire .....	37
Progress Monitoring at ABC Elementary .....	39
Competencies .....	45
Conditions .....	48
Culture .....	53
Context.....	58
SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS (TO-BE.....	59
Competencies .....	59
Conditions .....	62
Culture .....	65
Context.....	67
Conclusion.....	69
SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE .....	72
Competencies .....	73
Conditions .....	75
Culture .....	76
Context.....	78
Conclusion.....	80
REFERENCES .....	81
APPENDICES .....	88
Appendix A .....	89
Appendix B .....	90
Appendix C .....	91



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1- School Status Descriptions .....	35
Table 2- SQRP Indicators .....	36
Table 3- School Status Ratings .....	37
Table 4- Implementing the XYZ Tool at ABC Elementary.....	42
Table 5- Progress Monitoring at ABC Elementary.....	45
Table 6- Competency Using Progress Monitoring .....	47
Table 7- Using the XYZ Tool to Impact Student Achievement .....	48
Table 8- Conditions at ABC Elementary School .....	51
Table 9- Culture at ABC Elementary.....	55
Table 10- Implementation of XYZ Tool .....	56
Table 11- Context at ABC Elementary .....	57

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. ABC Elementary’s NWEA MAP Reading MAP Data Growth for students in Grades 8.....33

Figure 2. ABC Elementary’s NWEA Math MAP Growth for students in Grades 3–8.....33

Figure 3. ABC Elementary School’s NWEA MAP Reading—Attainment for students in Grades 3–8.....34

Figure 4. ABC Elementary School’s NWEA MAP Reading—Attainment for students in Grades 3–8.....34

## **SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Instruction has been identified as one of the most important factors impacting student achievement (Rivkin & Schiman, 2015). Progress monitoring is a process used to determine if the instruction meets the needs of all students. If implemented correctly, progress monitoring can accelerate student learning and allow teachers to make more informed decisions regarding teaching and learning (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2002; Safer & Fleischman, 2005; Ysseldyke & Bolt, 2007).

As teachers, administrators, and members of the instructional leadership team use student performance data to inform instructional decisions, implementing progress-monitoring structures assuring fidelity of implementation or the Data Driven Instruction (DDI) represent a challenge. At ABC Elementary School (a pseudonym for a charter school located on the South Side of an urban community in the Midwest and hereafter referred to as ABC Elementary), change is needed; however, such a change must include the support of the teaching staff, the administrative team, and the instructional leadership team. This study focuses on using the change levers (data, accountability, and relationships) to implement progress-monitoring structures and create a clear DDI cycle to positively impact student achievement through a collaborative change process at ABC Elementary.

## Statement of the Problem

Progress monitoring is an effective practice that allows teachers to track student progress, create stronger instructional programs, and make decisions regarding teaching and learning (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2002). When progress monitoring is implemented correctly, the following can occur:

- Helps teachers make informed decisions about teaching and learning.
- Students receive appropriate instruction.
- Provides documentation for accountability.
- Be used as a source to communicate students' progresses to families.
- Serves as a tool for teachers to set expectations for students. (Dexter & Hughes, 2009)

When progress monitoring is implemented with fidelity, students gain significantly more than students who were not progress-monitored (Ysseldyke & Bolt, 2007). Poorly implemented progress monitoring is one of the greatest obstacles to teacher effectiveness.

In 2001, when the federal government imposed a new educational reform known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, a drastic change was observed in school environments. The cultural shift can be seen in the schools and its accountability structures. Poor-performing schools were continuing to undereducate students. As well, evidence of curriculum reductionism could be seen throughout schools focused on reading and math. Curriculum varied school to school, district to district, city to city, and state to state. Schools were confronted with different challenges in ensuring that the progress-monitoring structure within the DDI cycle were implemented with fidelity.

Some of these challenges included poor implementation of progress-monitoring structures, implementation of the DDI cycle, lack of proper training, and change resistance behavior. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo (2010) described the DDI cycle as consisting of assessment, analysis, action planning, and progress monitoring.

Increasing the quality of implementation of progress-monitoring structures and ensuring the efficacy of the DDI cycle in every classroom can positively impact student achievement and is vital for improving student achievement (Fenton & Murphy, 2011). The lack of implementing progress monitoring effectively would result in poor student performance (Shapiro, 2011). This study evaluated how implementing effective progress-monitoring structures can impact students' achievements. The change plan focused on a school's current contexts, competencies, cultures, and conditions, as well as on implementing a clear plan for the DDI cycle (Wagner et al., 2006).

### **Rationale**

Assessment plays a significant role in the success of an educational institution. In the past, school accountability did not require schools to focus on success for all students. Schools did not emphasize the use of data systems, in detail, to determine the school's success. Poor student performance and high dropout rates were seen as a student, family, or community problem and not the school's failure to serve. State assessment measures have been in place for numerous years; yet, districts and schools continue to underperform. However, at the turn of the 21 century, accountability became a reality.

The NCLB represents a U.S. Act of Congress that attempted to address this underperformance of students. The NCLB supported standards-based education reform based on the premise that setting high standards would promote greater student

achievement. The act required states to develop assessments in basic skills to receive federal school funding. States had to give these assessments to all students at select grade levels. This act made the need to measure a student's progress toward standards mastery more necessary (Linn, Baker, & Betebenner, 2002).

Data Driven Instruction practices swiftly became a major influence of education. Schools and districts decided they needed a structured way to measure how students were progressing toward expectations. They began to implement progress-monitoring structures and used the measures to hold teachers, schools, and districts accountable. Initially, many schools did not have a specific tool to measure student performance. Eventually, schools implemented a structured process for progress monitoring by utilizing a designated tool. Educators were then held accountable for making progress toward the agreed upon learning outcomes for their students.

In 2010, former Illinois Governor, Pat Quinn, signed the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA). This changed how teachers' and principals' performance were measured at the state level. The new evaluation systems required the use of student growth and professional practice to measure individual performance (Delgado, LaVia, Ford, & Froehlich, 2006). This change in the evaluation process further encouraged the use of progress monitoring to inform teaching and learning. School leadership uses the obtained assessment data to analyze educational programs, evaluate teachers' performance, and allocate resources. Teachers use the data to identify student's strengths and weaknesses, plan lessons, provide targeted instruction, and measure students' progress toward identified goals.

It is this researcher's opinion that implementing a robust DDI cycle has been a major hindrance to improved student achievement. Based on the Program Evaluation, staff at ABC Elementary suggest that progress monitoring represents an additional task and conclude they do not have time to progress monitor (Harper-Young, 2017). School staff often mention the lack of technology as an impediment to progress monitoring. Appreciating the current progress-monitoring system is another rationale school staff gave as a reason for the lack of fidelity as it pertains to progress monitoring. Based on these statements, implementing a progress monitoring system appropriately is a necessity in any school.

This study was born out of a need for a positive improvement in the implementation process of progress monitoring in the researcher's school, district, and the larger community. Over the last 20 years, efforts have intensified in implementing technology-enhanced, progress-monitoring student academic performance and planning for teaching and learning (Bolt, Ysseldyke, & Patterson, 2010). This research explored the dual focus (e.g., organizational and individual change), which helps in understanding the school environment and creating effective school leadership. School leadership is the second most important factor impacting student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

### **Goals**

This study's objectives involve implementing a change plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal and uncovers leadership strategies for personal transformation in implementing progress-monitoring structures and the DDI cycle with fidelity to positively impact student achievement. In addition, this study sought to

evaluate the microlevel areas within ABC Elementary that needed changing. This was done by considering Wagner et al.'s (2006) change leadership framework to positively impact student achievement for every child.

### **Demographics**

The selected school for this study is ABC Elementary, which is located on the South Side of an urban community in the Midwest. ABC Elementary has 60 teachers who teach different disciplines. The average retention rate for teachers is 11 years. The total student population is around 1300; approximately 800 of these 1300 students are in grades 3-8. The student population is comprised of 99% African American and 1% Hispanic—with 0.3% of the students being English Language Learners, 88.5% of the students being economically disadvantaged, and 14.7% of the students being diverse learners. The students average attendance rate is 92.2%.

School leadership follows NCLB reform—as all the necessities are provided to the students with and without disabilities. The school employs nine educational aids and three teachers assist each educational division.

Currently, on the district's high-stakes assessment, 68% the students at ABC Elementary showed growth in reading, 58% in math; while 96% of the diverse learners showed growth in reading, 77% in math. The district utilizes the Northwest Evaluation Association Measure of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) as the high-stakes assessment. This is an adaptive online assessment aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The difficulty of each question is based on the accuracy of the previous question. As students answer correctly, the questions become challenging; if the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier (Militello & Heffernan, 2009).



Student growth represents change on the district's high-stakes assessment between Spring 2015 and Spring 2016—as compared to other schools nationally with the same pretest score. The student growth percentile is the average spring-to-spring scale score growth of students on the NWEA MAP assessment—as compared to the average national growth for schools with the same average pretest score. Each school is assigned a percentile representing where it would fall on the national distribution.

Attainments is the percentage of reading and math tests taken in grades 3-8 where students met the national 50th percentile student growth score for students with the same pretest score. As far as attainment, 49% of the students met grade level attainment in reading and 32% of the students met grade level attainment in math.

## **SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 Cs (AS-IS)**

Using Wagner et al. (2006), two charts were created: *As-Is* and *To-Be* (see Appendix A) for ABC Elementary. Wagner's 4 Cs change model for organizational renewal has brought to light a challenge of many schools in implementing programs to support teaching and learning to improve student achievement. Wagner's 4 Cs change model refers to the following:

1. Competencies
2. Conditions
3. Culture
4. Context

By exploring each of Wagner et al.'s (2006) 4 Cs, individual areas of ABC Elementary's implementation practices that must be altered to implement progress-monitoring structures with fidelity to positively impact student achievement were identified. Applying the 4 Cs framework described in Wagner's *Change Leadership* allowed this researcher to examine the poor implementation practices of many programs brought into the school.

### **Competencies**

Wagner et al. (2006) described competencies as, "the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning" (p. 99). Teacher's capacity for using the selected progress-monitoring tool is weak. Teachers were not allowed to provide any input in how students would be progress monitored or determine what tool would be used to monitor student progress. According to information from the questionnaire, teacher's

capacity for using technology is minimal. Most teachers were not aware of the features supporting the tool, and none of the teachers who were aware of them used them.

The quality of the professional development provided (regarded using the selected progress-monitoring tool) is not beneficial, according to most of the teachers (Harper-Young, 2017). This professional development included lesson planning for intervention, understanding data, and reports—leveling individual paths for students and boosting student confidence and motivation. Teachers stated they received between one and two hours of professional development on the progress-monitoring tool. A consultant for the progress-monitoring tool interacted with school staff onsite throughout the school year but only provided a 2-hour session to the staff as a whole. Teachers expressed they were not engaged in most of the professional development and felt their time could have been better used on other tasks. School staff had numerous initiatives, protocols, and practices in which to develop competencies in throughout the school year and often felt overwhelmed by the many expectations.

The school's value of the DDI cycle needs improvement. Meetings around teaching and learning need to focus more on data and using it to inform teaching and learning. While the schedule provided opportunities for staff to meet weekly, there was not a clear system for disaggregating data. Effective DDI is based on strong assessment, analysis, action, and culture (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010).

## Conditions

Wagner et al. (2006) described conditions as “the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p. 101). The expectation at ABC Elementary is that at least 80% of the students will demonstrate attainment—being at or above grade level in reading and math. Attainment measures performance at a single point in time, as compared to schools nationally. Ninety-nine percent of the students are expected to show growth in reading and math. Growth measures performance from one year to the next and evaluates a school’s performance based on how much growth occurred as compared to other schools nationally with the same pretest score. A minimum of 75% of the students are expected to meet their growth target. The growth target is the amount of growth individual students are expected to grow in a school year. According to information provided on the ABC Elementary website, 42% of the students are at or above grade level in reading and 27 % of the students are at or above grade level in math at ABC Elementary. On the end-of-the-year high-stake assessment, 66% of the students showed growth in reading and 42% of the students showed growth in math. Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs; 80%) showed growth in reading with 61% of the students showing growth in math (56.9% of their students made their growth target). The average daily attendance for students was 92.6%.

ABC Elementary uses XYZ Progress Monitoring Tool (hereafter referred to as XYZ Tool), which is an instructional technology tool to progress-monitor student learning. XYZ Tool can be used to assess how well students are aligned with CCSS or regional state standards. The program can determine students’ strengths and the areas

where improvement is needed. More than 30 different types of assessment reports can be generated. Teachers can issue students' parents a password so parents can keep track of their children's progress online.

### **Culture**

Wagner et al. (2006) defined culture as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, behavior, and quality of relationships within and beyond the school. ABC Elementary is considered "Partially Organized for Improvement," which means the school's culture and climate has a few strengths, but also has several weaknesses in certain areas (Chicago Public School, 2016 School Progress Report, p. 1). Chicago Public Schools (CPSs) My Voice, My School 5Essentials survey (hereafter referred to as MVMS) was administered to students and teachers in collaboration with The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR). The results from these surveys are included on schools' School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) to help inform schools, teachers, parents, and community members.

The learning community at ABC Elementary views progress monitoring as another mundane task that needs complete. Teachers reported that this diminished teaching and learning, that the professional development received was not valuable, and the plan for progress monitoring structures was not clear. Further, teachers and parents' current perceptions were that students were overtested and that most teachers did not take ownership for students' poor performance.

Forty-two percent of the teachers at ABC Elementary felt that once implementing a program and ensuring it worked, many of the programs at the school simply came and went. Teachers felt their professionalism was challenged due to high accountability;

however, every teacher felt their administrator had confidence in their expertise.

Administrators and the district demanded the implementation of progress monitoring for reading and math.

### **Context**

Context, as defined by Wagner et al. (2006), referred to the skill demands that all students must meet to succeed, relating concerns of the family and community the school serves. Context also referred to “the larger organizational systems within which we work, and their demands and expectations, formal and informal” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 104).

ABC Elementary is located in a large urban city and serves approximately 800 African American students between grades K–8. ABC Elementary consists of 99% African American students and 1% Hispanic. Just over 89% (89.2) of the students are economically disadvantaged and receive free or reduced lunch. Just over 14% (14.3) of the students are considered diverse learners and have IEPs. ABC Elementary is comprised of 30 teachers who teach grades 3-8; these teachers, on average, had 6 years of experience.

### **SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This change plan research focused on improving student achievement through implementing the DDI cycle with fidelity. Additionally, a deeper look was taken at using a progress-monitoring tool to inform teaching and learning and using professional development to build teacher capacity in using the DDI cycle. Qualitative and quantitative data was used to garner information to identify how ABC Elementary teachers currently implemented the DDI cycle to impact student achievement. Information was extracted from the 2014, 2015, and 2016 School Progress Report Cards, which provided information about the school quality rating, the district's high-stakes assessment data, demographics, attendance, and data from ABC Elementary's website garnered from MVMS.

School Progress Reports are issued for all schools in the district every year, for charter and traditional. School Progress Reports are public record and provide information regarding how well a school performed on the district's high-stakes assessment, the SQRP, school recognitions, school demographics, school attendance, and the percentage of students who are on and off track. The report also provided a neighborhood map comparing surrounding schools.

The SQRP is the district's policy for evaluating school performance (both charter and traditional). ABC Elementary happens to be a charter school functioning under one of the numerous charters in the City of Chicago. The information in this document establishes the indicators of school performance, student growth, and the benchmarks against which a school's success will be evaluated on an annual basis. In addition, the SQRP is used to communicate to parents and community members about the academic

success of individual schools and the district as a whole. It recognizes high achieving, high growth schools, and identifies best practices, which provides a framework for goal-setting for the schools by identifying schools in need of targeted or intensive support and guiding the district's decision-making processes for individual schools.

The MVMS is a tool for identifying a school's strengths and weaknesses. The survey combined validated questions and rigorous analysis to measure a school's performance in five essential areas:

1. Effective Leaders
2. Collaborative Teachers
3. Involved Families
4. Supportive Environment
5. Ambitious Instruction

The information from the MVMS is shared with administrators and used as predictors of student outcomes and school improvement.

The purpose of this paper was to improve the implementation practices of the DDI cycle to inform teaching and learning in efforts to ultimately raise student achievement. To meet this purpose, a collaborative approach was used to determine a sustainable strategy to improve the quality of education for ABC Elementary students.

### **Participants**

The study consisted of the following participants:

- Grade 3 teachers (2)
- Grade 4 teachers (4)
- Grade 5 teachers (2)



- Grade 6 teachers (2)
- Grade 7 teachers (2)
- Grade 8 teachers (3)

### **Data Gathering Techniques**

Data gathered from an electronic questionnaire was used to garner data from the teachers. The 75-question survey (see Appendix D) asked questions about teachers' knowledge and practices around the implementation of progress-monitoring structures at ABC Elementary. Questions also provided information about student demographics and valuable demographic information about individual teachers and their capacity to implement progress monitoring. Participants were asked to participate in the study and provide information through an electronic questionnaire. Upon completion of the consent for participation, participants were emailed the questionnaire and given 2 weeks to complete. Information was compiled in an electronic Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and sent anonymously from a Google form. The only identifiers for this information were the number of years taught and grade level. While this researcher is not employed at ABC Elementary, she is employed at a school with similar student demographics.

Additional information was obtained from the school's website, public information from the School Report Card, and the MVMS. This information ascertained data around culture and climate, staff expectations, school goals, mission, and vision. After the study participants completed the questionnaire and the researcher reviewed the school's public information, the researcher compiled qualitative data and analyzed trends regarding accountability and relationships. Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that qualitative data can serve as a powerful source for communicating key insights.

Additional data provided on MVMS (see Appendix F), which all schools in the district complete once a year, was analyzed. The MVMS is provided by an organization called UChicago Impact. UChicago Impact tools are currently being used in 60 major cities across 29 states nationwide. Schools in diverse settings—including rural Montana, Iowa; suburban St. Paul, Minnesota; Kansas City, Kansas; private, parochial, and public schools in Detroit, Michigan; as well as every school in the state of Illinois—use the UChicago Impact system of tools for training and professional development to build capacity for data-driven school improvement. The five essentials (consisting of effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environment, and ambitious instruction) are necessary components for positive change. Utilizing the information provided in the survey helped the researcher to understand ABC Elementary’s strengths and weaknesses. This information was then used as leverage in developing the change plan.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis for this change plan focused on qualitative data from a 75-question questionnaire (see Appendix D). Responses from the questionnaire were used to make an inference about the study participants thoughts and feelings regarding implementing progress monitoring on student achievement. Data from the MVMS survey was used to gain a better understanding of teachers’ feelings about instruction, professional development, and school as a workplace. Information from the school’s website was used to validate the number of students, teachers, and other demographic information. The School Report Card was used to gather information about students’ academic progress on the high-stakes assessment in reading and math.

## **Conclusion**

To ensure the researcher reached the end results ethically and appropriately, it was important to conduct this change leadership plan using the procedures outlined in this section. This study required significant input from teachers, administrators, and examining of the MVMS, the School Report Card, and the SQRP. It was equally important to interview administration to help toward interpreting information gathered from other sources. The purpose of the data collection process was to gather information about how teachers felt about the implementation structures and whether or not progress monitoring was being implemented with fidelity. Ultimately, this data informed and improved teacher instruction—resulting in a plan to implement progress-monitoring structures with fidelity to increase student achievement.

## **SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

Research conducted by Fuchs and Fuchs (2002) concluded that when teachers systematically use progress-monitoring structures, the teachers are better able to identify the additional needs of students, the teachers design stronger instructional programs, and students make significant gains (p. 1). Progress monitoring, previously referred to as curriculum-based measurement, was initially created to assess the growth in basic skills of special education students, identify general education students at risk of academic failure, and as a predictor of success in early literacy programs (Deno, 2003; Good, Simmons, & Kameenui, 2001).

Accountability continues to be at an all-time high as the federal government, states, districts, schools, and teachers implement progress-monitoring structures to determine if the education students are receiving meets expectations (Reeves, 2003). The landmark NCLB federal mandate codified a developing policy view that standards, testing, and accountability were the path to improved performance (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005). In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was instituted and replaced the NCLB act under President Obama's administration. The ESSA federal educational mandate provided states with a framework for student achievement and accountability metrics; however, states have the autonomy to implement their own goals: long-term goals and smaller interim goals, which ultimately aligns to the purpose of providing all students with an excellent and equitable education (Korte, 2016). However, these goals must address proficiency on tests, English-language proficiency, and graduation rates (Weiss & McGuinn, 2016).

A vital component in any educational system is assessment (Stecker, Lembke, & Foegen, 2008). States use assessment data to determine the effectiveness of their educational programs, school districts use assessment data to monitor the success of their instructional programs, and teachers use assessment data to inform teaching and learning (Stecker, Lembke, & Foegen, 2008). There are many indicators used to specify student academic success, and progress monitoring is way to evaluate the indicators. Schools have implemented progress monitoring as a strategy for monitoring student learning for well over 40 years, but progress monitoring has intensified within the past 10 years (Bolt, Ysseldyke, & Patterson, 2010).

Progress monitoring is one strategy used to determine the effectiveness of teaching on student learning. Progress monitoring is defined as “a practice that helps teachers use student performance data to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions” (Safer & Fleischman, 2005, p. 81). With the increased demands on schools to demonstrate student mastery of the curriculum on high-stakes assessments, progress monitoring provides a direct link between the instructional process and high-stakes assessments. According to the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, the purpose of progress monitoring is to determine whether students are profiting appropriately from the instruction they are receiving and to build more effective programs for children who are not benefitting from the instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2004).

Research supports progress monitoring as being one of the major factors differentiating effective schools and teachers from ineffective ones (Cotton, 1988; Edmonds, 1979). With this being the case, many classroom teachers are inadequately

trained on implementing progress monitoring to inform teaching and learning (Santi & Vaughn, 2007). This change plan researches best practices for implementing progress-monitoring structures to impact student achievement by analyzing Wagner et al's (2006) arenas of change. Research further suggested that having a well-defined system for implementation can increase the likelihood of having an effective program that will be successful (Fixen et al., 2005).

This literature review includes evidence supporting progress monitoring as a vehicle to improve student achievement, the benefits of using progress monitoring to inform teachings and learning, components of an effective progress-monitoring system, stages of the implementation process, and the benefits of using a technology-enhanced progress-monitoring system.

### **Progress Monitoring Systems**

Progress monitoring is a powerful instructional tool within the instructional cycle to increase student performance. When teachers implement the instructional cycle with fidelity, planning instruction, incorporating research based practices, assessing instruction, and analyzing data, the use of progress monitoring can shift from a mundane task the administration, district, and/or state needs to complete to an integral component of teaching (Santi & Vaughn, 2007).

Progress monitoring allows educators to monitor the performance and progress of every student in their classroom. Using a technology based tool provides immediate feedback to teachers, which allows them to make quick adjustments to teaching and learning. Progress monitoring allows the teacher to assess whether the instruction provided students is effective. The benefits of using technology based progress-

monitoring tools include monitoring student's individual learning needs, providing informative feedback to teacher, allowing teachers to adapt instruction as needed, and improving students' overall academic experience (Ysseldyke & Bolt, 2007).

The National Center on Progress Monitoring, a clearinghouse funded by the U.S. Department of Education between 2003–2008, vetted progress-monitoring materials for their technical adequacy and impacts on student achievement. It reported that when progress monitoring is implemented correctly, students' learning is accelerated because they receive more appropriate and targeted instruction, teachers make more informed decisions about teaching and learning, communication about student learning is pinpointed more efficiently, fewer students are recommended for Special Education, and teachers hold higher expectations for student outcomes (National Center on Progress Monitoring, n.d.).

Shapiro (2011) suggested that when progress monitoring is done on a consistent basis, it provides students with an opportunity to see how moving toward their goals provides teachers with a clearer picture of the impact of the instruction received and serves as a vehicle to communicate with parents about their child's progress. Research conducted by Ysseldyke & Tardrew (2007) found that teachers using progress monitoring provided more individualized instruction and were able to better meet the needs of their students.

Research conducted by Fuchs & Fuchs (2002) concluded that when teachers implement progress monitoring, they are able to identify gaps in student learning, differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students, create stronger instructional programs, and increase student learning opportunities impacting student achievement.

Fuchs & Fuchs (2005) noted that teachers effected significant levels of growth in student learning with progress monitoring only when they modified instruction based on progress-monitoring data.

Safer and Fleischman (2005) concluded that progress monitoring is a reliable and valid predictor of student performance. In addition, they demonstrated that when teachers use student progress monitoring with fidelity, students learn more, a teacher's decision making improves, and students become more aware of their own performance. Additional research by Fuchs & Fuchs (1998) concluded that implementing progress monitoring with larger classrooms requires additional effort, but it provides a powerful resource tool that can help teachers adjust teaching and learning to ensure that all students reach high academic standards.

### **Components of Progress Monitoring**

Effective progress-monitoring tools should include multiple components including:

1. Establishing and measuring academic goals.
2. Providing a vehicle for understanding how students are progressing toward established goals.
3. Creating opportunities for implementers to identify students potentially at risk for academic failure.
4. Offering data that can provide accountability evidence to parents, teachers, and educators about the impact of intervention programs. (Shapiro, 2011)



The academic goals for ABC Elementary are the Common Core State Standards. The goal of the standards is to increase students' preparation for success in college and the workplace in a competitive, global economy. XYZ Tool is the tool used to understand how students are progressing toward mastering the standards. Students who need additional support can be identified and adjustments made in teaching and learning.

### Stages of Implementation

Research suggested that six stages of implementation exist:

1. Exploration
2. Installation
3. Initial Implementation
4. Full Implementation
5. Innovation
6. Sustainability (Fixen et al., 2009)

The stages are cyclical and each stage impacts the others in complex ways. Fixen et al. (2009) further suggested that implementation is a recursive process that may take anywhere from two to four years (Saldana, Chamberlin, Wang, & Brown, 2012).

In the *exploration* stage, a potential match is identified that aligns to the needs of the stakeholders, evidence-based practices, and the needed resources to make a decision. After a decision is made, structural support is initiated to put the program in place for program *installation*. Additional resources are determined for funding, training and professional development. *Initial implementation* requires change as new learning is integrated. This can be one of the most difficult parts of the process (especially for the state)—when the implementation of a new practice fails (Fixen, 2009). *Full*

*implementation* occurs when the staff is fully trained. The program is being implemented with fidelity, and all vested parties facilitate the new practice. After the full implementation, adaptations can occur in the *innovation* stage. At this stage, the school makes the implementation their own by making adjustments, possibly keeping what is working and and/or removing the parts that are not supporting school improvement. The goal for the *sustainability* stage is for the long term survival of the tool. During this stage, the effectiveness of the tool is evaluated, such as its ability to keep up with the changes that might occur; in addition, ensuring that when new staff members are hired, they are trained and that implementation continues with fidelity.

When considering the implementation of a progress-monitoring system, the Center on Response to Intervention recommends administrators, educators, and support staff alike discuss these factors:

1. Core Components of Implementation
2. Implementation Fidelity
3. Technology Enhanced Progress Monitoring
4. Benefits of Progress Monitoring

Developing an environment where these factors are discussed and reflected upon will support the implementation process.

## **Core Components of Implementation**

Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, and Friedman (2005) identified four core implementation components for successfully implementing programs: practitioner selection, professional development, ongoing consultation and coaching, and administrative support. Fixsen et al. (2005) also suggested that how these components are implemented determine the effectiveness of the overall program. Practitioner selection supports recruiting the right people with the knowledge, skills, and capacity to implement the practice with fidelity. Proper professional development should expedite the knowledge base of those responsible for implementation. Professional development should also give those responsible for implementation opportunities to practice using the required tools, thereby providing the practitioners opportunities to become more effective at implementation. Ongoing consultation and coaching should provide practitioners access to skilled professionals that can clarify their misconceptions and engage them in *what if* scenarios. This on the job support is where practitioners really develop capacity to perform the work at a high level. Coaching is the process by which behavioral change can be most likely to take place. This change might be the difference between tacit compliance and full vestedness. It is imperative that administrators support the implementation process and the practitioners tasked with implementing the tool or practice. Administrators must provide the leadership necessary to set expectations, accountability, and progress monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation. Administrators must also encourage and support adjustments to the process when these are necessary.

## Implementation Fidelity

Implementation fidelity refers to how well a program is implemented with adherence and integrity to the program design (Carroll, Patterson, Wood, Both, Rick, & Balain, 2007). Research suggested that the implementation process affects how well a program succeeds (Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003; Mihalic, 2004). The concept of implementation fidelity is currently described and defined in terms of five elements that need to be measured (Carroll et al, 2007): adherence, exposure, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation. Each of these implementation elements influence the degree to which the program will be effective. The element of *adherence* or the degree to which those responsible for implementing the program adheres to the program as it is designed when implementing the program. The element of *exposure* suggests that the person responsible for implementing the program ensure that the intended user is exposed to the program per the directions. The *quality of delivery* element of implementation presupposes that the delivery is exactly as outlined in the program. This should ensure that the quality of delivery does not negatively affect the outcomes. The element of *participant responsiveness* postulates that if the other elements are implemented as outlined by the program, the participant should respond to the program as the control group. The *program differentiation* element purports that if any differentiation to the program is implemented it should only be done as outlined in the program—otherwise, the results may not be consistent with those based on the control group. Considering these elements will allow school districts to promote greater implementation fidelity. It is only by making an appropriate evaluation of the fidelity with which an intervention has been

implemented that a viable assessment can be made of its contribution to outcomes, e.g., its effect on performance (Carroll et al, 2007). Mowbray, Holter, Teague, and Bybee (2003) suggested that failed implementation is the most common reason for failed outcomes. Further research suggested that when programs are not implemented with fidelity, programs do not have as much impact (Forgatch, Patterson, & DeGarmo, 2006; McGrew & Griss, 2005; Resnick., Neale, & Rosenheck, 2003).

As this relates to the implementation of progress monitoring, school districts must consider if gains or losses in student performance is due to inherent flaws in a progress-monitoring system or a lack of fidelity of implementation by implementers. Therefore, school administrators must implement clear fidelity criteria guidelines to support implementation fidelity and monitor the structures to ensure appropriate execution. Having fidelity criteria should also promote external validity by providing adequate documentation and guidelines for replication projects adopting a given model (Mowbray et al., 2003). Structure and process are two aspects of fidelity criteria.

Structure encompasses the framework of service delivery and process comprises the way in which services are delivered. Fidelity criteria often include specification of the length, intensity, and duration of the service (or dosage); content, procedures, and activities over the length of the services; roles, qualifications, and activities of staff; and inclusion/exclusion characteristics for the target service population (Kelly, Heckman, Stevenson, and Williams, 2000).

Fixsen et al. (2005) stated two major theoretical frameworks exist for moving science to service more effectively and efficiently: the stages of implementation and the core components of implementation. As described earlier in this section, Fixsen et al.

(2005) posited there appeared to be six functional stages of implementation: exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, innovation, and sustainability. With every stage, the implementation process should be completed to support implementation fidelity. Each stage provides the user with different information pertaining to the particular stage. The exploration stage allows users to compare and contrast the different products and be a part of choosing the tool. The installation stage allows the users to be a part of and gain an understanding of the infrastructure. During the initial implementation stage, users have the opportunity to test the tool, practice using it, and work out any concerns. The full implementation stage provides the users the opportunity to use the tool for its intended purpose. Users are encouraged to extend the usefulness of the tool during the innovation stage. The sustainability stage represents a crucial component of the process in order for the tool to have a lasting impact on student achievement. Core implementation components drive practitioners to use progress monitoring effectively. These components are staff selection, preservice and in-service training, ongoing coaching and consultation, staff evaluation, decision support data systems, facilitative administrative support, and systems interventions (Fixsen et al., 2005). The stated processes support the fidelity of implementation. Mindfulness of these processes will strengthen the likelihood of the effectiveness of progress-monitoring implementation and therefore increase the validity of the results. School administrators must account for similar processes to ensure the success of a progress-monitoring system.

## **Technology Enhanced Progress Monitoring**

Over the last 10 years, technology has become an integral advancement to the world of assessment. Studies conducted by Charman & Elmes (1998) and Slay & Rennie (1999) purport that students perform better when computer-based assessments are used. Using technology-based, progress-monitoring tools allow rapid formative feedback to students and teachers, allowing teachers quicker turnaround time to adjust instruction for students.

Many school districts use research-based, progress-monitoring tools such as Accelerated Reading (AR), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), NWEA MAP, mClass, Accelerated Math (AM), Renaissance, XYZ Tool, or Reading Rockets (Bolt, Ysseldyke, & Patterson, 2010; Ysseldyke & Bolt, 2007). As school districts strive to use progress monitoring as a strategy to improve student achievement, Fixsen et al. (2005) suggested that the six functional stages of implementation and the core components of implementation can support implementation fidelity. In-order for school districts to increase the likelihood that the data students and teachers receive after students participate in progress monitoring portrays an authentic picture of the student, school districts may want to use Fixsen et al's (2005) six functional stages of implementation and the core components of implementation to support their efforts. These stages and components can support school districts as they strive to deliver better progress-monitoring data to all stakeholders.

Ysseldyke, Spicuzza, Kosciolk, and Boys (2003) suggested students who used a technology-enhanced, progress-monitoring system outperformed students who did not. They further purported that students benefited more from teachers who implemented with

greater fidelity. Ysseldyke and Bolt (2002) suggested that when progress monitoring is implemented continuously using a technology-based program as intended, students' data increased significantly—more than students who were not progress monitored on the program not implemented with fidelity.



## **SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

### **Findings**

The purpose of this change plan was to develop a plan to improve the implementation structures at ABC Elementary using its current progress monitoring tool, XYZ Tool, to improve student achievement. A significant body of research garnered over the past 30 years supports the idea that progress monitoring is a reliable and valid predictor of student performance, a useful tool for making informed decisions about teaching and learning, and an effective resource for targeting individual student learning needs (Roehrig, Duggar, Moats, Glover, & Mincey; Safer & Fleischman, 2005; Santi & Vaughn, 2007; Stecker, Lembke, & Foegen, 2008; Ysseldyke & Tardrew, 2007).

Qualitative and quantitative data was used to analyze trends in ABC Elementary's academic history and to gain perspective on the school's staff practices for implementing progress-monitoring structures to improve student achievement. Information pertaining to ABC Elementary's current academic performance was analyzed from data on the school's website, the district's website, and the Illinois Board of Education's website. Information was also gathered from a questionnaire given to grades 3–8 teachers who taught reading and or math at ABC Elementary. Findings and researched best practices guided the development of an implementation plan for implementing the ABC Progress Monitoring Tool with greater fidelity.

## **Academic History**

ABC Elementary has shown gradual improvement over that last couple of years (see Figures 1–4). In 2014, 29% of the students showed growth in reading, 1% of the diverse learners showed growth in reading, and 26% of the students met grade level attainment in reading. Also, 20% of the students showed growth in math, 1% of the diverse learners showed growth in math, and 17% of the students met grade level attainment in math. In addition, 60% of the students met their growth target overall in reading and math.

In 2015, 66% of the students showed growth in reading, 80% of the diverse learners showed growth in reading, and 42% of the students met grade level attainment in reading. As well, 42% of the students showed growth in math, 61% of the diverse learners showed growth in math, and 27% of the students met grade level attainment. Lastly, 56.9% of the students met their growth target overall in reading and math.

In 2016, 68% the students showed growth in reading, 96% of the diverse learners showed growth in reading, 49% of the students met grade level attainment in reading, 58% of the students showed growth in math, 77% of the diverse learners showed growth in math, and 32% of the students met grade level attainment in math. In addition, 56.3% of the students met their growth target overall in reading and math.

Figure 1. ABC Elementary’s NWEA MAP Reading MAP Data—Growth for students in Grades 3–8.

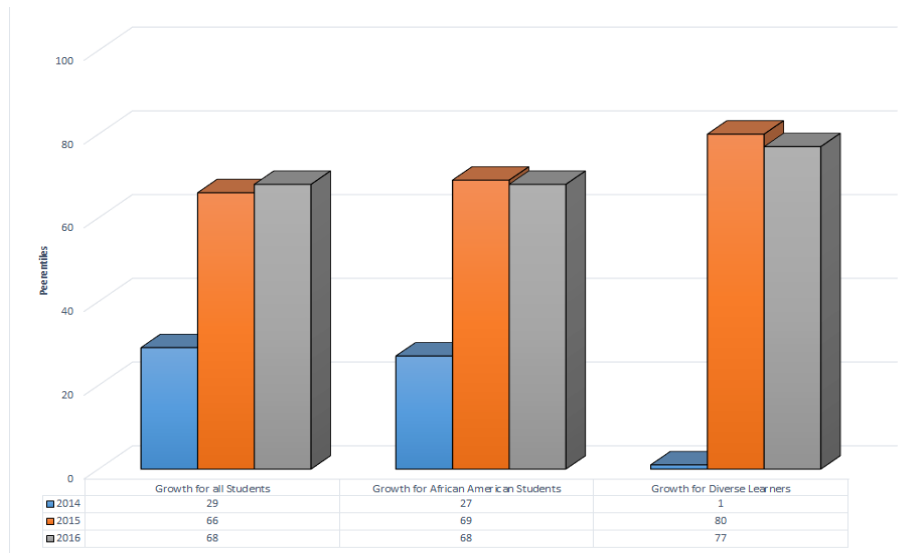


Figure 2. ABC Elementary’s NWEA Math MAP—Growth for students in Grades 3–8.

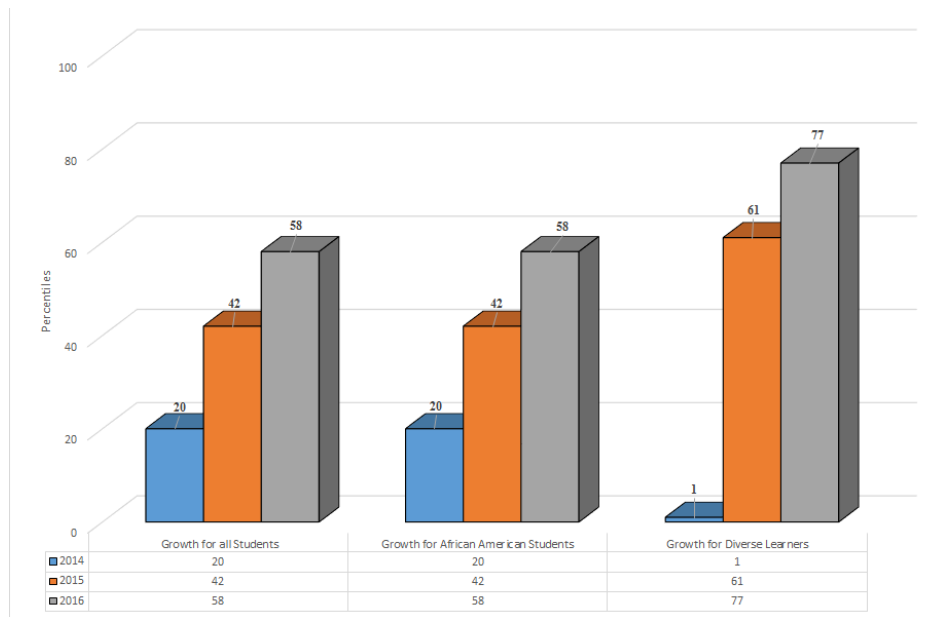


Figure 3. ABC Elementary School’s NWEA MAP Reading—Attainment for students in Grades 3–8.

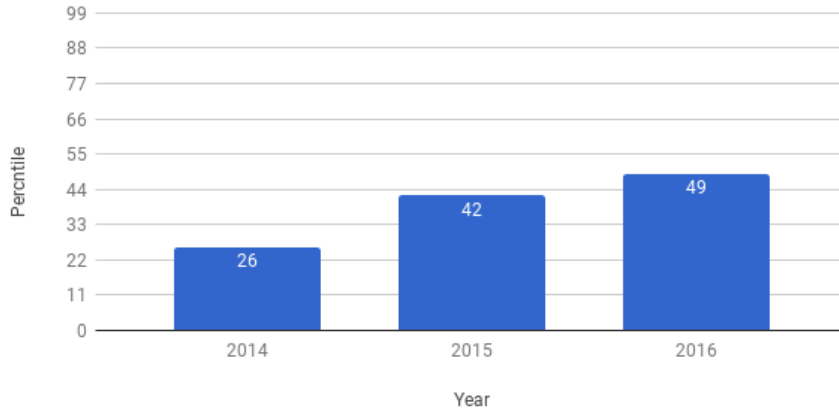
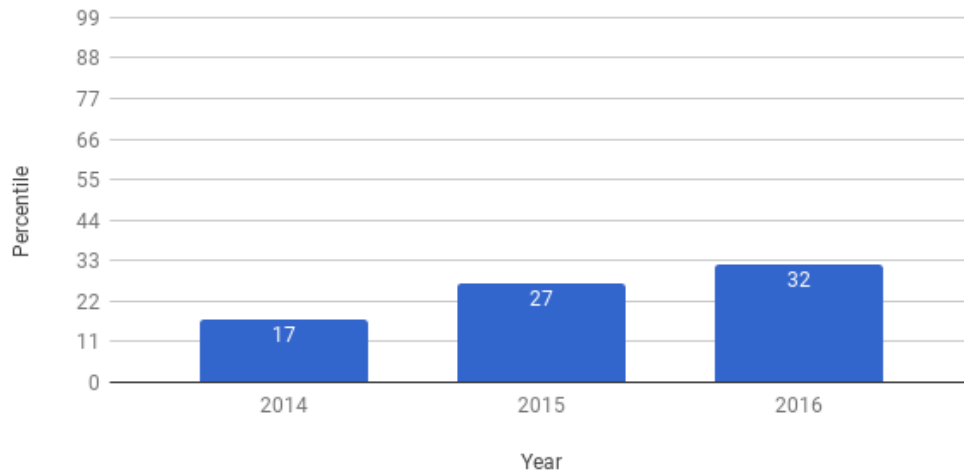


Figure 4. ABC Elementary School’s NWEA MAP Reading—Attainment for students in Grades 3–8.



ABC Elementary is now considered a Provisional Support School (see Table 1) with a Level 2 Rating (see Table 2). Schools that fall in the Provisional Support category are provided additional support to improve teaching and learning. The district can also

require ABC Elementary to revise its school improvement plan, closely monitor their budget, and require specific professional development.

Table 1

School Status Descriptions

<b>School Status</b>	
<b>Good Standing</b>	Good Standing is a school that has met or exceeded the district’s minimum performance standards. These schools must follow district policies and mandates, but the LSC retains all normal autonomy.
<b>Provisional Support</b>	Provisional Support means that the school needs increased support. The network and CEO may require the school to revise its Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP) and/or budget and may require specific professional development.
<b>Intensive Support</b>	Intensive Support means the school needs a high level of support. In addition to the interventions listed for Provisional Support, the Board of Education may—in extreme cases—take actions such as a turnaround or principal removal. These actions will not happen in all Intensive Support schools and require a public hearing.

A Level 2 status rating means that the school, overall, is performing below average and that additional support from the district is necessary. All schools in this district (including neighborhood, magnet, charter, selective enrollment, and options) receive a school quality rating each year. This system takes into account the different populations each school in the district serves. The indicators for the district in which ABC Elementary is located uses the following indicators for elementary schools:

1. NWEA MAP attainment
2. NWEA MAP growth
3. Student attendance
4. MVMS results

- 5. Student growth on ACCESS for English Language Learners
- 6. Data quality (see Table 2)

Table 2

SQRP Indicators

Elementary Schools	High Schools	Option Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attainment on the NWEA MAP test</li> <li>• Student growth on the NWEA MAP test</li> <li>• Student attendance</li> <li>• My Voice, My School survey</li> <li>• Student growth on ACCESS for English Language Learners</li> <li>• Data quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attainment on the ACT assessment</li> <li>• Student growth on the ACT assessment</li> <li>• Student attendance</li> <li>• Graduation rate</li> <li>• Freshman on-track rate; dropout rate</li> <li>• Students earning early college or career credentials</li> <li>• College enrollment and persistence</li> <li>• My Voice, My School survey</li> <li>• Data quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student growth on the STAR test</li> <li>• Graduation rate</li> <li>• Enrollment stabilization</li> <li>• Student attendance</li> <li>• Credit attainment</li> </ul>

**School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)**

The SQRP school score card is the district's policy for measuring annual school performance. The school score card is used to communicate to school staff, school leadership, local school councils (LSCs), parents, and the community about the academic success of individual schools and the district as a whole, recognizing schools with high achievement and/or high growth identified by best practices, providing a framework for schools to use to goal set, and guides the district's decision making process around school actions and turnarounds.

The score card is a five-tiered performance system based on a broad range of indicators (as Table 3 depicts) of success that include student test score performance, student academic growth, the closing of achievement gaps, school culture and climate, attendance, graduation, and preparation for postgraduation success. The current status of ABC Elementary is Level 2+.

Table 3

School Status Ratings

<b>School Status Ratings</b>	
<b>Level 1+</b>	Level 1+ is the highest performance; nationally competitive school with opportunity to share best practices with others
<b>Level 1</b>	Level 1 is high performance; a good school choice with many positive qualities and minimal support needed
<b>Level 2+</b>	Level 2+ is average performance; additional support from network team needed to implement interventions
<b>Level 2</b>	Level 2 is below average performance; <i>provisional support</i> rating means increased support from network
<b>Level 3</b>	Level 3 is the lowest performance; school is in need of <i>intensive intervention</i> . Directed by the district, charter schools in this category are on Academic Warning List

**Questionnaire**

This researcher visited ABC Elementary in September 2016 and spoke to teachers at each of the grade level meetings. Each staff member was invited to participate in the study via answering an electronic questionnaire. Twenty teachers completed the consent form agreeing to participate via an emailed questionnaire; however, only 15 participated in the actual questionnaire. The teachers fell into the following categories:

- Grade 3 teachers (2)

- Grade 4 teachers (4)
- Grade 5 teachers (2)
- Grade 6 teachers (2)
- Grade 7 teachers (2)
- Grade 8 teachers (3)

All of the teachers completing the survey were African American; only 3 of the teachers had 5 years or more teaching experience. Of the remaining teachers, 10 had 3–4 years of teaching experience and 2 had less than 2 years of teaching experience.

According to information garnered from the questionnaire, 80% of the participants have classrooms that service between 26 to 30 general education with inclusion students. Participants reported that 100% of their students are African American. One out of fifteen of the participants were only responsible for teaching math and the other fourteen were responsible for reading and/or a combination of other subjects in addition to reading.

The questionnaire consisted of 75 questions (see Appendix D). The researcher emailed the questionnaire to grades 3–8 teachers at ABC Elementary, who then completed the questionnaire anonymously. One of the teachers began the questionnaire, but did not complete it; others opted to not participate for various reasons not associated with this research project. The questionnaires were then used to glean information in regards to teachers' practices and perspectives on implementing the XYZ Tool at ABC Elementary. The responses were emailed anonymously so participants could not be directly linked to their responses.



Participants were asked a variety of questions about current practices and how progress monitoring is being implemented at ABC Elementary. Most of the participant's progress-monitored students using laptops (86.7%), while the remaining used desktops (13.3%). The participants shared that 93.3% of the teachers at ABC Elementary administered progress monitoring in their classrooms; the other 6.7% utilized a Technology Lab.

Another part of the questionnaire asked teachers questions about the professional development they had received on the XYZ Tool. A majority of the staff indicated receiving 1–2 hours of professional development on the current progress-monitoring tool, with 13.3% reporting receiving 3–4 hours. Eighty percent of the teachers reported that the professional development received was valuable or extremely valuable, 60% reported additional training was needed, and 20% reported the professional development was not valuable at all. Approximately 90% of the teachers had been administering the current progress-monitoring tool for under 3 years; the remaining had been using the current tool between 4–5 years.

### **Progress Monitoring at ABC Elementary**

The questionnaire asked about the structures of progress monitoring at ABC Elementary. This part of the questionnaire revealed information about the staff and their interactions with others.

Table 4 indicates that 85.7% of the teachers interacted with the consultant for the XYZ Tool only once the entire school year and 14.3% interacted with the consultant twice. Two teachers reported interacting with the consultant twice and none reported having contact more than twice. Staff training represents a critical component in

effectively implementing a progress-monitoring program to support student achievement in a school. Fixsen et al. (2005) identified four core implementation components for successfully implementing programs. One of the components is professional development. Fixsen et al. (2005) also suggested that *how* these components are implemented determine the effectiveness of the overall program. For a program to be gauged as effective or not, the program has to be implemented with the intended fidelity. Therefore, school staff at ABC Elementary would need the appropriate professional development to implement the program as outlined by the publisher. Fixsen et al. (2005) posited that pre- and in-service training and ongoing coaching and consultation are also core components of the implementation process. Professional development should give the individuals responsible for implementation opportunities to practice using the required tools, thereby providing the practitioners opportunities to become more effective during implementation. Teachers can really develop capacity to perform the work at a high level with this on-the-job support. This training structure may be effective for staff's ability to properly implement the XYZ Tool at ABC Elementary.

Data revealed that 57.1% of the participants had at least four discussions with students regarding data from the XYZ Tool, while the remaining 42.9% had three or less discussions with students. Twenty-one percent (21.4%) of teachers reported discussing data with parents from the XYZ Tool once, 64.3% reported discussing data at least twice, and 14.3% reported having four discussions with parents. The questionnaire revealed that 57.1% of the participants had more than four discussions with Instructional Support Leaders (ISLs) while the other 42.9% had three or less discussions the entire year. In

addition, 57.1% of the participants had one discussion regarding the XYZ Tool with their principal, 28.6% had two discussions, and the remaining 14.3% had four discussions.

The data revealed that less than half of the teachers communicated with students and parents about the tool. Ensuring that the staff had a clear understanding of the tool would build confidence in using it, as well as discussing data from it with both colleagues, parents, and students. Research suggested that properly trained teachers are more prepared and more likely to implement a new practice with greater fidelity (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Implementing the DDI cycle could create a space for teachers to have conversations around the data and best practices regarding teaching and learning.

Table 4

Implementing the XYZ Tool at ABC Elementary

	One Time the Entire School Year	Two Times the Entire School Year	Three Times the Entire School Year	Four Times the Entire School Year	Five Times the Entire School Year	Six Times the Entire School Year
How many times did you interact with the consultant who provided professional development on the current progress-monitoring tool?	85.7%	14.3%	No Responses	No Responses	No Responses	No Responses
How many times did you have a discussion with your students about their data from the progress monitoring?	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	57.1%	No Responses	No Responses
How many times did you have a discussion with your students' parents about their data from the progress-monitoring tool?	21.4%	64.3%	No Responses	14.3%	No Responses	No Responses
How many times did you have a discussion with the Instructional Support Leaders (reading and/or math coach) about the progress-monitoring tool?	No Response	35.7%	7.1%	42.9%	7.1%	7.1%
How many times did your principal have a conversation with you regarding data from your progress - monitoring tool?	57.1%	28.6%	No Responses	14.3%	No Responses	No Responses

The next section of the questionnaire (see Table 5) asked participants about their feelings and perspectives about the XYZ Tool. Only 7.1% of the participants reported being included in the decision to use the XYZ Tool, while the other 92.9% reported not being involved in the selection process. Over 60% (64.3%) of the participants reported being confident in using the XYZ Tool, while the other 35.7% did not feel confident in their ability to use it. Allowing ABC Elementary staff the opportunity to be a part of the decision making, goal setting, scheduling, and integration of the tool could play more favorably in adoption and buy in and could be crucial in implementation success (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This change might be the difference between tacit compliance and full vestedness.

Participants indicated they felt the XYZ Tool was not an accurate indicator of the state's high-stakes assessment; only 14.3% of the participants reporting it was an accurate indicator. This position could negatively impact teacher's perception of the benefit of the tool's impact on preparing students for high-stakes assessments. Teachers may be less likely to value using the tool to inform instruction regarding assessments. As far as students report card grades, 71.4% of the teachers reported that the XYZ Tool was an indicator of student grades while the other 28.6% reported that students' grades were not correlated to the data provided by the XYZ Tool. Administrators may reflect on how teachers are arriving at their assumptions and create structures to support teacher's suppositions. Teacher's grading practices could indicate their alignment to student's required learning in order to demonstrate alignment. Schools have implemented progress monitoring as a strategy for monitoring student learning for well over 40 years, but

progress monitoring has intensified within the past 10 years (Bolt, Ysseldyke, & Patterson, 2010).

In terms of teachers having the necessary tools to implement the XYZ Tool with fidelity, 71.4% reported not having the necessary tools. If school staff felt they did not have the capacity to implement the tool, school administrators may want to rethink the professional development they are providing regarding the tool. If teachers feel ill equipped to implement the tool, the tool mostly will not be implemented as outlined by the publisher. Further, the data collected probably will not be reliable nor valid to genuinely inform teaching and learning. This could create a larger concern for this learning community. More concerning is the fact that this situation could produce a greater concern for students and their families. An inaccurate diagnosis of a student's strengths and weaknesses related to their learning could create greater learning gaps and irrevocable demand. As well, teacher's thinking appears to align to the statements regarding the limited amount of professional development the survey revealed that the staff received. Information from the questionnaire revealed 57.1% of the participants were satisfied with the XYZ Tool and 42.9% reported they would not use the tool if not directed to. This appeared to be a contradiction. If progress monitoring is a valuable instructional practice, then why would 43% of teachers not implement the process if not directed? Administrators at ABC Elementary may have a larger concern on their hands regarding teachers implementing a full instructional cycle to improve student achievement. If schools are interested in closing the achievement gap and providing equity in education, core instructional practices must be implemented.

Table 5

Progress Monitoring at ABC Elementary

DESCRIPTION	Percent of Participants who Selected This Answer	
	Yes	No
I had some say in the selection of the current progress-monitoring tool.	7.1%	92.9%
I feel totally confident about my ability to use the current progress monitoring.	64.3%	35.7%
The current progress-monitoring tool was an accurate indicator of my students' success on the state's high-stakes assessment.	14.3%	85.7%
The current progress-monitoring tool was an accurate indicator of my student's report card grades.	71.4%	28.6%
I have all the tools necessary to implement the progress-monitoring tool with fidelity.	28.6%	71.4%
I am satisfied with the current progress-monitoring tool used at my school.	57.1%	42.9%
I would not use the current progress-monitoring tool if not directed to do so.	42.9%	57.1%

**Competency**

The questionnaire asked teachers about competence in implementing the XYZ Tool (see Tables 6 and 7). More than 50% of the teachers at ABC Elementary felt confident about implementing the tool with fidelity to impact teaching and learning. Research conducted by Safer & Fleischman (2005) conclude that progress monitoring is a reliable and valid predictor of student performance and when teachers use student progress monitoring with fidelity, students learn more, teacher decision making improves, and students become more aware of their own performance.

The questionnaire divulged that approximately 40% were undecided. Teacher confidence at implementing a practice could support their ability to implement the practice with greater fidelity—thereby encouraging greater student learning. About 95% of the teachers reported that progress monitoring allowed them to gather and interpret data effectively, 63.4% felt that the XYZ Tool addressed the needs of their students some of the time, 28.6% reported the tool addressed the needs of their students most of the time, and 7.1% reported the tool addressed the needs of their students all of the time. Teachers at ABC Elementary mostly suggested that the tool was a resource that provided data regarding student learning. However, this data can support teachers by providing more effective teaching and learning experiences for students—leading to greater student learning and a reduction in the achievement gap for some of society’s most vulnerable students. Over 70% (71.4%) of the teachers reported collaborating with their colleagues using information collected from the tool, 21.4% reported collaborating most of the time, while the remaining 7.1% reported collaborating all of the time.

Regarding feedback, only 14.3% of the teachers indicated receiving feedback from their administrators regarding data extracted from the XYZ Tool; the remaining (85.7%) reported receiving feedback from data extracted from the tool. School administrators at ABC Elementary may be sending conflicting messages to teachers by not providing feedback regarding the data collected from the tool. Teachers could believe that if the data was valuable, school administrators would provide greater feedback. Fixsen et al (2005), suggested that a core implementation component is facilitative administrative support. Often, if a program is important to school administrators, it will be important to school staff. Administrators at ABC Elementary may want to consider



how they are communicating the importance of progress monitoring at their school as a strategy to improve teaching and learning. Teachers revealed using the XYZ Tool to make adjustments to teaching and learning some of the time (78.6%), most of the time (14.3%), and all of the time (7.1%). All of the teachers revealed using the tool to predict how successful students will be on the district’s high-stakes assessment. Teachers reported using the tool some of the time (85.7%), most of the time (7.1%), and all of the time (7.1%). Teachers using progress monitoring to make adjustments to teaching and learning and to make predictions about students’ performance on high-stakes assessments benefit from using the progress monitoring tool. Safer and Fleischman (2005) concluded that progress monitoring is a reliable and valid predictor of student performance. It could be put forth that teachers’ thinking at ABC Elementary is aligned to research. Then why do some teachers suggest progress monitoring only be implemented out of compliance? Additional research is needed.

Table 6

Competency Using Progress Monitoring

<b>Description</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I feel confident that I can implement progress monitoring structures with fidelity to positively impact teaching and learning.	7.1%	50%	42.9%	No Responses	No Responses
The progress monitoring tool allows me to gather and interpret data efficiently.	14.3%	78.6%	7.1%	No Responses	No Responses

Table 7

Using the XYZ Tool to Impact Student Achievement

<b>Description</b>	<b>All of the Time</b>	<b>Most of the Time</b>	<b>Some of the Time</b>	<b>None of the Time</b>
The current progress monitoring system addresses the needs of the students in my classroom.	7.1%	28.6%	64.3%	No Responses
I collaborate with my colleagues using information I collected from the current progress monitoring tool.	7.1%	21.4%	71.4%	No Responses
I receive feedback from my school administrator regarding the data garnered from the current progress monitoring tool.	7.1%	21.4%	57.1%	14.3%
I reflect and use the data garnered from the progress monitoring tool to make adjustments to teaching and learning.	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to predict how successful my students will do on the school district's "high stakes" assessment.	7.1%	7.1%	85.7%	No Responses

**Conditions**

Table 8 revealed information about the conditions currently existing at ABC Elementary. Information garnered revealed that 71.4% of the teachers use the current progress monitoring tool to determine the effectiveness of their teaching while 14.3% did not use it at all. Of the teachers surveyed, 78.6% stated using the XYZ Tool some of the time for the following reasons:

1. Help write lesson plans
2. Create yearlong plans

3. Organize small group instruction
4. Determine students' strengths in Math
5. Create homework assignments
6. Select reading materials for students

Teachers at ABC Elementary articulated using progress monitoring to enhance the teaching and learning process. This practical reliance on progress monitoring could be a way for school administrators to encourage staff to increase their capacity to use the progress monitoring tool to garner greater results related to student achievement.

Research conducted by Fuchs & Fuchs (2002) concluded that when teachers implement progress monitoring, they are able to identify gaps in student learning, differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students, create stronger instructional programs, and increase student learning opportunities to impact student achievement. Teachers at ABC Elementary also seem to see the positive benefits of progress monitoring.

Of the teachers surveyed, 85.7% stated using the XYZ Tool some of the time for the following reasons:

1. Collaborate with colleagues
2. Have conversations with parents about their student's progress
3. Predict how successful students would do on high-stakes assessments
4. Provide additional resources for students to support teaching and learning

Additionally, of the teachers surveyed, 92.9% stated using the tool some of the time for the following reasons:

1. Differentiate instruction
2. Have conversations with parents about their student's progress

3. Determine students' strengths in reading
4. Determine students' deficits in reading
5. Determine students' deficits in math

Most of the teachers felt the data they received from the XYZ Tool was relevant most of the time (64.3%), 7.1% reported data was relevant all of the time, 57.1% of the teachers felt data was user friendly most of the time, 7.1% felt it was user friendly all of the time, and 35.7% reported it was user friendly some of the time. Half of the teachers reported receiving support from the school administrators in implementing the tool some of the time, 35.7% said they received support most of the time, and 7.1% said they received support all of the time. Support for the tool was 64.3% some of time, 21.4% most of the time, and 7.1% all of the time.

The relevancy of data should influence how engaged teachers will be in disaggregating the data. If teachers feel that data is going to make a difference in their teaching and learning, they may be more likely to vest in the process to garner the data. More than half of the teachers at ABC Elementary seemed to suggest the data received from the XYZ Tool was relevant; therefore, they may be more likely to use the tool with some fidelity, recognizing that the data could be helpful. Research supports that when teachers implement an instructional cycle with fidelity, plan solid instruction, and incorporate research based practices, the fixed mindset around progress monitoring can shift from a mundane task to an integral part of teaching and learning (Santi & Vaughn, 2007).

Table 8

## Conditions at ABC Elementary School

<b>Description</b>	<b>All of the Time</b>	<b>Most of the Time</b>	<b>Some of the Time</b>	<b>None of the Time</b>
I use the current progress monitoring tool to determine the effectiveness of my teaching.	7.1%	7.1%	71.4%	14.3%
I use the current progress monitoring tool to help write my lesson plans.	7.1%	7.1%	78.6%	7.1%
I use the current progress monitoring tool to create yearlong plans for the school year.	No Responses	14.3%	78.6%	7.1%
I use the current progress monitoring tool to group my students for small group instruction.	14.3%	No Responses	78.6%	7.1%
I use the current progress monitoring tool to collaborate with my colleagues.	7.1%	7.1%	85.7%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to differentiate instruction.	No Responses	7.1%	92.9%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to have conversations with the parents of my students about their progress.	No Responses	7.1%	92.9%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to have conversations with parents about their child's progress.	No Responses	7.1%	85.7%	7.1%

I use the current progress monitoring tool to predict how successful students will do on the state's high-stakes assessment.	No Responses	14.3% %	85.7%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to determine my student's strengths in reading.	No Responses	7.1%	92.9%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to determine my student's deficits in reading.	No Responses	7.1%	92.9%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to determine my student's strengths in math.	No Responses	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%
I use the current progress monitoring tool to determine my student's deficits in math.	No Responses	7.1%	92.9%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to create homework assignments for students.	No Responses	No Responses	78.6%	21.4%
I use the current progress monitoring tool to provide additional resources for students to support student achievement.	No Responses	14.3%	85.7%	No Responses
I use the current progress monitoring tool to select reading material for my students.	No Responses	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%
The data I receive from the current progress monitoring tool is relevant.	7.1%	64.3%	28.6%	No Responses
The data I receive from the current progress monitoring tool is user-friendly.	7.1%	57.1%	35.7%	No Responses
I receive enough support from my school administrators in implementing the current progress monitoring tool.	7.1%	35.7%	50%	7.1%
I support the implementation plan of the current progress monitoring tool.	7.1%	21.4%	64.3%	7.1%
I have all the necessary technology to administer the current progress monitoring tool to my students.	No Responses	21.4%	78.6%	No Responses

## **Culture**

Tables 9 and 10 show survey question responses revealing information about the culture at ABC Elementary. Wagner et al. (2006) refers to culture as the invisible but powerful mindsets held by the staff members independently and collectively throughout the school. Participant's level of expectation for student learning appeared to be high with 64.3% *strongly agreeing* with having high expectations and the remaining 35.7% *agreeing* with having high expectations. None of the teachers assumed responsibility for progress monitoring not being successful at ABC Elementary: 78.6% disagreed, 14.3% strongly disagreed, and the remaining 7.1% were undecided. Most of the staff also agreed that administration was not responsible for progress monitoring being unsuccessful, with 57.1% disagreeing, 28.6% strongly disagreeing, 7.1% strongly agreed and 7.1% undecided. Staff suggesting that teachers nor school administrators were culpable for the progress monitoring tool being successful may suggest that teacher efficacy should be considered. When staff feel that their work does not impact student learning, it may be impossible to build staff practices to the necessary level to genuinely improve teaching and learning.

In addition, the questionnaire revealed that 50% of the staff implemented progress monitoring structures for compliance reasons only. Twenty-five percent of the participants reported working collaboratively to implement progress monitoring with fidelity. Fifty percent of the staff agreed that progress monitoring was not necessary to determine if students are learning while 42.9% replied that progress monitoring was necessary to determine if students are learning some of the time. When asked if teachers

implemented progress monitored as directed, 50% indicated most of the time while the other 50% said it was implemented as directed some of the time.

Staff training is a critical aspect of successful program implementation. The greater the buy-in of the progress-monitoring tool, the less likely teachers are to create their own modifications and implement the tool as intended by the manufacture of XYZ Tool. Offering frequent training to staff and ensuring all new staff are trained can improve the skills necessary for all implementers, therefore improving the impact of the tool on student achievement. Also, a form of coaching can be used to build staff capacity in delivering the tool. Coaching can support the skills learned in the initial training and can be completed individually or in groups (Joyce & Showers, 2002).



Table 9

## Culture at ABC Elementary

<b>Description</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
My level of expectation for student learning is consistently high for all students.	64.3%	35.7%	No Responses	No Responses	No Responses
My level of expectation for student learning is consistently high for most students.	64.3%	35.7%	No Responses	No Responses	No Responses
The teachers only implement progress-monitoring structures to be in compliance.	7.1%	57.1%	21.4%	14.3%	No Responses
The reason progress monitoring is not successful at my school is because of the teachers.	No Responses	No Responses	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%
The reason progress monitoring is not successful at my school is because of the administrators.	7.1%	No Responses	7.1%	57.1%	28.6%

Table 10

Implementation of XYZ Tool

Description	All of the Time	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	None of the Time
I implement progress-monitoring structures only for compliance reasons	7.1%	42.9%	28.6% I think this is supposed to be 28.6?	No Responses
The teachers work collaboratively to ensure that progress monitoring is implemented with fidelity.	7.1%	21.4%	71.4%	No Responses
I feel confident that progress monitoring is not necessary to determine if students are learning.	No Responses	7.1%	42.9%	50%
I currently use the progress monitoring tool the way I have been directed.	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	No Responses
I follow the current progress monitoring scheduled as directed.	14.3%	35.7	50%	No Responses

Table 11 shows questions from the last section of the questionnaire where teachers were asked about the context. Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that understanding the contextual information of an organization lends insight to helping transform the culture, conditions, and competences of a school. The staff at ABC Elementary felt that when communicating with parents, 35.7% did not feel they did a good job, 28.6% agreed they did a great job, 7.1% strongly agreed they did a good job, and 28.6% were undecided. When teachers know the reasoning behind implementing a program and how it achieves their goals, they are more likely to buy-in to the program. Teachers may

benefit from understanding the links between the XYZ Tool, student achievement, and how it can improve their ability to deliver high quality instruction to make adjustments to teaching and learning to meet the needs of all of their students and report the results more effectively to students and parents. Technology based, progress monitoring tools most often generate parent friendly data reports that provide suggested ways parents can assist their children. The tool has numerous reports that teachers can share with parents and students. Again, proper training on the tool may be a way to strengthen a teacher’s ability to effectively communicate with parents regarding a student’s performance.

Table 11

Context at ABC Elementary

<b>Description</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I do a great job communicating progress-monitoring data to parents.	7.1%	28.6%	28.6%	35.7%	No Responses
I feel that technology-based, progress monitoring tools are better than systems that do not require the use of technology.	21.4%	57.1%	14.3%	7.1%	No Responses
I feel that progress monitoring is one of the most important tools to support student achievement.	21.4%	71.4%	7.1%	No Responses	No Responses

## **Context**

The teachers at ABC Elementary felt that technology based programs are better than systems that do not require the use of technology. Only 7.1% of the teacher participants disagreed. All but 7.1% of the teacher participants felt that progress monitoring is one of the most important tools to support student achievement.

More than 71% of the teachers felt that progress monitoring is one of the most important tools supporting student achievement. Teachers appear to value the data they are able to garner from progress monitoring. Annual data from the high-stakes assessments only gives ABC Elementary a snapshot of where students are (at a single point in time) at the end of the school year on the NWEA MAP assessment. Teaching and learning continues between when the tests are given and when the results are returned to the school in the Spring. The results are then dated, and provide only a snapshot of where students were academically when they took the test. Teachers need an accurate understanding on a daily basis to inform teaching and learning. Teachers at ABC Elementary appear to value progress monitoring as a strategy to improve student achievement, which is supported by research.

Future research is needed to fully uncover the effectiveness of the progress-monitoring strategies being implemented at ABC Elementary and identify next steps to improving the quality of progress monitoring. However, the information garnered from the questionnaire could be used as preliminary information to support the implementation of more robust progress-monitoring structures at ABC Elementary. These findings could also be the basis for exploring additional strategies to support the quality of implementation for schools similar to ABC Elementary.

## SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS (TO-BE)

*Vision* is the ability to see necessary possibilities and *mission* is the ability to implement the changes necessary to make the vision a reality. School organizations must be able to envision greater advancements in performance. Wagner et al. (2006) purported that student achievement will not improve unless and until schools and districts are created where all educators are learning how to significantly improve their skills as teachers and as instructional leaders. This suggests a mindset of continuous improvement with a focus on greater possibilities or *To-Be Vision*.

### **Competencies**

Wagner et al. (2006) defined competencies as “the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (p. 99). Therefore, teachers’ knowledge, skills and expertise directly correlate to student achievement. Ball and Cohen (1999) purported the most important factor that accounts for differences in achievement is instruction. Currently, teacher experience ranges between 3-25 years, approximately 50% of the school’s teaching staff is tenured, staff members serve as instructional coaches in reading and math, and teachers attend bimonthly professional development throughout the school year. At ABC Elementary, teachers’ capacity in the progress-monitoring process is considered to be weak—it should be stated that school staff has minimal ability to use technology effectively.

Staff ability to use technology tools effectively have an impact on the staff’s ability to meet the goal of using technology, which is to support student improvement. If staff are less than competent in using the tool, they may never get to actioning the data

the tool renders. School staff's value of the DDI cycle appears to be weak. Staff does not process through the cycle in a regular and engaged manner. This irregular practice creates numerous gaps in the information provided, giving an incomplete picture of the data. Therefore, diagnosis could be incomplete—leading to weak or incorrect prognosis and thereby directing teachers to implement faulty action plans. Teachers at ABC Elementary collaborate weekly, but meetings are rarely focused on DDI. This pseudo-opportunity to focus teaching and learning on data provides a false picture of the school's work. Regarding the survey, teachers stated receiving between 2 to 3 hours of professional development on the progress monitoring tool. However, teachers continuously suggested needing additional training on the tool. School staff concluded that the quality of the professional development did not lead to an increase in their capacity to use the tool to progress monitor.

Heifetz (2006) stated that a commitment to individualized professional development comes from understanding that the courage to make needed changes resides in people who have a long-term perspective and a stake in the organization's future. This researcher's *To-Be* plan provided continuous and appropriate quality professional development—having job-embedded expectations and agreed upon accountability measures are key. Wagner et al. (2006) purported that having skillful competent people in any organization is a necessity.

Santoyo (2010) stated that after establishing a calendar, the single most important element of building a data-driven culture is effective training for both teachers and leaders. Schools need to benchmark staff capacity to effectively use the tools and set deadlines for expected competency. Schools should not continue budgeting for the exact

training provided previously because school staff did not fully engage in the past training. Developing professional development rooted in Malcolm Knowles andragogy theory of adult learning would be useful in promoting greater staff learning. Strategies that can support teachers are establishing teams, creating lead roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentor relationships (Drago-Severson, 2010). Strategies to develop staff efficacy would be deployed and monitored for impact.

A core, clear, and consistent DDI cycle would be developed, implemented, and adjusted collaboratively and collegially in an attempt to promote staff efficacy. Promoting teams and team accountability would be a major theme to encourage team members' competencies. Staff isolation of the past would be discouraged, and teamwork would be the norm—ensuring that the team's vision and mission are directly related to the larger goals of the organization (in efforts of limiting disaffected-ness by staff. In school, instructional support staff would be available to support staff's ongoing development.

A yearlong professional development calendar (centered on the school's theory of action), would be actioned throughout the school year. School staff would be required to participate in ongoing professional development provided by colleagues and other sources as appropriate. Professional development would be individualized and based on staff performance, experience, productivity, and other pertinent factors. Performance would be acknowledged, articulated, and replicated—encouraging others to visualize and strive for higher levels of performance.

## **Conditions**

Section 2 of the questionnaire outlined the conditions at ABC Elementary. Sixty-six percent of the students showed growth on the end of the year high-stakes assessment in reading; 42% of the students showed growth on the end of the year high-stakes assessment in math; and 42% of the students ended the school year at grade level in reading. Teachers are currently expected to meet the benchmarks set by the school district in-order to be designated as a proficient teacher and a school in good standing. Teacher's evaluations are attached to student growth on high-stakes assessments. The school's performance rating is determined by several factors. These factors include student growth, student attainment, student attendance, and school organization success factors. However, based on the questionnaire, only 71% of teachers stated using student performance data only some of the time to determine the effectiveness of their teaching. Numerous teachers have been rated as proficient while students' performances continue to show limited increase. Teachers suggested they did not have the appropriate technology to progress monitoring as expected.

Currently, ABC Elementary has two computer laboratories, each containing 32 computers and 2 heavy-capacity printers. Also, all classrooms have six computers and a printer for student use. In addition, there are two laptop carts available for checkout by classroom teachers, each housing 36 iPads, school staff has access to class sets of Chromebooks, and the school has a wireless network that allows easy access to the internet and the progress monitoring tool. The school has spent approximately \$400,000 on hardware to support progress monitoring over several years. Plus, the school



purchased a district-suggested tool to progress monitor students. The progress monitoring tool cost approximately \$35,000 over a 2-year period.

Currently, teachers are scheduled to meet weekly with grade level team members to analyze progress monitoring data. Students are progress monitored on a 5-week basis. The progress monitoring tool measures student's grade level achievement. Teachers are expected to craft instructional plans aligned to student data to promote student learning. The instructional plans are intended to be adjusted based on student data. This process is intended to continuously meet students at their current instructional level and provide them with instruction that promotes growth.

Research suggests teachers who teach in favorable work environments are more satisfied and less likely to transfer or leave the profession than their counterparts in school environments with less favorable conditions—even after taking into account student demographics and other school and teacher characteristics (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Wagner et al. (2006) contended that conditions represent the visible arrangements and allocations of time, space, and money. School conditions play a major role in staff, parent, and student satisfaction; development; and performance. This researcher's *To-Be Conditions* would account for maximizing resources, time, space, and money in alignment with Wagner's thinking. Conditions would be created for ABC Elementary that provided adequate technology based on ideal situations. Teachers would be afforded data rooms furnished with technology, materials, and furniture that promote an optimal environment for spending time analyzing data, action planning, and engaging in thoughtful student-centered discussions.

School staff would work under conditions that promote collegiality and a shared vision and mission. The work and accountability of the school would be shared by all stakeholders. Teacher's evaluations would be agreed upon by all stakeholders and, to some degree, tied to student achievement. Teacher's expertise would be high and continuously promoted and developed. The impact of teacher performance would be acknowledged and highlighted to be replicated. The monitoring of teacher performance would be aligned to students to being progress monitored. Agreed upon progress monitoring structures and tools would be developed collaboratively, based on researched practices associated with the current demographics of the school community. The progressed monitoring tool would align to high-stakes assessments and the information garnered would predict student's strengths and weaknesses related to the high-stakes assessment. Teachers would be afforded time to observe implementation of the progress monitoring process in colleague's classrooms, converse about the process, and provide feedback to each other regarding implementation.

Each classroom would have a laptop/Chromebook cart for students to use in school and to check out to take home in the evening. There would be time provided before and after school for students who do not have a quiet place to work at home, to work independently. Students would be able to progress monitor their own learning and parents would be able to immediately see where their child is academically. Teachers would administer pretests at the beginning to determine needs and pinpoint skill gaps for each student. Students would be able to access their individualized learning paths for reading and math, to take some ownership in their learning. Teachers would use progress

monitoring data to create unit and lesson plans aligned to the state standards that assist students in mastering grade level material.

Teachers would encourage students to spend a minimum of 1 hour in reading and 1 hour in math engaged in rigorous instruction—delivered through the progress monitoring tool and based on their learning path to support differentiation and student individualized growth. Teachers would use the reporting functions of the progress monitoring tool to generate reliable data for instructional decision making. In addition, teachers would have access to real-time actionable data to inform instructional decisions. Every student would experience academic success. Quality and ongoing professional development would be provided to all school staff, and the learning would be used to promote student achievement with fidelity. School schedules would promote opportunities for staff to design, observe, discuss, provide feedback, and practice what they learned in the professional development.

Accountability structures would be agreed upon, implemented, and monitored to encourage efficacy and to increase student achievement. Staff progress-monitoring skills would continue to increase and positively impact student achievement. School administrators and coaches would participate in all practices to support staff and grow students academically.

## **Culture**

Change, at its core, is a people process; and people tend to be creatures of habit—hardwired to resist adopting new behaviors, practices, and ways of thinking. Wagner et al. (2006) defined culture as “the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership,

and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school” (p. 102). Culture describes an invisible but powerful norm that is understood by individuals within the organization collectively.

The current culture at ABC Elementary is to be tacitly compliant. The teachers at ABC Elementary understand that progress monitoring plays a critical role in evaluating the effectiveness of the core instructional program to increase student achievement. However, teachers also feel it is an additional task, which they are held responsible. Teachers resent the tool because they did not play a role in its adoption. Many of the teachers feel that progress monitoring is not necessary to determine if students are learning. While all of the teachers’ progress monitor their students, many do not implement it with fidelity. The teachers view progress monitoring as a way of punishing them for students not learning.

The culture my change plan articulates is a collaborative community of educators working in tandem to provide the optimal learning experience for every child they encounter. Basically, the district and school staff working collaboratively, professionally, and respectfully to accomplish the goal of providing students the high-quality learning they deserve. Mutual trust and respect would be evident and the premise of all interactions. Teacher leadership and ownership would be valued, encouraged, and considered the norm.

All stakeholders would value daily planning time to analyze data to inform teaching and learning. Strategizing with colleagues, regarding best practices to implement accelerated individual student learning, would be promoted regularly. Stakeholders would create and enforce shared accountability practices calling for collective action by

all individuals. Test data would be valued as a predictor of college and career preparedness. Predictive data would be used to ensure all students receive interventions, accelerations, remediation, and other supports to ensure their college and career readiness.

Teachers' ownership of data and implementation practices necessary for teaching and learning adjustments in a cyclical continuum would be a core practice to afford all students the free and appropriate education articulated in the state constitution. Diagnostic tools would be esteemed for the massive amount of information they provide. Weekly grade level meetings would ignite collaborative conversations driven by data. Teachers would view progress monitoring as an ongoing formative diagnostic measurement process that informs teaching and learning. Also, teachers would create action plans based on the data and implement the plans driven by a desire for student improvement.

Bambrick-Santoyo (2010) suggested that all action plans share a fundamental principle: they are explicitly tied to conclusions from analysis and designed to put such conclusions into practice. Based on Bambrick-Santoyo's (2010) premise, action plans are intended to be put into action and produce results. This *To-Be* staff culture would value implementing progress monitoring with fidelity and be intentional, and the action planning process would be results orientated.

### **Context**

As suggested in the *As-Is* of my change plan, numerous current conditions have created the context at ABC Elementary. When NCLB was enacted in 2001, failing schools across the nation, including ABC Elementary, implemented progress-monitoring

structures to measure student progress in reading and math aligned to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) expectations (Korte, 2015). At ABC Elementary, there are approximately 800 students between grades 3–8 attending, almost 99% (98.6%) of the student population is African American, diverse learners comprise 15.2% of the school's population, and the student poverty rate is at 98.4%.

ABC Elementary uses a district-designated, progress-monitoring tool. Weekly, teachers have designated common planning time to meet with other teachers who teach the same grade level. This planning time is intended to provide teachers with the opportunity to collaborate and participate in teaching and learning discussions centered on data from regular progress monitoring. Teachers feel overwhelmed and view progress monitoring as an additional task. In addition, teachers do not implement progress monitoring structures with fidelity. This current context has encouraged teachers' current behaviors and attitudes. Reframing teachers' behaviors and attitudes should support a greater implementation of progress monitoring. Research suggested that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are more open to new ideas and willing to implement new strategies to meet the needs of their students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Therefore, if teachers were confident in their ability to implement progress monitoring to impact student achievement, they would implement it with fidelity and student achievement would increase.

Change leadership is predicated on the ability to envision the necessary changes and improvement within an organization. This researcher's *To-Be* context for improved implementation of progress monitoring structures at ABC Elementary includes:

1. Implementing research-based practices with fidelity centered on improving student achievement.
2. Staff operating a clear DDI cycle using data from the district-designated, progress-monitoring tool.
3. Student performance would increase on high-stakes assessment.
4. Support would be provided to every child to master grade level material in reading and math to grade level and above.

By implementing the progress monitoring tool with fidelity, teachers would:

- Use the data to accelerate student learning by providing students differentiated instruction to tailor to their individual needs.
- Make more informed decisions around teaching and learning.
- Communicate more effectively regarding student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning outcomes with parents, administrators, students, and other concerned parties.
- Value the district identified tool.
- Receive quality professional development on the tool.
- Implement the tool with fidelity.

### **Conclusion**

Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that “a system is a perceived whole whose elements hang together because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose” (p. 97). He further stated that “system thinking is about trying to keep that whole in mind, even while working on the various parts” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 97). An approach to thinking systemically about school change encompasses

competency, conditions, culture, and context. Thinking systemically allows for documenting the current state, *As-Is* in each of the 4 Cs, to get a clear idea of the existing milieu. This process also allows for the envision state, *To-Be*, in each of the 4Cs to crystallize for actualization. Juxtaposing the *As-Is* to the *To-Be* promotes the development of action planning.

To promote improved progress monitoring at ABC Elementary, staff will have to utilize a clear DDI cycle using data from the district-designated, progress-monitoring tool. Implementing the progress monitor tool with fidelity, teachers would be able to use the data to accelerate student learning by providing students differentiated instruction tailored to their individual needs. A culture of mutual professionalism, trust, and respect would be evident, and the premise of all interactions between all interdependent entities. Building relationships amongst all staff members is an important factor to minimize staff working in isolation.

All stakeholders valuing daily planning time to analyze data to inform teaching and learning would be the norm. At ABC Elementary, providing continuous appropriate quality professional development, having job-embedded expectations and agreed upon accountability measures would be continuously developed. ABC Elementary needs to benchmark staff capacity to effectively use the tools and set deadlines for expected competency. ABC Elementary will not continue to budget for the exact training provided previously because school staff did not fully engage in the past training.

*My To-Be Conditions* would account for maximizing resources, time, space and money in alignment with Wagner et al.'s (2006) thinking. Conditions would be created for ABC Elementary that provided adequate technology based on ideal situations.



Teachers would be afforded data rooms that are furnished with technology, materials, and furniture that promote an optimal environment for spending time analyzing data, action planning and engaging in thoughtful student-centered discussions. School staff would work under conditions and foster a climate that promotes collegiality and a shared vision and mission. The impact of teacher performance would be acknowledged and highlighted to be replicated. The monitoring of teacher performance at ABC Elementary would be aligned to students to being progress monitored. Agreed upon progress monitoring structures and tools would be developed collaboratively with ABC Elementary staff based on researched practices associated with the current demographics of the school community. The progress monitoring tool used at ABC Elementary would align to high-stakes assessments and the information garnered would predict student's strengths and weaknesses related to the high-stakes assessment. In turn, the data gleaned would be used to create action plans to improve teaching and learning.

Teachers at ABC Elementary would be afforded the time to observe implementation of the progress monitoring process in colleague's classrooms, converse about the process and provide feedback to each other regarding the implementation. Finally, to improve progress monitoring structures at ABC Elementary, a clear vision and mission would be formulated to drive and focus all staff members work. School staff would cultivate an environment of continuous improvement leading to effective teaching and learning practices encouraged by progress monitoring and other researched based practices.

## **SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE**

According to Wagner et al. (2006), any theory involving change in an organization must take a series of questions into account: What is the desired change the organization is trying to make? What is the desired outcome of this change? What will motivate the stakeholders involved with the organization to perform the set of new, potentially difficult and frustrating tasks that are set before them to accomplish positive change?

A change plan establishes how changes will be proposed, accepted, monitored, and controlled. Developing strong vision and mission statements can help stakeholders in an organization develop a common understanding of the goals and the plan for reaching the goals of the organization. This same vision gives a glimpse of the desired outcomes. My change plan is intended to promote greater fidelity in the use and implementation of progress monitoring at ABC Elementary. Therefore, a clear vision of progress monitoring must be cultivated within the school community. This vision must be implemented by voicing a mission that encourages all stakeholders. Inspiring the school staff to implement a researched based, while inspiring the school community to use a research based practice like progress monitoring will build fidelity inspiration along is not enough. Wagner et al. (2006), suggested strategic planning practices focused on the arenas of change competencies, conditions, culture, and context. I plan to strengthen each arena in ABC Elementary to increase the implementation of progress monitoring.

## **Competencies**

The repertoire of skills and knowledge that teachers demonstrate would be elevated to meet the need to increase student performance. This researcher's *To-Be* plan would provide continuous and appropriate quality professional development, since having job embedded expectations and agreed upon accountability measures are key levels. School staff capacity to effectively use the required progress-monitoring tool should be benchmarked and deadlines set by which competence should be expected. ABC Elementary should not continue to budget for redundant training provided previously because school staff did not fully engage in the past trainings.

Developing professional development that is rooted in Malcolm Knowles andragogy theory of adult learning would be used to promote greater staff learning. Implementing Drago-Severson's four pillar practices, establishing teams, creating lead roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentor relationships would be used to support differentiated strategies to support teachers (Drago-Severson, 2010). School staff will need to build capacity in a core, clear, and consistent DDI cycle (collaboratively and collegially) in an attempt to promote staff efficacy. More than 50% of the teachers at ABC Elementary felt confident about implementing the ABC Progress Monitoring with fidelity to impact teaching and learning, while approximately 40% were undecided. This indicated that school staff could benefit from additional training.

Questionnaire participants indicated having all of the necessary tools to implement the progress monitoring tool with fidelity (71.4%). School staff's ability to analyze interim assessment data and use the data to positively impact teaching and learning should be a major precept if leadership intends to increase student achievement

aligned to expectations. Therefore, school staff must increase their ability to engage in the process of analyzing student assessment data. School staff (64.3%) indicated that the current progress-monitoring system addresses the needs of the students in their classroom *sometimes*. This indicates there appears to be a misalignment between what is taught and what is expected. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo (2010) indicated that once the specific types of questions employed by the end-goal test are noted, schools should work to create or select interim assessments aligned to the specific demands of the end-goal examination. Increasing school staff's ability to analyze assessment results and ensure alignment to high-stakes assessments would support student performance.

Promoting teams and team accountability should be a major theme to encourage team members' competencies. Teamwork needs to be normalized, ensuring that the team's vision and mission are directly related to the larger goals of ABC Elementary. This practice would be implemented to combat the alienation behavior of school staff and teachers would be coached into improvement based on a yearlong professional development calendar by instructional specialist. These specialists would be held accountable, aligned to teacher development and student achievement. All school staff would be evaluated on their professional development and grouped aligned to their ability to administer progress monitoring effectively. Grade Level cluster teams could be created to support implementation and promote collective efficacy. Performing teachers would be revered and used as an example.

## Conditions

Wagner et al. (2006) defined conditions as the external architecture surrounding student learning—the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources (p. 101). Currently, ABC Elementary teachers are expected to meet the benchmarks set by the school district in order to be designated as a proficient teacher and a school in good standing. Teacher’s evaluations are attached to student growth on high-stakes assessments. However, currently 7% of teachers stated using progress monitoring data all the time to determine the effectiveness of their teaching. The school’s performance rating is determined by several factors, including student growth, student attainment, student attendance, and school organization success factors.

ABC Elementary staff suggested not having the appropriate technology to progress monitoring as per expectations. *To-Be* conditions would be created for ABC Elementary that provide adequate technology, based on researched. Teachers would be afforded data rooms furnished with technology, materials, and furniture promoting an optimal environment for spending time analyzing data, action planning, and engaging in thoughtful student-centered discussions. School staff would work under conditions that promote collegiality and a shared vision and mission.

Paul Bambrick-Santoyo (2010) suggested that targeted focus is an advantage of interim assessing. Bambrick-Santoyo further contended that by creating concrete benchmarks, interim assessments allow for classroom strengths and weaknesses to be clearly identified and systematically targeted. In providing a baseline standard for comparison, interim assessment offers a comprehensive checkpoint of where a class needs to go and what it takes to get each student to that level. Therefore, at ABC

Elementary, agreed upon progress-monitoring structures and tools would be developed collaboratively, based on researched practices associated with the current demographics of the school community.

The progress monitoring tool would align to high-stakes assessments and the information garnered would predict student's strengths and weaknesses related to the high-stakes assessment.

Teachers would have access to real-time actionable data to inform instructional decisions to strengthen the actioning of instructional plans, minimizing loss of targeted instructional time.

## **Culture**

The school's shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school would be summarized in and driven by the school's vision and mission. The culture of ABC Elementary must be articulated throughout the school in words, actions, and deeds. District and school staff working collaboratively, professionally and respectfully, to accomplish the goal of providing students the high-quality learning they deserve must become the norm. Mutual trust, professionalism, and respect has to be evident and the premise of all interactions. Teacher leadership and ownership has to be valued, encouraged, and developed as the norm. Only 7.1% of the participants reported being included in the decision to use the ABC Progress Monitoring Tool, while 92.9% reported not being involved in the selection process.

The all-important strategy of building relationships to support growth in all staff members through the development of effective teams must be used. Seventy-one percent (71.4%) of the teachers reported collaborating with their colleagues (using information collected from the ABC Progress Monitoring tool), 21.4% reported collaborating most of the time, and the remaining 7.1% reported collaborating all of the time. The promotion of teacher buy-in using the process of looking at student data protocols would benefit ABC Elementary. Further, teacher ownership of data and implementation practices necessary for teaching and learning adjustments in a cyclical continuum must be strengthened in all staff members and developed as a core practice to afford all students the free and appropriate education articulated in the state constitution. Heifetz (2009) suggested tracking progress along the way, if there are clearly defined short-term goals.

For ABC Elementary to further improve their academic standing, strategies promoting the diagnostic tool (to an esteemed status for the massive amount of information it provides) will support the student achievement necessary. The value of progress monitoring must increase as an ongoing formative diagnostic measurement process that informs teaching and learning and be implemented with fidelity.

Approximately 57% of teachers reported implementing progress monitoring for compliance reasons only. Teachers must be expected and encouraged to engage in the entire DDI process with efficacy and fidelity. Consistent, regularly structured, and scheduled DDI time established on research-based practices must be a major tenet of all ABC Elementary staff.

Heifetz (2009) purported that creating and maintaining time for checking in with people, teasing out the lesson of recent experiences, and sharing those lessons widely in

the organization is critical to adaptability in a changing world. Expectations need to be crafted collaboratively with all stakeholders in order for individuals to develop belief in the process and value of a tool. Only 42.9% of ABC Elementary staff stated using the progress monitoring tool (most of the time) in the way in which they had been directed. Leadership staff must model the value of the process and believe that the process will positively impact student performance.

In addition, the system must be given an opportunity to demonstrate success combating the teachers' beliefs that a new program or practice will replace the current one very soon and therefore, there is no need to invest in the current practice. All indications by school leadership must be that a heavy investment in the process has taken place and a huge return is expected. School leadership must also continue to indicate their desire to move staff members from compliance to agency. Currently, leadership has created time for school staff to meet collaboratively by involving school staff in analyzing school data—thereby creating a culture that encourages teacher agency. However, additional structures and practices to support a culture of teacher agency are needed. A culture that promotes teacher agency rooted in mutual respect and professionalism would greatly support the implementation process.

## **Context**

The demands and expectations placed on ABC Elementary (both formal and informal) have impacted the structures and systems developed to meet those demands and expectations. Some of the demands and expectations are self-imposed and therefore, can be self-adjusted; others are controlled by external forces and therefore, can only be



adjusted through greater effort. School demographics will change over an extended period of time. ABC Elementary's present student population will be the clients that teachers are tasked with educating to the expectations outlined by the district and local, state, and federal government. Staff would operate a clear DDI cycle using data from the district-designated, progress monitoring tool, which is the context in which staff would be understood and referenced often to ensure all stakeholders are clear. Demographic information would be shared openly. School identifying documents crafted by the district would be used to benchmark current and future progress. These documents would help set the context in which the school staff would be working. Teacher contractual agreements would be a centerpiece for the context aligned to professional expectations.

## **Conclusion**

Teachers' beliefs, practices, and attitudes are important for understanding and improving educational processes such as progress monitoring. Teachers at ABC Elementary see progress monitoring as a mundane task they are responsible for implementing. The staff should be included in determining which tool will be used, and implementation should be rolled out in phases. Teachers cannot afford to lose instructional time with practices that are ineffective and do not support student achievement (Rock, Thead, & Gable, 2006). This researcher believes that if the teachers at ABC Elementary receive high-quality professional development on the implementation and use of the XYZ Tool, that student achievement will increase. When teachers implement systematic progress monitoring structures with fidelity, they are better able to identify students in need of additional or different forms of instruction, they design stronger instructional programs, and their students achieve better (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001). Progress monitoring is a powerful tool that can help teachers adjust instruction to ensure that all students reach high standards if implemented with fidelity. Progress monitoring can help the teachers at ABC Elementary know, on a daily basis, where their students are in relation to the content standards to inform teaching and learning.

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## APPENDICES

# Appendix A

## AS-IS Chart

### Context

- NCLB has increased the role of the federal governments in education
- Since 1965, almost 400 billion dollars has been spent on public education in the United States
- High stakes assessments has caused schools to implement systems of accountability to monitor student learning
- Most of the teachers at XYZ feel overwhelmed and view progress monitoring as an additional task
- Teachers do not implement progress monitoring structures with fidelity.
- District selected the progress monitoring tool schools would use
- 800 students between 3rd and 8th grade
- 89.4% of students are low income
- 98.6% of students are African-American
- 15.2% of students are diverse learners

### Culture

- Teachers' perceptions about progress monitoring is that it is an additional task that they are held accountable for.
- Teachers and parents current perception is that students are being over tested
- Teachers are not clear on the plan for progress monitoring structures
- Teachers do not take ownership for students' poor performance
- Teachers feel that their professionalism is being challenged due to high accountability.

### Improving Progress Monitoring Structures to Impact Student Achievement in an Elementary School

### Conditions

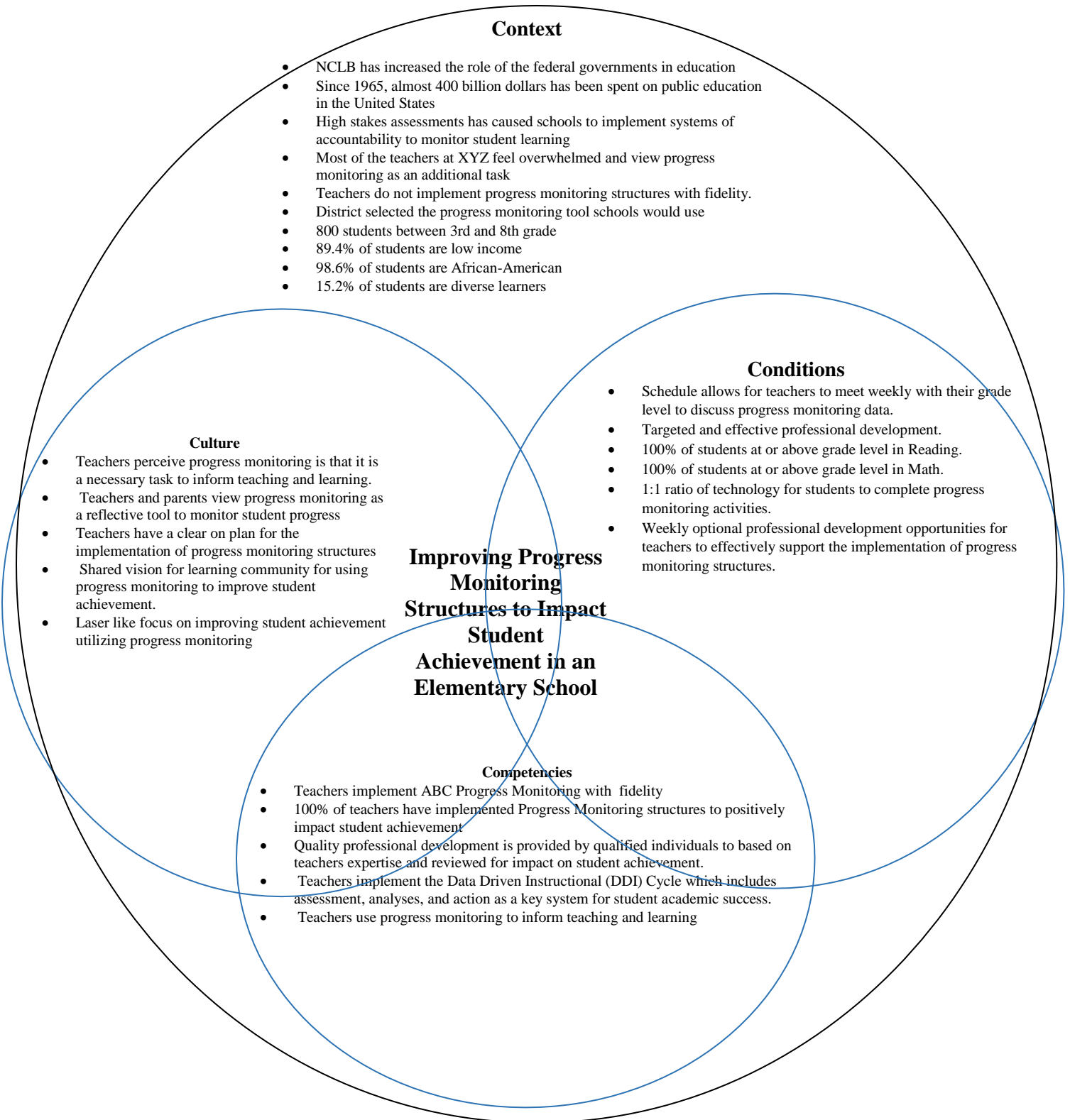
- None of the teachers at XYZ administer PM with fidelity
- 42% of the students at XYZ School are at or above grade level in Reading
- 27% of the students at XYZ School are at or above grade level in Math Antiquated technology
- Environment perceived not to be conducive to implementing progress monitoring effectively.
- Most of the teachers at XYZ feel overwhelmed and view progress monitoring as an additional task
- Teachers do not implement progress monitoring structures with fidelity
- Teacher perception of the instructional cycle is weak
- Instructional Coaches support Literacy and Math

### Competencies

- Teachers capacity for using the selected progress monitoring tool is weak
- Teachers capacity for using technology is minimal
- Quality of the professional development provided on using the selected progress monitoring tool is not effective
- Schools value of the Data Driven Instructional (DDI) Cycle needs improvement
- Meeting around teaching and learning need to focus more on data and using it to inform teaching and learning.

## Appendix B

### TO-BE Chart



## Appendix C

### Strategies and Actions Chart

#### Data-Driven Instruction and Fidelity of Implementation

<p><b>Big Assumption:</b> Increasing the fidelity of implementation of progress monitoring structures will positively impact student achievement.</p>	
Strategies	Action
<p>Allow teachers to select a progress monitoring tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite teachers to participate in the selection of a PM tool</li> <li>• Have team present to the entire staff recommended PM tool</li> <li>• Allow staff to vote on which tool will meet the needs of the students</li> <li>• Purchase PM tool</li> </ul>
<p>Provide professional development  <b>Minor: I would pull these out more when you talk about them in the text. The strategies get lost.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group teachers aligned to their ability to administer PM Effectively. (Differentiation)</li> <li>• Create cluster teams to support the implementation of PM and promote collective efficacy</li> <li>• Agenda action items during common planning time to discuss implementation practices.</li> </ul>
<p>Implement the Data Driven Instructional Cycle (DDI) with fidelity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a DDI cycle that all teachers will use</li> <li>• Schedule time weekly for cluster teams to share data with team</li> <li>• Create action plans</li> </ul>
<p>Hold teachers accountable for implementing PM with fidelity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a technology based PM tool to monitor progress monitoring</li> <li>• Schedule time weekly when, where, and how students will be progress monitored</li> <li>• Schedule time for teachers to meet with ILT to speak about individual class/student data</li> </ul>
<p>Create a high sense of group efficacy to increase the fidelity of implementation of the DDI Cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use structures such as cluster teams to work collaboratively in the implementation process</li> <li>• The administration will foster a learning community of collaboration and reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>Actionable Test of Big Assumption:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at teachers’ lesson plans/unit plans to see if they used data from progress monitoring to inform teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Look at student data from 5-week benchmark to determine if students have showed growth.</li> <li>• Analyze teacher groupings for small group instruction based on data</li> <li>• Look at data from high stakes assessment (NWEA) to see if school has meet district expectations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 99% of students show growth on the NWEA EOY MAP assessment</li> <li>○ 75% of students meet their growth target on the NWEA EOY MAP assessment</li> <li>○ 51% of the students will meet/exceed standards on the NWEA EOY MAP assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Look at the number of students who are being recommended to go into Special Education</li> </ul>	

