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## **Perceptions of Reading Academic Intervention Services and The Effectiveness of a District-Wide Remedial Reading Program**

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PERCEPTIONS OF READING ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES  
AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A DISTRICT-WIDE REMEDIAL READING  
PROGRAM

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
to the faculty of the Department of  
ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP  
of  
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
at  
ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY  
New York  
by  
Micheala L. Finlay

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Dr. Elizabeth Gil

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF READING ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A DISTRICT-WIDE REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM**

Micheala L. Finlay

Remedial reading academic intervention services are provided to students who are reading below grade level. Student reading ability and progress is an essential component of the learning and success for each and every student. Academic intervention service programs for struggling students are state mandated in school grades where state standardized testing is present and encouraged in earlier grades to promote the progression of the development of reading. This study explores how a school district identifies student reading progress through a remedial reading program and how progress is monitored. Participants in this study include classroom teachers, reading teachers, and school building administrators within a middle-income suburban school district in the Northeast United States. Applying frameworks from Frank Smith's (1991) Advocacy Design Study and Edgar Schein's (2004) theory of organizational leadership and culture to analyze and extract assumptions, artifacts, and values, this study centers around the progress of student reading is how it is identified and monitored.

Emergent themes within the findings of this study center around trust and planning. The implications of this study support thoughtfully guided staff development in remedial reading teaching practices, and the positive relationship between trust, which can assist school administrators and instructional staff in the organization and instruction of a current program, and present the effectiveness and efficacy based on these findings of student outcomes.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research study is to explore the ways in which teacher and administrators identify student reading progress within the context of a remedial reading program provided within a school district. The supporting research cited within this study suggests that if students who are struggling in the area of reading, (this study identifies at-risk-readers (ARR) before grade 3) they can further develop reading skills and maintain grade level reading progress.

Overall, this report will present five chapters. This first chapter is divided into several sections that will include a problem statement, purpose of study, rationale for the study, significance of study, and research questions. Second, the theoretical framework, will include a visual model that will be outlined and provide an explanation of the lens that the researcher used in analyzing data, artifacts and evidence. Finally, the third chapter will include an overview of methodology for data collection and analysis, the determination of assumptions, and limitations faced during the study. Key terms and background information close the first chapter.

### **Problem Statement**

Reading is an essential element at the core of every student's educational experience. As students enter school, they are expected to learn the content material and pass the content tests in school, regardless of their reading ability. Along with learning new skills and content, students explore content through reading. In the early stages of a student's educational journey, a child will learn how to read. At a certain point along the journey, the child will read to learn. Students learn to read in different ways and at different paces while monitoring students reading progress is ongoing. Student adequate

yearly progress is measured by semi-annual assessments, which identify students as either meeting with distinction, proficient, or failing. Research data (Schrum & Levin, 2009) highlights that when struggling readers are identified within the early stages of their academic learning journey, intensive remedial reading support can rectify students lack of reading abilities and provide students with the stamina, strategies, and reading skills to maintain successful reading progression.

The core of remedial instruction draws on consistency as the common building block in most remedial reading programs. Consistent remedial reading instruction is essential in creating, implementing, and mastering a successful instructional program (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Remedial reading programs that are not aligned to the aforementioned values can yield unsuccessful results and may impact identified students in a stagnant way.

Student reading progress includes both decoding as well as comprehension, and students may remain at the same level of decoding difficulty, which may interfere with their reading comprehension. Decoding is the ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound symbol correspondences; and the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Reading comprehension is an awareness of one's understanding of text being read.

Comprehension monitoring is part of metacognition, or "thinking about thinking". To comprehend is to understand the meaning. In reading, monitoring student comprehension is important to be aware of what is clear and what is confusing as the reader, and having the capability to make repairs to problems with comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell,

2001). Both skills can be measured in isolation and together, to clearly assess a student's reading ability.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study is to explore current teacher and administrator perceptions, artifacts of remedial reading program, and student progress of a remedial reading program provided within a school district. For the purposes of this study, evidence and artifacts of a remedial reading program are items such as schedules, instructional tools, memorandums, reading progress notes, and student results. To gain information on educator perspectives, a questionnaire was distributed to teachers and school administrators regarding program implementation. Student assessment data from reading measures was examined to further understand the program. By analyzing a remedial reading instruction program through content analysis and a questionnaire, the researcher explored the program and the ways in which progress is identified. The school district within this study is an appropriate site for this study to take place as it implements a remedial reading program district wide, in grades where it is mandated as well as non-mandated. The school district is preparing to review the remedial reading program to analyze the efficacy of the program.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the proposed study along a path of exploration.

- To what extent are teacher and administrator perceptions aligned regarding the reading academic intervention services program?

- To what extent are stakeholders including classroom teachers, reading teachers and building administrators involved in the remedial reading program?
- How do reading academic intervention services yield student reading progress, as measured by the district adequate yearly progress chart, adapted from Fountas and Pinnell?

These questions will guide research through identifying data and information that will inform the researcher. The informational quest of this research study focuses on the teacher and administrator perceptions that address student progress within the context of a remedial reading program. This research study addresses an existing gap within current research of the topic by identifying specific perceptions of stakeholders within a school district, and how those perceptions may present common themes linked to student progress within the context of the remedial reading program. First, the researcher explores the evidence of a remedial reading program, specific student enrollment, schedules, memos, and instructional materials. Second, the researcher identifies teacher and administrator perceptions of the remedial reading program and analyzes those perceptions for common themes.

This qualitative study is inclusive of quantitative data by presenting student reading scores that are sub-grouped by teacher, gender, English language learners (ELL), students with disabilities, and socio-economic status. An English language learner (ELL) defined by the U.S. Department of Education as national- origin-minority students who are limited-English-proficient. Students can be identified within various subgroups based on length of services received, including newcomer, developing, long-term, students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), and former (NYSED, 2017). “A student with a

disability can be defined as a child identified as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as “emotional disturbance”), an orthopedic impairment, a designation of autism, a traumatic brain injury, a health impairment, a specific learning disability, a deaf-blindness impairment, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, need special education or related services”. (NYSED, 2019)

Adequate yearly progress is measured by research-based benchmark assessments and measured by a district wide adequate yearly progress chart that identifies each student as meeting with distinction, proficient, or failing. Schrum & Levin (2009) identify that when struggling readers are classified in the early stages of their academic learning journey, intensive remedial reading support can rectify students reading deficits and provide students with the stamina, strategies, and reading skills to maintain successful reading progression.

### **Significance of the Study**

A connection has been identified between student reading progress with instructional practices that include consistency, fluidity, explicit teaching, and small group instruction (Fountas & Pinnell (2001)). Through data collection and analysis, the study explores the perceptions and progression outcomes of a remedial reading program.

The study identifies common themes between teacher and administrator perceptions of a remedial reading program with student outcomes. This study is important to the research field in identifying relationships in perceptions and progress, specifically through a remedial reading program. Data was collected through two a two-

pronged approach. The first prong of data collection focuses on stakeholder perceptions of AIS services, inclusive of misconceptions, needs, and wants. The second prong of data collection represents student achievement through a remedial reading program. Success and lack of success will present individual pros and cons that may be further studied. The study can be considered in future research and may impact instructional decision making regarding remedial reading programs and student reading progress. A specific benefit that this study provides to educators is the identified theme of professional development and the impact it serves within the implementation of a remedial reading program. A specific benefit this study provides to administrators is the confirmation of thoughtful planning creating a positive impact on the implementation of a remedial reading program.

Indirectly, policies can be impacted and updated to include recommendations of the common themes and productivity of the outcomes identified by the researcher in this study.

This study is important to the research field, within a limited scope that it will identify teacher and administrator perceptions of a remedial reading program that is in place and student achievement outcomes. By federal educational regulations, students are entitled to an appropriate education in order to strengthen their potential abilities.

Reading is a core subject area in which student progress is essential to further development and content material exploration along a student's educational journey. The data from this study is analyzed to strengthen the remedial reading program within the study, and it can also be used in a replication study to explore additional implemented remedial reading programs.

## Framework

“A paradigm is a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research”, (Nilsen, 2014, p. 17). A theoretical perspective is a way of looking at the world, the assumptions people have about what is important and what makes the world work (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Two sources serve as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study. First, Schein’s organizational theory will serve as a guide to review teacher and administrator perceptions of the remedial reading program and the culture that exists within the model. This theory will act as a lens in providing a framework to study the assumptions and beliefs presented through data collection in relation to the remedial reading program within the study.

Second, the Instruction, Organization, Governance, Accountability (IOGA) model within the Advocacy Design Study by Dr. Frank Smith (1991) will be applied to explore current evidence that the school district has implemented a sound remedial reading program. The Advocacy Design framework, which is presented below, is used as a tool to present a picture of each school within the district, and the context within which remedial reading instruction takes place. Assuming there is a priority on remedial reading instruction and therefore a need for each school to study its remedial reading program, teachers and administrators from each school within the study will serve as participants to generate a school specific and district wide conversation about the nature of the remedial reading program. This framework serves as a tool for self-assessment of the school and its remedial reading program. The self-assessment provides a process for developing plans to explore expectations of the remedial reading program, instructional strategies, and student performance.

The elements of the self-assessment model focus on Instruction, Organization, Governance, Accountability (IOGA). These four elements are referred to as the elements of a school's design. Every school. To establish the meaning of these elements of design and establish a useful common understanding, a series of questions will provide a way for people to construct their meaning (Smith, 1991). For the purposes of this study, teacher and administrator perceptions are gathered using these questions. The questions are designed to elicit the clear construction of ideas. These perceptions or ideas will be analyzed for common themes about values and beliefs of the remedial reading program.

Within the IOGA model, 29 questions serve as a self-assessment tool. Analyzed qualitative data is separated into several areas such as how components of the remedial reading program is instructed, how components of the remedial reading program is organized, how components of the remedial reading program is managed, and last how components of the remedial reading program are reviewed and reflected to record accountability. The following questions outline the framework provided by the IOGA model (Smith, 1991).

1. Instruction: What does remedial instruction look like? What does the learning process look like? How do learners use learned strategies to develop reading skills? How do students demonstrate their learning? Is there evidence of academic intervention services?

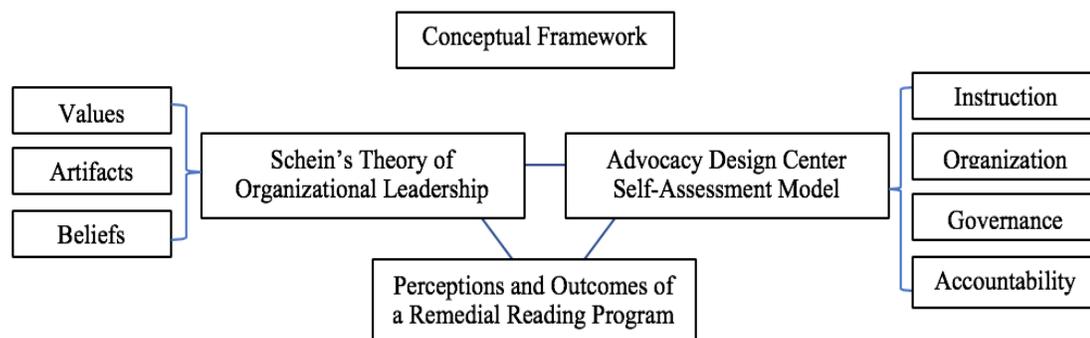
2. Organization: How is the school organized? Is there evidence that the school provides reading academic intervention services while making more efficient use of time, money, and staff? What is the nature of the school's infrastructure? Do all students and educators have access to reading academic intervention services? How do the adults

communicate with each other? What are the tools and materials provided within the reading academic intervention services?

3. Governance: How is the school governed? Who are the leaders? How is leadership distributed? How are decisions made regarding programs and identifying ARR? Does the principal act in identifying ARR? How do other leaders within the school communicate with the faculty, parents, and other stakeholders regarding AIS? What is the vision of key stakeholders for the school with regard remedial reading and AIS services?

4. Accountability: How does the school account for education? Does the school review results from the remedial reading program? To what extent are components identified and changed within the remedial reading program with the data to support the change?

Second, the researcher will apply Edgar Schein's Organizational Culture and Leadership (2004) concept of values and artifacts to the school district's beliefs and assumptions through qualitative data collection, coding, and analysis.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## **Overview of Methodology**

The methodology for this study is a case study in which the researcher conducted questionnaires and content analysis. The sample for the study is a school district comprised of two elementary schools' grades kindergarten to second grade, two intermediate school grades three through five, one middle school grades six through eight, and one high school grades nine through twelve.

From a qualitative perspective, the researcher provided participants with a questionnaire to gather perceptions of remedial reading instructional programs within their respective school district. The researcher provided questionnaires to school personnel including teachers and school administrators. Specifically, classroom teachers, remedial reading teachers, and school principals were identified as participants of the study. The data collected provided direct insight to the perceptions within the individual school buildings within the district. This information was used to assess the alignment of classroom level perceptions, to building level perceptions, to district level expectations. Content analysis was applied to documents such as memorandums, district wide progression standards, benchmark assessments, schedules, instructional materials, and guided reading notes. This information proved to be valuable in exploring projected outcomes and expectations to later be compared to results.

The researcher collected quantitative data including student reading assessment achievement results. The cumulative results were analyzed retroactively for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. The researcher facilitated questionnaires with key stakeholders, including teachers and administrators, to collect information by compiling content such as memos, reading progression charts, and assessment results. The data was

collected over several weeks to provide participants with ample time to complete the questionnaire and allow the researcher to compile content documents for analysis, and to gain access to the pre-existing quantitative student data from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school year.

### **Researcher Assumptions**

The researcher is a current employee of the school district in which the study was conducted. The researcher served in an administrative capacity during the time of the study. The researcher did not have any supervisory authority over the remedial reading program or the remedial reading teaching staff. Previously, the researcher served as a remedial reading teacher and English as a second language teacher within the same school district. The researcher assumed that student reading progress is a priority within the school district, evidenced by the non-mandated remedial reading support in place. The researcher assumed that remedial reading programs are available in all schools within the district and that the programs are similar. The researcher recognized biases that exist, which include prior knowledge of school district and prior knowledge in the area of literacy. These biases are acknowledged by the researcher and were reduced by the use of qualitative data generated by participants within the study.

### **Definition of Key Terminology**

The terms below will provide the reader with an understanding of remedial reading instructional concepts and vocabulary. The researcher collected evidence citing these terms to focus the support of this proposed study.

**Benchmark Assessment:** an assessment administered at interim levels between instruction. Data from reading benchmark assessments can be used for several purposes

including measuring achievement, identifying patterns, and targeting additional resources. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

**Frustrational Reading Level:** the level at which a reader reads at less than a 90% accuracy (i.e., no more than one error per 10 words read). Frustration level text is difficult text for the reader. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

**Foundations:** a foundational skills program for reading and spelling, emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics-word study, high frequency word study, fluency, vocabulary, handwriting, and spelling. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

**Guided Reading:** Instructional support including immediate corrective feedback as students read orally. Students practice newly learned skills with the teacher providing prompts and feedback. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

**Independent Reading Level:** the level at which a reader can read text with 95% accuracy (i.e., no more than one error per 20 words read). Independent reading level is relatively easy text for the reader. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

**Instructional Reading Level:** the level at which a reader can read text with 90% accuracy (i.e., no more than one error per 10 words read). Instructional reading level engages the student in challenging, but manageable text. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

**Wilson Reading Program:** a reading program designed for students in grades two through adulthood that have difficulty with decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling). It is a complete curriculum with 12 steps, beginning with phoneme segmentation. Its main goal is to teach students language and word structure through a carefully planned program. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

The research questions that guide this study center around student reading progress and the way in which reading progress is identified, remediated, and monitored for growth. The next chapter will explore literature and previous studies that are aligned to the purpose of this study. The literature in the following chapter will review reading development, perceptions, planning, and implementation.

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

Chapter two reviews literature related to this study. This chapter is organized into the following subtopics: reading development, remedial reading, and perceptions, and planning and implementation. The literature presented in this chapter provides a review of previous research studies that support this study and the significance of this study.

#### **Reading Development**

Reading levels can be defined as independent reading level, instructional reading level, and frustration reading level (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). Students who are reading at an independent level, require minimal to no assistance with grade level reading tasks. Students who are reading at an instructional level are reading grade level material within their zone of proximal development. Students may be instructed at this level to learn new material but will require guidance in navigating at this reading level. Students who are reading at a frustrational level are not yet able to read at the expected level. Students who are not reading at an expected grade level may be considered at risk readers. Defined by Fountas and Pinnell (2001), and for the purposes of this study, reading levels are defined AA (pre-A) through Z+. Depending on a student's grade level and month of school year, students are predicted to be at a certain level and making progress at a steady rate (Appendix E). Students may have appropriate phonemic decoding skills, if given a list of words many students can identify words well above their grade level. However, they do not comprehend text containing these words (Lubliner, 2004). The National Reading Panel issued a report in 2000 that responded to a Congressional mandate to help parents, teachers, and policymakers identify key skills and methods central to reading

achievement (Archer, Gleason, Vachon, 2003). The Panel was charged with reviewing more than 100,000 research studies in reading instruction, focusing on the critical years of kindergarten through third grade and identifying methods that consistently relate to reading success. The panel identified five key areas of skill instruction necessary for reading readiness: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). A balanced literacy approach is cited within the National Reading panel review of instructional resources. Balanced literacy is the approach in which literacy instruction focuses on the building blocks of phonics instruction in conjunction with reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and writing comprehension. A balanced literacy approach separates words into groups of study to target the same sound or phonological practice for students to repeat until rote. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Phonemes are the smallest parts of sound in a spoken word. Changing a phoneme in a word changes the word's meaning. For example, changing the /c/ in cat to a /h/ to make hat, changes the meaning of the word (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). These early onset reading skills are developed continuously by means of exposure, rote practice, and developing connections. Target activities to practice phonological awareness are designed to be purposefully repetitious. Activities to develop phonological awareness start with identifying individual letters and their associated sounds. Next, sounds are combined together to practice the "glued" or "welded" sounds that can be decoded. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Children with phonemic awareness skills understand letters and sounds are related in a particular way, which, in turn, helps them to learn to read and spell (Ricci, 2011). Research on phonics instruction, provided by the National Reading Panel (2000),

concluded that systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics and is particularly beneficial for children having difficulty learning to read.

Fluency is defined as the ability to read text accurately and quickly with proper expression. Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell 2001). As students become familiar with text, reading speed and fluidity becomes the next component in focus. Techniques for developing or enhancing fluency are repeat reading strategies and monitored reading. Voice, tone, and pace within reading are some of the many tiered reading components that assist students in developing meaning within reading (Fountas & Pinnell 2001).

As a student progresses through the curriculum, consistent reading development is essential to remain aligned to grade level reading standards. As basic reading skills such as decoding can reach their effective potential by fourth grade, reading comprehension skills continue to develop throughout schooling. When students reach intermediate grades, they need to both decode fluently and comprehend what is read. Vocabulary development furthers fluency in isolation. Vocabulary development also assists students with fluid reading by providing students with prior knowledge a topic or content area. As students are exposed to vocabulary terms, these terms can become a part of their word knowledge base and schema in reading.

Specifically, within the English language, vocabulary can be ambiguous and may rely on the context for true meaning. Tiered vocabulary is provided to students by the use of scaffolding. Tier one consists of the most basic words. These words rarely require direct instruction and typically do not have multiple meanings. Sight words, nouns, verbs,

adjectives, and early reading words occur at this level. “Examples of tier one words: *book, girl, sad, run, dog, and orange*” (Beck, 2002, p. 3). There about 8,000-word families in English included in tier one. Tier two consists of high frequency words that occur across a variety of domains. That is, these words occur often in mature language situations such as adult conversations and literature, and therefore strongly influence speaking and reading. “Tier three consists of low-frequency words that occur in specific domains” (Beck, 2002, p. 3). Domains include subjects in school, hobbies, occupations, geographic regions, technology, weather, etc. (Beck, 2002, p. 3).

Beginning at the kindergarten level, exposure to sight vocabulary terms provides students with the building blocks for fluid reading. Each layer or tier of vocabulary presents a set of strengths and needs for students in the context of reading. All words can be separated into tiers, tier one consists of the most basic words. These words rarely require direct instruction and typically do not have multiple meanings. Sight words, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and early reading words occur at this level. “Examples of tier one words: *book, girl, sad, run, dog, and orange*” (Beck, 2002, p. 5-6). There about 8,000-word families in English included in tier one. Tier two consists of high frequency words that occur across a variety of domains. That is, these words occur often in mature language situations such as adult conversations and literature, and therefore strongly influence speaking and reading. “Tier three consists of low-frequency words that occur in specific domains. ” Domains include subjects in school, hobbies, occupations (Beck, 2002, p. 5-6).

Comprehension can be defined as an awareness of one’s understanding of text being read. Comprehension monitoring is part of metacognition. Remediating

comprehension focuses on identifying what is clear to the reader and what is confusing to the reader (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Listening comprehension is the process of understanding what you are listening to or hearing. Reading comprehension is the process of understanding what is being read. Reading comprehension can be developed over time by questions based on readings. Comprehension is a skill that can be measured by demonstration. For example, a student may demonstrate their understanding by answering questions about what is read. As students master decoding and fluency, and continually develop vocabulary, the meaning of readings can progress to continuously challenge students to understand the meaning of literature.

### **Remedial Reading Intervention**

Remedial reading intervention can be defined as a specialized reading service assigned to assist students in order to achieve expected competencies in core literacy academic skills (Barry, 2012). Remedial reading instruction may vary in its delivery; however, the purpose is always the same: remediate stagnant reading development. A remedial reading program can also equip students with the tools and strategies to mitigate underlying decoding or comprehension in cross curricular situations. Response to intervention (RTI) is a responsive tiered system of intervention designed to identify students requiring various levels of intervention support (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Response to intervention services are a precursor to special education services. It is New York State mandated (NYSED, 2011) that Response to Intervention (RTI) services are implemented and progress monitored to declare a student eligible for special education services with the educational classification of a learning disability.

The National Reading Panel report in 2000 that responded to a Congressional mandate to identify key skills and methods was charged with reviewing more than 100,000 research studies in reading instruction, focusing on the critical years of kindergarten through third grade and identifying methods that consistently relate to reading success. In response to student underachievement throughout American public schools, legislated reform to existing educational systems was enacted starting in 2002 with the release of No Child Left Behind (USDOE, 2002). Included within the updated legislation, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), (USDOE, 2018) are the components of effective remedial reading instruction. The aforementioned National Reading Panel research confirmed the importance of the various elements within reading that require mastery in order to allow readers to become successful. As students are assessed in reading, progress can be monitored using trajectories to ensure timely developmental success.

Students may be identified as At-Risk-Readers (ARR). For the purposes of this study, this term will describe low achieving students in the area of reading. Students may be identified as ARR if they are not on the trajectory timeline to make Adequate-Yearly-Progress (AYP), defined as the expected reading progression continuum expected of students within a ten-month school year, otherwise known as “reading on grade level”. Students who are identified as ARR may be provided with Academic Intervention Services (AIS). Academic Intervention Service (AIS) can be defined as services designed to help students achieve the learning standards in English language arts and mathematics in grades K-12. AIS services provide additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum (regular classroom instruction) and/or services needed to address barriers to

improve academic performance. The intensity of such services may vary, but must be designed to respond to student needs as indicated through state assessments and/or the district-adopted procedure (NYSED, 2000)

Current state and federal educational legislation ensure that grade levels that are assessed in the area of reading through standardized testing, must provide this research-based intervention support (USDOE, 2018). For grades kindergarten thru grade two, AIS support is not mandated but recommended.

### **Stakeholder Perceptions**

Perceptions and involvement by various stakeholders within a remedial reading program are an area to be considered in support of this study. Perceptions of teachers and administrators will provide insight to how the remedial reading program is viewed. Involvement within the remedial reading program from stakeholders including teachers and administrators are explored throughout this study. Questionnaires completed by teachers and administrators will include a response to which they are involved within the remedial reading progress from time of identification to end of year progress. A research study (Colombo, 2006) to review the exhaustion of a school district's resources to increase achievement throughout the district yielded results to support a relationship between program staff development and achievement. This information informs the proposed study of the relationship between program staff development and student achievement. In providing participants of the proposed study with questions to determine involvement in program development, the data will be reviewed to determine to level of involvement in relation to student achievement.

Methodology included a survey that was sent out to school personnel. Returned surveys reported on the lack of participation and lack of staff involvement in program development. The survey yielded information regarding parental involvement in programs available to students. The lack of reinforcement in student's homes make it more difficult for students to move forward socially, academically, and behaviorally in the classroom. This study is of interest to the researcher of the proposed study as it defines a link in parent involvement and student achievement. Questionnaire questions will ask participants to identify the level of parental involvement within the remedial reading program.

A similar research study (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 2007), focuses on the important role that stakeholders play in a student's academic experience. This research study relates directly to the proposed study in the area of implementing remedial programs for students who are identified as struggling readers. Stakeholder support by way of identifying possible barriers and remedying them can allow for more opportunities for parents or guardians to be more involved within a student's education. The purpose of this study was to examine the relative magnitude of teacher effects on student achievement while simultaneously considering the influences of classroom heterogeneity, student achievement level, and class size on academic growth. The results show that teacher effects are dominant factors affecting student academic gain and that the classroom context variables of heterogeneity among students and class sizes have relatively little influence on academic gain (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 2007).

Colombo (2006) studied how school staff and community members would participate in a district wide professional development meeting and focused on

stakeholders perceptions of a proposed program and how involvement was related to the success of the program. The lack of involvement in student academics within the district was in need of drastic change and the proposed intervention was set to enhance communication dramatically throughout the community and in turn have a positive effect on student achievement in the classroom. The district implemented Colombo's extensive professional development training that was immediately offered to teachers. The workshops focused on all facets of communication including admin-teacher, teacher-teacher, and teacher-student relationships. Cultural and linguistic barriers were also included in all workshops to accommodate the 20% of the districts student's families and effectively bridge the gap, which would be led by teachers. The "funds of knowledge" exist within cultural and linguistically diverse families; teachers viewed those students as mainstreamed and saw their deficits as a factor based on their language and/or cultural barrier. The population of culturally and linguistically diverse families continued to grow each year, but a majority of the teachers and administrators were from mainstream middle-class backgrounds, which supported an increase in achievement in this area (Colombo, 2006). This study informs the proposed study by defining the positive relationship that stakeholders play in supporting a program.

Evidence of student engagement positively effecting the student achievement, inclusive of teacher perceptions (Wang and Holcombe's 2010) highlights how students achieve higher. Students who attended school regularly, concentrated on learning, performed better on standardized tests. Wang and Holcombe (2010) examined the relationships among students' perceptions of school environment, school engagement, and academic achievement. Through the findings, the authors found that teachers'

perceptions of school programs influenced their students' academic achievement directly and indirectly.

### **Planning and Implementation**

Teacher perceptions of an effective classroom are also related to the proposed study. The impact of class size at various school levels can vary (Kulik, 1992). In a study to review teacher perceptions of effective class size learning, two class-size groups were used: small (ten to nineteen students) and large (twenty to thirty-two students). The direct observation of a teacher's perceptions impact this study and include the highlighting of such variables that are involved in the semiannual observation protocols related to teacher evaluations. When teachers are focusing on the pressures based on perceptions, their contact and teaching process can be lost in the focus on the product. Results of the research study indicate that there are several factors to be considered within the population of the overall classroom that can inhibit the exploration of connecting teacher cause to student outcome effects. Researchers focused on the importance of considering a classroom in its entirety. This research study supports that although teachers may be equipped with the knowledge and all necessary resources to provide students with remedial support, there are elements within the classroom that impact the outcome of the interventions. In providing students with remedial support, options provided by teachers other than the classroom teacher can prove to be more successful.

Evidence based remedial reading programs and response to intervention services have been studied to determine their effectiveness on student reading progress (Whitehurst & Brookings, 2009). The implementation of said programs may be state mandated or required by some state educational department agencies or provided to assist

student reading progress based on district determination. Whitehurst and Brookings (2009) studied classroom implementation to determine the overall impact of evidence-based remediation. Fidelity was determined to be a classroom practice priority of the program to yield valid and reliable results. This finding was a signal to the researchers to take a deeper look at not only the direct factors relating to delivery of the program, but more importantly, the indirect factors that mold and shape the program and the evidence-based remedial reading instruction as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

The review of literature highlights the importance of reading for students along their academic journey. Studies presented in this chapter focus on the importance of the implementation of a remedial reading program and the teamwork that guides students across the finish line. In the following chapter, methodology of the study will be reviewed to include research design, participant selection, data collection, and data and artifact analysis.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

The third chapter details the methodology of the study, the participants in the study, and the procedures that were followed through data collection, coding, and analysis of the study. Methodology for this case study was thoughtfully planned by the researcher. Participants and questionnaires were sources and collected by the researcher after permission granted by the institutional review board.

#### **Research Design**

Creswell (2014) stated, “Qualitative research attempts to explore a complex, central phenomenon whose variables might not be known and need to be explored” (p. 16). This case study will investigate the experiences and perceptions of teachers and administrators that are responsible for engaging their students in learning through a remedial reading program. This qualitative approach will allow for an investigation into areas of the remedial reading program. According to Creswell (2017), qualitative research provided a “complex, detailed understanding of the issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowed them to tell unencumbered by what we expect to find of what we have read in the literature” (p. 45). The research questions ground the study in exploring the perceptions of a remedial reading program (AIS) and student progress.

- To what extent are teacher and administrator perceptions aligned regarding the reading academic intervention services program?
- To what extent are stakeholders including classroom teachers, reading teachers and building administrators involved in the remedial reading program?

- How do reading academic intervention services yield student reading progress, as measured by the district adequate yearly progress chart, adapted from Fountas and Pinnell?

In an effort to investigate the relationship between perceptions and student progress, the researcher explored a remedial reading program within a school district by collecting evidence in the areas of instruction, organization, governance, and accountability. Thereafter, the researcher analyzed the evidence of the artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions in each area. The school district currently has one remedial reading program available for students in grades kindergarten through grade 5.

The research design consisted of indirect interaction with participants through the use of a questionnaire. According to Rubin (2012), “When using questionnaires, an indirect research method, researchers allow those who have knowledge of or experience with the problem of interest to respond through writing, which invites the participant to develop thoughts and support them with evidence or reasoning” (p. 6). In preparation for the questionnaires, the researcher created a questionnaire protocol. The protocol is guided by an introductory narrative which provided the participant with structure. The use of an open-ended questionnaire allowed the participant to provide a qualitative response on a flexible timeline.

### **Data Collection**

The primary methods of data collection for this study were through questionnaires and artifact analysis. Quantitative student achievement data was also collected throughout

this study. Student achievement data included demographic information such as English language learner, students with disabilities, and years of remedial reading services.

### ***Questionnaires***

Questionnaires were presented to various participants including teachers, remedial reading support staff, and school administration. Participants were provided with a list of questions and the ability to reflect privately before answering.

Questionnaires were aligned to focus on the areas of instruction, organization, governance, and accountability (IOGA framework) (Smith, 1991), in an effort to identify said areas within the remedial reading program. Qualitative data collection assisted in narrating the perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs of the remedial reading program through participants responses. The questions within the protocol for participants were the same for all participants, and the lens of the participant determined the approach in which they responded.

Questionnaires were disseminated to participants in person by the researcher. As consent was received from identified participants, the researcher provided the participant with a paper copy of the questionnaire and an electronic copy of the questionnaire for the participant to complete based on preference of response type. The questionnaire consisted of 29 questions and was estimated to be completed within 60 minutes. Participant email addresses were compiled from consent forms that were received by the researcher as a point of contact if needed during the analyzing of the data by the researcher. The researcher did not have to contact participants during data analysis, as participants were clear and concise.

### ***Artifact Analysis***

Another form of data collection was gathering documents and artifacts. Artifacts such as schedules, letters, memos, and instructional materials were collected for the purpose of content analysis. Artifacts were reviewed in isolation, to compare the perceptions of the remedial reading program with the artifacts associated with the program. One of the three elements of Schein's three-tiered approach to analyzing school organization and culture is artifacts. The review of such items supported the researcher in the study. This method of analysis also provided a lens into the expectations of the remedial reading program and was compared with the perceptions and outcomes of the remedial reading program. As artifacts were collected from teachers and administrators, themes within instruction, governance, organization and accountability was identified. Artifact analysis supplied additional information in the form of artifact collection instead of participant response or quantitative data.

### ***Student Achievement Data***

A third form of data collection to assist with the study was the collection of student reading achievement results. Data was collected through the student data management system (SMS). The available student data management system was a universal school data system, and for the purpose of this study, demographic data and achievement scores were made available. This data was compared to the adequate yearly progress chart (Appendix E), adapted from Fountas and Pinnell by the school district at the center of the study. This chart serves as a visual model of reading progress trajectory for each school year based on grade level.

## **Participants**

The participants in this qualitative study were selected within each school, based on their exposure to the remedial reading program. The researcher ensured this by inviting participant representation from each grade level and requesting a balanced ratio of classroom teachers, to remedial reading teachers, to school building leaders. The researcher updated flyer to reflect the participant profiles needed for the study. The participants within the school district were very supportive and responded in a timely manner. All participants met the criteria of elementary teacher certification or school building leader, and participation in the implementation of the remedial reading program. Within the variety of teachers in the school district, elementary teachers were the focus. The reason for this was to achieve a balanced perspective based on the profile of the school. For example, in a given elementary school within the district, there are 3 remedial reading teachers and 20 classroom teachers. The researcher created a balanced profile of participants to represent the perspectives equitably. Classroom teachers who were responsible for teaching reading were asked to participate in the study. Remedial reading teachers were asked to participate in completing questionnaires and submitting artifacts that support the remedial reading program. School administrators are essential in identifying answers to organization governance within the school. It was expected that participants were full time employees with varying levels of experience, grade level exposure, and different areas of teaching certification.

The number of participants within this study was 14 participants, each of whom were from all four elementary schools within the district, including school administrators, remedial reading teachers, and elementary classroom teachers. The number of

participants and the ratio of participant perspectives ensured perceptions were captured and analyzed for the purpose of this study appropriately.

All participants were from within the same school district, at the time of participation, with varying external and previous experiences. The school district at the center of this study is a low-income to middle income school district, inclusive of general education students, students with disabilities (SWD), and English as a second language learners (ELL). Free and reduced lunch is available to students within the school district. Remedial reading student progress was generally monitored, as well as, subgroup monitored. The school district within this proposed study was an appropriate site for this study to take place as it provides a remedial reading program district wide, in grades where it is mandated as well as non-mandated. The school district at the center of the study was preparing to review the remedial reading program to analyze the efficacy of the program at the time of the study.

The participants within this study included classroom teachers, reading teachers, and building administrators from each of the four elementary schools within the district. Each of the elementary schools, located within the suburban school district, housed between 330 and 590 students enrolled in grades K-5. Participants experience and school demographic information are listed in the tables below.

Table 1: Participant Profile: Including Role, Experience Assignment

<b>PC</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Self-Identified Experience</b>	<b>School(s) Taught</b>	<b>Current Assignment</b>
1	Building Administrator	10+ years	NW, BY, JFK, CHS	Principal 3-5 330 students
2	Building Administrator	10+ years	NW, JFK, CHS	Principal K-2 345 students
3	Building Administrator	10+ years	NW, TV	Principal 3-5 490 students

4	Building Administrator	<5 years	NW, TV, CL, JFK	Assistant Principal
5	AIS Reading Teacher	10+ years	NW	Reading Teacher K-2
6	AIS Reading Teacher	10+ years	TV	Reading Teacher 3-5
7	AIS Reading Teacher	5-10 years	BY	Reading Teacher 3-5
8	AIS Reading Teacher	5-10 years	CL, NW	Reading Teacher K-2
9	Classroom Teacher	10+ years	NW, BY	Grade K 21 students
10	Classroom Teacher	10+ years	BY, NW	Grade 1 19 students
11	Classroom Teacher	10+ years	CL, TV	Grade 2 19 students
12	Classroom Teacher	<5 years	TV, CL	Grade 3 21 students
13	Classroom Teacher	10+ years	BY	Grade 4 21 students
14	Classroom Teacher	10+ years	BY	Grade 5 18 students

(CL: K-2 Elementary School, NW: K-2 Elementary School, BY: 3-5 Elementary School, TV: 3-5 Elementary School, JFK: 6-8 Middle School, CHS: 9-12 High School)

**Table 2: School Profile: Including Enrollment, Grade Level, Staff Count**

School	Student Enrollment	Instructional Staff	Grade Levels
CL	510	45	K-2
NW	335	28	K-2
BY	320	30	3-5
TV	590	50	3-5

## Procedures

Upon the researcher's successful defense of dissertation proposal, an application was made to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approval was granted from the IRB, the researcher began inviting participants for the study based on

the aforementioned criteria. The researcher scheduled a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools to obtain consent for the study to take place within the school district. The district approved the study to be conducted. Participant criteria, as mentioned in the participant section of this report, included full time teaching staff in the areas of general education, special education, remedial reading, and school administration. Individual participants were provided with the informed consent (Appendix 3) to obtain written consent. With written consent from each participant, qualitative data was collected via questionnaires, artifact analysis, and reading achievement scores from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher analyzed the data for this study. Participant responses were hand coded for themes and common patterns by the researcher. First, the researcher compiled the responses from the 14 participants within the study. Based on the 29 responses from each participant, the researcher separated responses by question, and included all answers from participants. Once all data was inputted, the researcher then identified common patterns between responses and created an axial coding cut off limit of seven. If at least half of the participants provided a synonymous answer, it was determined by the researcher to be a prominent theme. The researcher then created a data spreadsheet to support the coding of the data and connect the data to the framework supporting the study. Starting with the widest scope, the researcher listed the question, followed by the pillar within the IGOA model that the question was intended to target. Then, the responses and artifacts that act as assumptions, beliefs, and values to also support the intended pillar of IOGA were listed as tangible evidence to provide the researcher with

two prongs of evidence to support the questionnaire protocol. All of the questions within the questionnaire were crafted by the researcher to elicit answers to the research questions that guide this study,

After the data was collected, the researcher then began to analyze the data by extracting common themes. The researcher reviewed the collected data to construct visual representations of the perceptions of the various participants, including graphs and charts to highlight the data. Another step in analyzing the data was to scale the student achievement scores of all students within the remedial reading program to produce a possible correlation between individual school perceptions and the relation to student reading success. The researcher compiled the lists of student scores and coded reaching benchmark levels to numbers to determine the positive or negative trend of growth. Each level was a point, the lowest reading level scored at 0 and the highest possible reading level scored at a 29. The researcher was able to organize the data by date and get an average reading level of students individually, by AIS or non AIS, by ELL, or SWD. This final step was to include each school, and percentage of reading growth based on the benchmarks performed throughout the school year. This quantitative data served as a secondary measure to determine the outcomes of the remedial reading program. Finally, the triangulation of questionnaires, artifacts, and student achievement scores allowed for a more substantial understanding of the data collected, validation of the results, and the alignment of teacher and administrator perceptions of the remedial reading program.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited in scope due to the concentration of one school district comprised of four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. This

study proved to be limited in scope due to the concentration of one school district comprised of four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. One way to address the limit of the study is to replicate the study in a larger school district. Although the district at the center of the study was small in population, it was diverse in student population demographics. One other limitation of this study was that the sample was restricted to one suburban district in the Northeastern United States. Urban and rural areas were not included in this study. Examining multiple areas may lead to more comprehensive data.

Another area of limitation was the willingness to participate. Flyers to participate in the study were placed in each of the four elementary schools. Only 14 teachers and administrators were willing to participate, and this study was only a snapshot of participants' perceptions on student reading progress. Furthermore, the bias of the researcher could be considered a limitation was. She works in the area within the potential sample and all participants included in the sample work in the same school district as the researcher. The researcher also has previous knowledge of student reading progress as she worked in the capacity as a classroom teacher and remedial reading teacher. Last, by analyzing data by hand, the researcher's lens undoubtedly had an impact on the themes and conclusions.

### **Trustworthiness and Triangulation**

In order to ensure trustworthiness, several steps were implemented by the researcher. Prior to the collection of data, each participant was selected based on meeting the participant criteria. During the questionnaire process, the protocol provided an introductory form to ensure all questionnaires were started in the same way. The protocol

supported the trustworthiness of data collection by providing all participants with the same script. Credibility presented within this study was provided by transcription or written dictation of each participant's responses verbatim for the researcher to analyze transparently. Trustworthiness was ensured by the researcher using "referential adequacy" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This involves "identifying a portion of data to be archived, but not analyzed" (pg. 313) The researcher then conducts the data analysis on the remaining data and develops preliminary findings. The researcher then returns to this archived data and analyzes it as a way to test the validity of his or her findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a result of the data comparability, confirmability by the researcher was presented through the student reading progress data and the participant response data.

Participants answered the same questions and prompts from their individual perspective. Data was collected through several processes for triangulation of data sources and to strengthen the study. Participants completed a questionnaire, the participants provided content to be analyzed by the researcher, and the researcher sourced student assessment data results from the student data management system. The data collected from the student data management system was archived and analyzed after the researcher first analyzed the participant data. This allowed for the researcher to reduce bias in analyzing data for patterns and themes, and ultimately to test the validity of the participant data that was collected by researcher.

Following the questionnaire process, the researcher completed a round of member checking. Member checking is a process in which participants in the study review the findings (Creswell, 2014). Member checking is meant to ensure that the researcher has

correctly interpreted what has been said during the interview. Further, member checking is a means of minimizing researcher bias in the analysis of the results. Lastly, criteria for selecting participants were purposefully varied based on their lens, and thoughtfully sourced to determine common themes that can be identified as perceptions of the remedial reading program. The method of canvas by invitational flyer was used to recruit participants for the study. The researcher's determination of criteria for participants was created to provide a balanced sampling of participants, including equitable ratios of classroom to reading teachers and teachers to building administrators. Criteria for participants also allowed for a balanced sample of teacher experience and grade levels from kindergarten through grade 5.

The following chapter will report on the findings of this study based on the methodology and research questions that guided the study. The findings of the study will review participant profile data, artifacts, and participant response data.

## Chapter IV

### Results

This chapter reports the results and findings of this case study. The first section is a brief overview of the findings. Second, the chapter concludes with a presentation of the findings. Artifacts are reflective of the phenomena that the researcher encountered, including data from classroom teachers, reading teachers, building administrators, written policies, websites, and other documents. The columns for espoused beliefs and values are inclusive of what the key stakeholders reported to the researcher in survey responses. The tables below depict the overall findings of the study.

The findings below begin to answer the research questions:

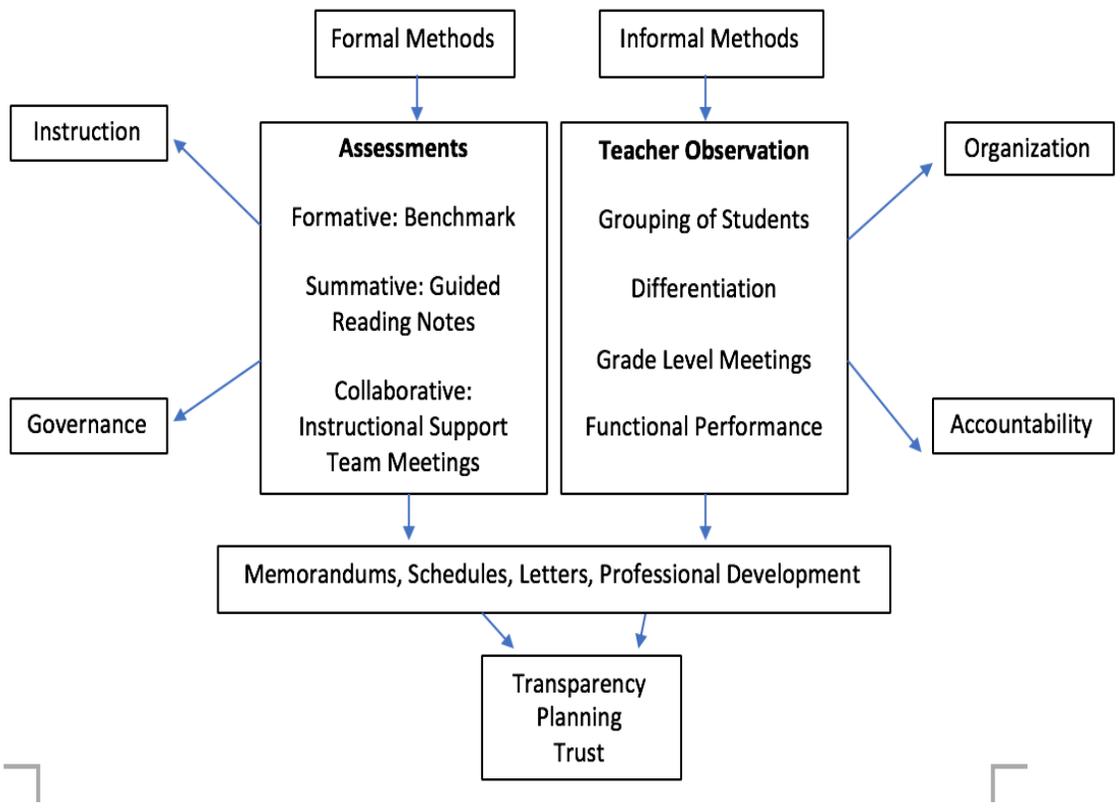
- To what extent are teacher and administrator perceptions aligned regarding the reading academic intervention services program?
- To what extent are stakeholders including classroom teachers, reading teachers and building administrators involved in the remedial reading program?
- How do reading academic intervention services yield student reading progress, as measured by the district adequate yearly progress chart, adapted from Fountas and Pinnell?

The figures below illustrate how the coded data feeds into the themes identified by the researcher throughout the study. Axial coding of the data for this research study was completed by compiling all data from participants and logging consistent mentions of themes from each participant. For example, all 14 participants made mention of benchmark assessments within their responses to the written questionnaire. The

researcher set a cut mark of 7 or more responses, to represent 50% of participants within the study making note of the specific topic or subtheme within each wider theme.

Topic	Number of Sources
Benchmarking Assessment	14
Instructional Support Team	12
Guided Reading Notes	10
Grade Level Meetings	10
Reading Groups	9
Differentiation	8
Functional Performance	7

**Figure 2: Axial Coding for Subthemes**



**Figure 3: Emergent Themes: Transparency, Planning, Trust**

## **Findings**

What follows is a discussion of the themes relative to the research questions. Within the theme of formal methods for identifying student reading progress, participants in this study shared specific practices used in their classrooms and school to formally identify student reading progress. The themes that emerged from this study focus on the strengths of a cohesive team in the implementation process of a remedial reading program and the benefits of a trusting relationship between teachers and administrators throughout the implementation process. A thoughtful plan paired with open communication proved to support student progress and are provided throughout the findings in this chapter.

## **Planning and Implementation**

The theme of planning that emerged from within this study addresses the question of participants' involvement within the implemented remedial reading program. One of the emergent themes of this study is planning. Connected to the framework, planning and implementation of the remedial reading program at the center of this study is supported by the instruction and governance pillars of the IOGA framework for this study. The participants within this study reported to the researcher that there are many ways to identify thoughtful planning and implementation of the remedial reading program throughout the school district. Artifacts provided by teachers and administrators present as evidence of thoughtful planning and implementation of the remedial reading program. For example, memorandums from upper administration designating certain dates and times for assessments to collect student data to be compiled, demonstrate the planning

provided by the district. This theme is also intertwined with the theme of transparency. By providing the teachers with a schedule many months ahead of time, the district is working together with their staff to build trust while still maintaining accountability. For example, artifacts that were collected and analyzed by the researcher included memoranda specific to the expectations of fidelity within the program and deadlines for submitting student assessment scores. Participant responses included appreciation for the transparency within the remedial reading program expectations and how it allowed for teachers to feel trusted as stakeholders within the remedial reading program. Clear expectations allowed for continuity in accountability. Another artifact that highlighted accountability throughout planning and implementation was a letter to parents introducing the remedial reading program and the targeted outcomes. Participant responses included the appreciation for this letter sent by the building administrator, spotlighting the classroom teacher and remedial reading teacher's respective roles in identifying candidates and tracking progress. Both of these artifacts support the need for thoughtful planning and implementation inclusive of all stakeholders within the remedial reading program.

For the purpose of this study, identifying student reading progress refers to formative, summative, and collaborative assessments administered by all stakeholders. Formal benchmark assessments are administered by reading teachers. Summative guided reading notes are generated by classroom teachers and reading teachers. A collaborative assessment process identified as the instructional support team is inclusive of all participants, initiated by the classroom teacher, attendees include reading teachers, and the team is facilitated by the building administrator. Each of these assessments play a

significant role in formally measuring student reading progress within the context of the remedial reading program. This theme connects to the framework for this study in the areas of instruction, organization, governance and accountability. Specifically, a pillar of the framework is accountability, the themes of planning, trust, and transparency serve as examples of accountability within the school community to monitor student reading progress, with a trusting and supportive relationship.

### ***Benchmark Assessments***

Participant responses and artifact analysis each call attention to the role that benchmark assessments play in the context of the remedial reading program. Through artifact analysis, the researcher learned more about the thoughtful planning involved in the remedial reading program assessments. Reading assessment data is collected each trimester in an effort to inform the following trimester. Each of the participants explained methods for measuring student progress in their classrooms and school. Each of the 14 participants specifically described how benchmark assessments are used as a tool for measuring student reading progress. Analysis of these data results are considered within the instructional and accountability facets of the IOGA self-assessment tool. Participants within this study explained the process of benchmarking, specifically the frequency that benchmarks are conducted to assess student progress. Participant 5, a female reading teacher for more than ten years, explained:

The benchmarking system provided by Fountas and Pinnell is used in our district to formally assess students reading progress. The benchmarking system comes in the form of a kit. All of our reading teachers have their own kit to assess students reading progress. Later in the findings, the topic of professional development is noted by participants and

analyzed by the researcher as a method within the district to support the emergent themes of transparency and trust. The participant discusses being equipped with the necessary tools and training to provide the students with the necessary assessments. When speaking about assessment, specifically the frequency of formal assessment, teachers and administrators shared the district wide approach to collecting student reading progress data. Participant 1, a male building administrator for more than ten years explained:

Student reading data is formally collected and measured by the AIS reading teacher if the child receives services, or by the classroom teacher if the student does not receive services. This data collection takes place three times during the school year. Students are benchmarked three times a year (Fall, Winter and Spring) and then the data is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. A memo goes out to all faculty in September to provide the three dates that the benchmarks are due to the school management system. Teachers input this information onto the school management system through their portal account.

The consistent collection of students' reading records allows for thorough review of student reading progress. The data yielded from the participants within this study assisted the researcher in identifying that the reading benchmarks are reviewed by administrative staff to determine the need for additional staff within the remedial reading program and to review the consistency across the school district. Analysis of this data led the researcher to identify the emergent theme of planning within the implementation of the remedial reading program. The student assessment information provides the district within this study with student reading progress data at the end of each school year to act

as a vantage point in the upcoming school year. This information is analyzed and interpreted considering the accountability and organization components of the remedial reading program. This information addresses student progress and the monitoring of student progress, as well as, the organized schedule in collecting student data to oversee the progress of the implemented remedial reading program. In addition to comments about formal benchmarking assessment, Participant 6, a female reading teacher for more than ten years explained:

As a reading teacher, on the first day of school and the first few weeks, my schedule is not established. I spend time benchmarking previous AIS students while classroom teachers benchmark the remainder of the students in their classroom. The benchmarking information is helpful because then we can begin to identify the students who qualify for AIS reading. Once we have all of the student benchmarks information, we determine a cut level for each grade to provide students with remedial reading support.

The above data is considered using the organization component of the IOGA self-assessment tool within the framework of this study.

Content analysis further supports the organization of the implemented remedial reading program by review of the schedule by the researcher. The researcher reviewed the schedules submitted by the remedial reading teachers within this study. Schedules also support the governance and accountability sections of the IOGA framework by conforming to the guidelines of the remedial reading program as also gathered through content analysis by the researcher. These artifacts support the emergent theme of planning and transparency within the implemented remedial reading program. While all

14 participants discussed the formal benchmark assessment, several participants referred to using the results of the formal assessments to drive classroom instruction, reading group scheduling, or balancing class profiles, depending on the task. Participant 13, a male fourth grade teacher for more than ten years, shared:

It is great to know where the kids are at so that you have a vantage point. Once I can arrange my students for reading groups based on their level, I can differentiate for the students appropriately. It is important that the benchmark levels are accurate so that we know exactly where we should be working with the students as far as reading level. If I know a student has weak reading skills, then I will make sure to eliminate the task of reading as much as possible in math problems to make it a fair assessment of math for the student.

Participant 7, a female reading teacher for between five and ten years, shared:

As we complete the benchmarks, I regroup the students in AIS to make sure that the students are in the appropriate groups. The small group instruction is best suited for students on the same reading level. In September, I build the groups and in January I look at the groups to make changes if need be. I also discuss dismissal of AIS students with the classroom teachers and the principal at grade level meetings. Participant 2, a female building administrator for more than ten years, responded: The benchmark that is collected at the end of the school year is printed on each student's placement card. The placement cards are used to create the classes for the upcoming school year. We do this each year in June with the current classroom teachers, a special area teacher, the reading teachers,

and the school psychologist. Placement gets tricky because we have outside variables to consider such as parent requests and special education program requirements, but the reading level allows us to check for balanced classrooms. Before we used the benchmarks for placement, I can remember when a teacher had 14 students reading below grade level out of 18 students. It became a challenge for the teacher and for the building support staff. Thankfully, the end of year benchmarks have alleviated that problem.

### ***Guided Reading Notes***

Participants explained how guided reading notes supported informal monitoring of student progress. All six classroom teacher participants made mention of guided reading notes in their responses, indicating the value that these notes hold in the context of the remedial reading program and in each individual student's reading progress journey. Participant 8, a female reading teacher for between five and ten years, shared:

Students attend reading daily and when they are working in small group instruction, I take daily reading notes on student performance and areas where they are struggling. I have a checklist for each level of reader that showcases what they student should be demonstrating at that given level. The checklist allows for quick completion without sacrificing important information. The checklist is also something that I share with the classroom teachers because the adaption of skills from small group to whole group or independently is important to note.

Participant 11, a female second grade classroom teacher for more than ten years, shared:

I keep a binder on the back table in my classroom for when I work with the students in small reading groups. Ideally, this happens daily, but due to all kinds of circumstances, at best guided reading groups are three times a week. The good thing for the AIS students is that they are pulled five times a week in addition to my classroom groups. For when I pull my groups, I take notes on the group, the book, and the strengths and weaknesses overall. I find these notes to be especially helpful because as they are kept cumulatively, I can use them when I meet with parents to review student progress or when I attend IST meetings.

Although not generated from teachers but rather the Assistant Superintendent who leads the implemented remedial reading program, a memorandum reminding teachers to be accountable for guided reading notes throughout the school year reinforces the elements of governance and accountability throughout the district.

### ***Instructional Support Team (IST)***

Many participants discussed the instructional support team (IST) in their responses to the researcher as a building level team that monitors student progress. Several participants compare the IST to an all-inclusive assessment. Participant 9, a female Kindergarten teacher for more than ten years mentioned:

When a student is struggling in reading, I complete a referral packet for the IST. My referral is documented in writing and it cites the areas in which the student is demonstrating difficulty. The IST is a great “benchmark” in a way because it involved the current classroom teacher, the previous year classroom teacher, the building reading teacher, the building speech teacher, the school psychologist, the principal, and an additional teacher member. It is helpful because you get a

complete profile of the student. Sometimes it has occurred that the student was doing well the previous year and then something changed, sometimes it is the opposite, but it is helpful to have the team in the room to get a clear picture and make a decision. In addition to the previous response, participant 3, a female building administrator for more than ten years, wrote in depth to describe what the assessment of IST includes: In our building, our IST includes the parents of the student. When we make the referral to the IST, the parents are usually intimidated and concerned because of the amount of people in the room at the meeting. We explain that everyone is there to provide a different perspective and that together we can draw a clear picture. Our speech teacher will complete a screening. Our reading teacher will benchmark the student if they are not already in AIS, and the classroom teacher reports on all academic areas of functioning. The parents are asked to report on similarities and differences that they see at home. I think our IST process is the most comprehensive and fair look at a student compared to a report card which is more like a snapshot.

For these participants, formal benchmarks, informal guided reading notes, and collaborative instructional support team meetings have been used to identify student reading progress in their classrooms, school, and within the district. Each prong of data collection within this study focus on the implementation process and how a team approach can positively impact student reading progress within the context of a remedial reading program. While there were similarities in the responses, many participants shared their perspective in a distinctive way, including how they utilize the information within their classroom and within the school community.

## **Trust and Transparency**

The themes of trust and transparency lead to answering the research question about the alignment between participant perceptions and outcomes of the remedial reading program. The participants highlight the trusting relationship between the stakeholders within the district and how the positive relationship indirectly effects the outcomes of student performance. The implementation of the remedial reading program has proven to show positive results due to the trust and transparency that is between the teachers and administrators. Trust can be seen from two vantage points when reviewing the data of this study. First, trust between the teachers and administrators is evident from the top down based on responses from the participants within this study. Participants consistently referred to feeling supported by their administrators and feeling confident in their ability to share their feelings about the remedial reading program processes. A second way that trust emerged within this study is also between the teachers and administrators but from the bottom up based on responses from both teachers and administrators within this study. For example, the teachers feel trusted as they can assess their students fairly and share with their administrators what they think is best. This trusting relationship allows for autonomy and risk taking. The data from this study explicitly demonstrated the direct relationship between trust and productivity from teachers, which in turn increases progress from students. For the purposes of this study, informal methods for identifying student reading progress refers to specific grouping of students, differentiation practices, grade level meetings, and functional performance within the classroom setting.

The participants provided insight to the differentiation that goes into a healthy classroom product. This evidence continues to support the trust and transparency demonstrated by the teachers and administrators within the district. It should also be noted that participants acknowledge that a student's functional classroom performance is a result of internal and external factors. For the purpose of this research study, internal factors are referred to as learning disability, concentration barriers, emotional regulation, etc., where external factors are considered classroom management, classroom chemistry, classroom organization, and building organization.

### *Professional Development*

In gathering data for this study, the researcher posed a question regarding professional development in the area of reading instruction. Most participants responded to the question citing grade level meetings as a source of professional development.

Participant 4, a female building administrator for less than five years shared:

Professional development occurs at grade level meetings. Teachers collaborate directly with each other and attend grade level meetings to discuss AIS. These meetings are very productive in getting everyone on the same page, as well as, reviewing the students progress is add or dismiss students as needed. Letters to parents are completed and teacher discuss how and when to notify parents of the upcoming changes in a collaborative way. I enjoy these meetings because it allows me to gain insight to the many students in my building in an effective and timely manner.

Participant 7 included:

All students enrolled in AIS are discussed at grade level meetings. As a member of these meetings, I have input to determine the students who receive AIS reading. The collective input between reading teachers is then shared at department level meetings. These department level meetings include all reading teacher district wide and the meeting is led by the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Curriculum as she oversees the reading department. The benchmarks are also submitted to the Assistant Superintendent so it comes full circle when we meet to review what we are doing in our individual classrooms, our school buildings, and district wide.

An interesting perspective shared by Participant 12, a female, third grade teacher for less

than five years included:

At the grade level meetings, I feel that I learn the most about reading instruction and the vision that the district has for the students. Compared to a “typical” PD lecture, in a grade level meeting, I am more likely to participate in the general discussion with my colleagues because everyone in the room already knows each other and we are all working towards the same goal. Sometimes when we attend lecture led professional development sessions, I have questions that I am not comfortable asking for a variety of reasons. For me, the grade level meetings are not only necessary, but extremely impactful.

The data emphasizes the need for a trustful and transparent relationship to increase the potential of student success and teacher involvement. Teachers reported that an open line of communication and trust led to a higher rate of risk taking and

involvement in the implemented remedial reading program and the indirect professional development and other meetings linked to the remedial reading program.

### **Summary of Findings**

There are several notable takeaways related to the emergent themes of planning, trust and transparency. First, the trusting and transparent relationship between the teachers and administrators leads to a more productive learning environment, specifically within the context of the implemented remedial reading program. Next, the professional development that is offered by the school district is seen as a very valuable resource to the teachers. Based on the participant responses, the administrators made little to no mention of the benefits of the offered professional development, leading the researcher to analyze this data and interpret that the administrators within the school district are unaware of the positive impact that the professional development has on their staff, within the context of the remedial reading program. Overall, the student reading progress data taken from the school management system supports that students in all schools demonstrate reading progress throughout the school year, including those students who receive remedial reading through the implemented remedial reading program. The data also addresses the gap of the need for additional reading support to promote more students reading on grade level.

The data also identify the connection between trust and productivity. The schools in which more participants referred to trust and support between teachers and administrators, were the schools that yielded higher results in student reading progress on an annual basis. The schools in which participants less acknowledged a positive trusting relationship, demonstrated a lower percentage of results. Overall, the district can identify

student reading progress as an area of need. For example, at BY elementary school, where teachers stated that having “more than adequate” remedial reading support, including more than one remedial reading teacher and more than one instructional tool for remedial reading, the most amount of students were reading on grade level over the span of the two years that this study reviewed. It should be noted that this school has less students than others, but the researcher considered reading progress per capita.

District-wide student progress was reviewed by the researcher to include a breakdown of subgroups. Students with disabilities (SWD), English language learners (ELL), and students receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS), were tracked to determine a positive or negative trend of reading progress over the two-year period of study. In the 2017-2018 school year, positive trends of progress were reported for all subgroups. Students with disabilities progress was the most stagnant, but a positive trend of growth. In the 2018-2019 school year, the rates of progress were less for all subgroups as compared to the 2017-2018 school year, but again, the trends of progress were positive.

**Table 3: Annual Student Reading Progress Data by School 2017-2019**

School	Total Student Enrollment 17-18	% of AIS students reading on grade level based on end of year benchmark 17-18	Total Student Enrollment 18-19	% of AIS students reading on grade level based on end of year benchmark 18-19
CL K-2	510	68%	521	72%
NW K-2	335	75%	329	76%
BY 3-5	320	81%	322	83%
TV 3-5	590	69%	568	72%

**Table 4: Baseline, Mid-Year, and End of Year Scores: Student Reading Progress  
2017-2019**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Baseline (September)</b>	<b>Mid Year (January)</b>	<b>End of Year (June)</b>	<b>Total Progress from September to June</b>
<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>AIS: 8.1 SWD: 6.4 ELL: 5.8</b>	<b>AIS: 11.1 SWD: 6.9 ELL: 7.8</b>	<b>AIS: 12.8 SWD: 7.0 ELL: 9.6</b>	<b>AIS: +4.7 SWD: +0.6 ELL:+3.8</b>
<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>AIS: 9.7 SWD: 6.1 ELL: 6.8</b>	<b>AIS: 11.8 SWD: 6.4 ELL:8.5</b>	<b>AIS: 13.9 SWD: 6.9 ELL:9.8</b>	<b>AIS: +4.2 SWD: +0.8 ELL:+3.0</b>

**(AIS: Academic Intervention Services, SWD: Students with Disabilities, ELL: English Language Learners)**

Findings from this study emphasized the themes that emerged relative to the research questions that guided this study. Emergent themes were the importance of trust, transparency, and planning, the data were collected from a balanced sample of participants. Out of 14 participants, 4 were administrators, 4 were reading teachers, and 6 were classroom teachers. It was important to include a classroom teacher to represent each of the grade levels within this study. The experience of the participants was on the more seasoned end of the spectrum with 10 out of 14 participants working ten or more years in their field. 2 participants had 5 or less years of experience, and 2 had between 5 and 10 years of experience. Within the theme of trust and transparency, teachers and administrators identified student reading progress as a shared outcome. Participants referred to formative benchmark assessments, summative guided reading notes, and collaborative instructional support team meetings.

Professional development was also noted as a strength by the teachers, where it is mentioned less by the administration of the implemented remedial reading program. The data address the need for planning and transparency within the implementation of a remedial reading program and the benefit of fluidity between all stakeholders. Professional development further supports the planning and trust emergent themes within this research study. Within the informal methods for teachers and administrators to identify student reading progress, the emergent themes of trust, transparency, and planning are supported by the participants as referred to the grouping of students, grade level meetings, differentiation, and functional performance. These themes are related to collaboration and are demonstrated by the teamwork approach within the remedial reading program. The wide scope of findings helps support the research questions that guide this study and provide the researcher with data analysis to identify the strengths of the implemented remedial reading program, as well as, the existing gaps.

The final chapter will analyze the findings of this study to provide discussion and implications of this study. The chapter will start with the implications of findings. Next, the chapter will showcase the relationship of the findings of this study in connection with the literature. Finally, recommendations for practice and future research will be explored.

## Chapter V

### Implications of Findings

Findings from this study support the emergent themes of trust, transparency, and planning as illustrated through the formal methods and informal methods for teachers and administrators to identify, monitor, and increase student reading progress within the district-wide remedial reading program. The research questions that guided this study were able to be answered sufficiently based on the data that was provided to the researcher by the participants within this study.

- To what extent are teacher and administrator perceptions aligned regarding the reading academic intervention services program? The researcher can identify that there is a positive relationship between the aligned results of the stakeholders within the remedial reading program and student reading progress. This is supported by participant responses supporting the trust and transparency they experienced within the school district. The trusting and transparent relationship affords teachers and administrators the opportunity to be aligned in their understanding of the program while maintaining autonomy in producing results of the program. The results of the program can also be identified as connected to perceptions based on the results within this study that specifically address adequate yearly progress in relation to school building.
- To what extent are stakeholders including classroom teachers, reading teachers and building administrators involved in the remedial reading program? It is evident to the researcher that all participants demonstrate an active role within the implementation of the remedial reading program and feel informed as members of

a collegial team. This is evidenced by the participant responses to which teachers and administrators shared their ongoing involvement within the implementation of the remedial reading program and the ongoing professional development to support the continued growth of the remedial reading program.

- How do reading academic intervention services yield student reading progress, as measured by the district adequate yearly progress chart, adapted from Fountas and Pinnell? Analyzing the annual student reading progress data led to answering this question. Overall, there is a positive trend of student outcomes within the implemented remedial reading program. However, this study also allowed the researcher to analyze the data and identify the gaps within the program. There is a gap in the level of student progress between schools within the district.

Analysis of the data through the lens of the framework within this study provides an in-depth summary of the instruction, organization, governance, and accountability that guides the implemented remedial reading program. Participants revealed specific methods used in the classroom and strategies used within the building. Within the theme of informal methods for identifying student reading progress, participants revealed methods utilized within the classroom and professional growth. The connection between student progress and teacher input connects to the literature that guided this study by identifying the importance of teacher involvement and fluid implementation leading to impactful results with a whole team approach (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 2007). The participants within the study solidify the need for a trustful and transparent relationship within the planning and implementation of a remedial reading program as they identified higher progress as a result of the said relationship. Each participant's responses were

analyzed to determine the perspective of the participant, how they could identify student reading progress based on their lens, and to ensure a balanced sampling. Findings of formal methods for identifying student reading progress included formative benchmarks assessments, summative guided reading notes, and collaborative instructional support team meetings.

Professional development is another take away from the data analysis and it strengthens the emergent themes of trust, transparency and planning. The investment in human capital demonstrates returns within the implemented remedial reading program based on the results of this research study. Identifying student reading progress included grouping of students, differentiation, grade level meetings, and functional student performance. A method discussed by several participants was the need for assessments, as they assist to drive instruction and base lessons on the students' needs. Dewey (1938) viewed the educator as the person who must plan for the engaging classroom: "He must survey the capacities and needs of the particular set of individuals with whom he is dealing and must at the same time arrange the conditions which provide the subject-matter or content for experiences that satisfy these needs and develop these capacities" (p. 58). A second particular method discussed by several participants was the need for differentiation, to assist instruction and support the student's needs. Servilio (2009) wrote about the balance of choice and differentiated instruction with students with disabilities (SWDs). By addressing the needs of students through direct instruction and student choice, Servilio asserted that students are engaged and learning at their own levels. After assessing students and selecting content and strategies, teachers provided challenging and supportive options for choice at students' learning levels. Servilio cautioned that

classrooms where students have choice in instruction can be noisy and seem chaotic; however, the empowerment that students feel as a result of making choices about their learning engages them to continue learning. Participants shared that the data learned from both formal and informal methods allowed them to get to know their students.

Participants also shared that they use that data to plan, prepare and drive their future instruction. The findings within this study connect to previous research highlighted throughout this study and are supported by the pillars of the Instruction, organization, governance, and accountability (IOGA) framework that guide this study.

The main conclusions from this study center around trust and planning and the data collected through various methods indicated in this study should be incorporated into measuring student reading progress. Trust and transparency within the stakeholders' relationship of the implemented remedial reading program is essential, and productive in regard to student achievement. The thoughtful planning approach, which includes communication and trust between teachers and administrators, lends itself to a transparent relationship and ultimately supports student progress. This study represented the positive impact that a trusting relationship can bring to an instructional program and the benefits for all stakeholders, including students.

The way teachers and administrators use data driven instruction plays a major role in the teachers' ability to monitor student reading progress. Teachers and administrators shared the ways in which they use assessments to drive their future instruction or planning of balanced classrooms throughout the school community. Participants referenced both formal methods and informal methods for collecting data. Formal methods included the collection of data through formative, summative, and collaborative

assessments. Informal methods included the collection of data through observations. By using the data collected through observations such as grouping of students and functional classroom performance, teachers referenced specific strategies to monitor student reading progress. By using this data, teachers can assess the strengths, abilities, and needs of their students, which will positively impact students reading progress.

### **Relationship to Prior Research**

One of the main ways in which the findings were consistent with the research literature was in the area of informal and formal methods for identifying student reading progress. The theme with the most references in this study is formal methods for monitoring student reading progress. One particular method discussed by several participants was the need for assessments, as they assist to drive instruction and base lessons on the students' needs. Both this study and the supporting literature highlight the importance of trust and planning to identify and support student reading progress. The planning of assessments and team driven approaches to monitoring student progress promotes the existence of a trusting collaborative relationship. Factors presented during this study that were interpreted by the researcher to positively impact a collaborative relationship include common language, reflection, and clear expectations. Teachers often remarked about the transparent accountability between the district administration with teachers and how it was helpful to remain focused.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are a number of remaining questions that can be answered concerning student reading progress. Among the topics are various attributes of a school and the role of an administrator. For example, in this study, the clarity of leadership at the building

and district level was supportive to the implementation of the remedial reading program. Another takeaway was the unity between teachers and their building leader in collaboratively discussing student progress through the Instructional Support Team. Each of these various attributes can be examined further to determine the rate of impact on student reading performance within the context of the remedial reading program.

A number of organizational practices, such as planning, organization, and accountability, have surfaced through this study. While this study focused on the implementation of a remedial reading program, questions remain regarding organizational practices of the remedial reading program district wide as opposed to just at the elementary level.

Further research is also needed to explore the implementation of remedial reading programs or other content area remedial programs in various schools. Most of the schools in the sample were similar in terms of population to one another and the surrounding area. Perhaps with a more diverse sample, research will be able to shed more light on the extent to which schools with a more diverse population differ in their program design. A more diverse population would include schools with multiple groups of students with different ethnicities, backgrounds, religions, cultures, etc. This will also be similar when examining urban and rural settings. Diversity can also be examined based on student gender. Lastly, future research on the impacts technology and parental input within the context of the implemented remedial reading program and student reading progress is also recommended.

## **Recommendations for Future Practice**

One recommendation for future practice is to provide thoughtful professional development to all teachers on how to use data to monitor student reading progress. This recommendation includes providing teachers with the support necessary for professional growth through the use of strategic professional development workshops. Based on the findings of this study and the importance of assessment, the topic of the professional development should include data driven instruction. For example, profession development program that is provided based on teacher request or with teacher input is recommended to increase the benefit of such professional development and to strengthen the reciprocal relationship between teachers and administrators.

In connection with the research questions that guided this study, teacher and administrators' involvement within the entirety of an implemented remedial reading program can strengthen the understanding and fidelity of the program. Instructional leadership in the implementation process has the capacity to elevate the trust and buy in of the remedial reading program by working with teachers to have open communication and meaningful staff development. Investing in human capital within the context of the remedial reading program can provide teachers with the tools to take new risks and to the opportunity to identify the trust in the relationship. Another connection to the research questions that guided this study is to consider review of the progression outcomes of the remedial reading program while also reviewing the involvement of the instructional staff.

In terms of looking at the schools' instruction, organization, governance, and accountability (IOGA) in this study through the lens of the self-assessment tool applied to the remedial program, important information to support communication between teachers

and administrators is interpreted by the researcher as a positive identification of a healthy relationship. Specific to instruction, the self-assessment tool highlighted teacher autonomy throughout this district and the important role that teachers play in providing students with instruction. Accountability was measured in several ways using the self-assessment tool and is considered by the researcher as another positive strength of the district and the center of this study. The “transparent relationship” and fair accountability noted by several participants led to less focus on teachers being rigid and allowed for “more time and confidence to take risks.” Reflecting on the organization of the remedial reading program using the IOGA self-assessment tool provided the researcher with a basic understanding of the inner workings and organization of the implemented program. The self-assessment tool focused more on facts or organization and less on opinions, therefore, it is noted by the researcher that a more reflective tool could be combined with the self-assessment to garner more information of the organization of the program. Last, governance of the remedial reading program was interpreted by the researcher using the self-assessment tool as a unique model of an implemented remedial reading program. Unlike a top down approach where at the district level there is an administrator who oversees the remedial reading program; however, the building principals are entitled to provide their individual schools with a customized plan for implementation in way of scheduling and student selection. The structure of the program is seen as demonstrating a positive impact to support schools with what they need rather than the notion that “one size fits all.” In conjunction with Schein’s (2004) hierarchy of assumptions, beliefs, and values, the researcher interprets the collective appreciation for the remedial reading

program at the core of this study. The importance and value of collaboration and trust are at the forefront of the thematic findings within this study.

### **Conclusion**

Schools across New York State and the United States are facing mandates of academic intervention services and response to intervention. When organizations work together on implementation, stakeholder buy in and student progress are strengthened. As student achievement continues to plateau across the state (NYSED, 2018), school stakeholders need to be equipped with the strategies and skills to measure and respond to student reading progress with a collaborative and thoughtful implementation approach inclusive of all members. A trusting relationship within the implementation of a remedial reading program is key in securing a successful and meaningful program. This study highlights collaboration in the field of public education regarding the implementation of a remedial reading program. Considering the progress outcomes discussed in this study, it is recommended that school systems focus on the strength of communication and collaboration through the platforms of professional development, team meetings, and instructional leadership. Student gains be achieved when thoughtful planning, trust and transparency within an implemented instructional program can be identified and strengthened. Implementing the IOGA self-reflection tool to measure areas of instruction, organization, governance and accountability has proven to be useful in targeting a fluid and effective remedial reading program.

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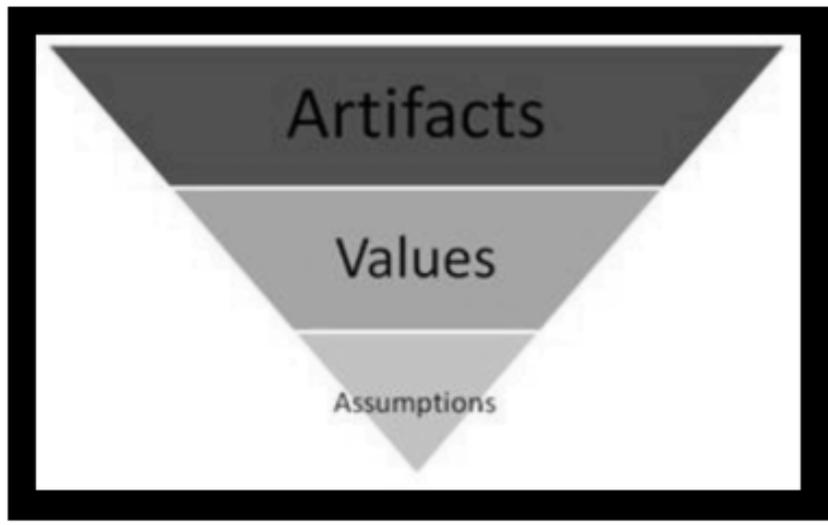
**Appendix A: Basis of Framework**

29 Questions into Subgroups of IOGA: This table is presented to provide the adapted structure for the questionnaire questions. Each question follows the format to identify data within each area of the research design model.

*29 Questions of the IOGA Model*

Instruction (Work)	Instruction (Knowing)	Organization	Governance	Accountability
1. Teaching Practices	7. Creation of Knowledge	13. Access to Program	19. Planning Change	24. Improving Community Life
2. Teacher Role	8. Demonstration of Learning	14. Access to Services	20. Resources/ Commitment	25. Adult Growth
3. Materials/Tools	9. Student Interests	15. Student School Career	21. Control of Training	26. Monitoring Student Life
4. Workplace Organization	10. Order of Thinking	16. Adult Work Patterns	22. Inquiry Into Success	27. Student Community Service
5. Classroom Management	11. Relation to Community	17. Staff Patterns	23. Authority Distribution	28. Systematic Data
6. Work Patterns	12. Program Sequence	18. External Agencies		29. Information Use

Schein’s Model of Organization Leadership and Culture:



## Appendix B: Participant Data Coded into IOGA

<b>IOGA Frame work</b>	<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Beliefs, Values, Assumptions</b>	<b>Artifacts</b>
Instruction	How does the school group or place students in your school?	<p>“Students are evaluated for services based on Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks”, “reading level”, “Review Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarks for students, both independent and instructional learning levels.”,</p> <p>“The students are grouped by their reading level/ability and grade level.”,</p> <p>“Heterogeneously. There is an attempt to balance classes based on academics, behavior, and social needs.”,</p> <p>“The children are placed in groups based on their reading levels.”</p>	AIS letter identifying student has been selected based on performance
Instruction	Who makes grouping or placement decisions in your school?	<p>“Reading teachers, classroom teachers and input from admin”, “teacher and principal”, “Administration, AIS teacher, classroom teacher, and ESL teacher. Students are placed by level and sometimes by classroom teacher if there is a programming conflict.”,</p> <p>“It is a shared decision between a team consisting of the student’s classroom teacher, the AIS reading teacher, the building principal, and the assistant superintendent for</p>	Memo Regarding placement Send to teachers, principal, psychologist, Reading teacher.

		instruction.”, “Principal with some input from parents and teachers.”, “Placement decisions are predominantly done by the building principal and classroom teachers.”	
Instruction	Is reading ability factored into the decision of placement or grouping in your school?	“Yes, based on decoding, fluency, and comprehension scores from benchmark”, “Yes, focus”, “Yes. Groups are formed after benchmarking each student that is below grade level.”, “Yes, because it is part of the academic measure”	Placement cards provided by principal For placement meeting.
Instruction	Are subgroups (English Language Learners or Students with Disabilities) factored into placement or grouping decisions in your school?	“Based on level and overall performance, they can be included in AIS”, “No”, “Yes”, “Yes. I teach an inclusion class”, “Students that are ESL Learners do not receive reading services. Students that have IEPs receive reading services in the classroom. I do see two students with IEPs based on teacher recommendation.”, “Yes. ENL students as well as students who have IEPs/504 plans are carefully considered when creating classes.”	Placement cards provided by principal For placement meeting.
Instruction	How do teachers in the school communicate with each other?	“Teachers collaborate directly with each other and attend grade level meetings to discuss AIS”, “faculty meetings, email”, “IST Meetings, common planning, informal conversations, grade-level meetings”, “Teachers communicate in person during preps and meetings, through email, and over the phone about student	

		needs and progress.”, “As the school reading teacher, I am continuously discussing my student’s progress with the classroom teachers. We work collaboratively to provide the best practice for each individual student.”	
Organization	Is common prep time available in your school?	“Not at this time”, “Yes”, “Yes, through program coverages we arrange planning time.”, “Yes, common prep time is available.”, The entire grade doesn’t have a common prep.”	Master Schedule
Organization	How is enrollment in remedial reading decided in your school?	“Based on benchmarking and IST intervention”, “lowest students”, “We use Fountas and Pinnell benchmark instructional levels to determine enrollment in AIS reading. We decide based on each grade level. For example, a student that is at a level L or below may receive AIS reading in third grade. We then look at our ENL students and include them in the program if there is room.”, “It is decided by a team consisting of the student’s classroom teacher, the AIS reading teacher, the building principal, and the assistant superintendent for instruction. Students who are below grade level receive reading services.”, “Based on prior year recommendations, F&P Benchmarks, teacher recommendation, and Read 180 Tests”	Letter to parents explaining how student was selected to participate in AIS reading.

Organiz ation	Who plans or implements a remedial reading schedule in your school	“Reading AIS teacher in conjunction with principal”, “The AIS reading teacher creates and implements a remedial reading schedule.”, “Reading Teacher and certified ICT teacher for Wilson.”, “The reading teacher creates the schedule.”	AIS teacher schedules
Organiz ation	How are students grouped for remedial reading in your school?	“Based on benchmark levels”, “By learning level, classroom teacher, and grade based on F&P benchmarking.”, “By class and grade level”, “The students are grouped based on reading level.”. “The students are “pulled” by class. There have been efforts to “pull” by level but this has caused conflict with the master schedule and classroom teachers.”	AIS teacher schedules
Organiz ation	Is staff development in the area of remedial reading available in your school?	“Professional development occurs at grade level meetings”, “Yes, by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction if needed.”, “Yes”, “The reading teachers meet several times a year for staff development.”	Memo regarding PD opportunities for teachers from Assistant Superintendent
Organiz ation	Describe the input that you have in the remedial reading program and the students who attend the program in your school.	“All students enrolled in AIS are discussed at grade level meetings. As a member of these meetings, I have input to the students who receive AIS reading”, “Collective input between reading teachers”, “Review of student benchmarks and discussion with reading teachers and classroom teachers.”, “As an assistant principal, I attend	

		<p>AIS reading meetings to help in the shared decision of what students will receive reading services. I continue to monitor the students' progress and support the classroom and reading teachers with resources needed. “, “I work closely with the reading teacher to decide if students should be added to or remain in the program.”, “As the school literacy specialist, I have a significant amount of input with instruction and student placement.”, “My opinion is valued during IST meetings. However, there are specific remedial reading teachers who have a big influence on the programs that do and do not get implemented. These remedial teachers are friendly with upper administration.”</p>	
Organization	Describe the different types of readers in your classroom or school?	<p>“Vast array of readers, students in grades 3-5 are reading on levels grades 1-8”, “Various levels: academic intervention, on level learners, and above level readers.” “We have students reading at levels A-Z+.</p> <p>Teachers in all grades and content areas receive literacy professional development, to be effective with struggling and advanced readers.”,</p> <p>“Since I teach inclusion, I have students at the end of 1st grade to beginning of 5th</p>	Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.

		grade level”, “On the first grade level, I have students reading on a levels A – D. On the second grade level, I have students that are reading from a level D – J.”, “We are seeing a large influx of Turkish immigrants as well as families moving from the Dominican Republic into our district. I predominantly service all remedial third graders. These students have reading ranges from kindergarten level to an end of second grade range.”,	
Organization	How are students Reading abilities measured in your school?	“guided reading and benchmark assessments”, “AIMSweb”, “The benchmarking system Fountas and Pinnell is used. Our teachers are well versed in Balanced Literacy. The students are observed and assessed with research based and authentic assessments on a continuous basis.”, “Guided reading level and lexile scores if they attend Read 180”,	Yearly reading progress chart and benchmark assessment examples
Organization	Are all students benchmarked for reading ability in your school?	“Yes, all students are benchmarked 3x yearly”	Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.
Organization	Are previous remedial reading students benchmarked more often than others in your school?	“When necessary as per IST recommendations”, “no”, “Yes”, “If a child is having an IST meeting, a benchmark is administered before the meeting. “	Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.

Governance	How is student reading progress measured in your school?	“benchmark assessments”, “AimsWeb”, “F&P Benchmarks, Aimsweb and Aimsweb progress monitoring, Read 180 assessment, guided reading notes, teacher formal and informal assessment.”	Yearly reading progress chart and benchmark assessment examples
Governance	When is student reading data collected and measured in your school?	“Benchmarks are submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction 3x yearly”, “Oct. Jan. May”, “2-3 times per year for benchmarks. Weekly Aimsweb progress monitoring.”, “Student reading data is collected and measured on a continuous basis by the classroom teacher (and AIS reading teacher if the child receives services). Students are benchmarked three times a year (Fall, Winter and Spring).”	Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.
Governance	How does the school use the data to determine students reading achievement in your school?	“guided reading levels measure student reading achievement”, “AimsWeb”, “Review data and assess student progress. Analyze data for independent and instructional learning levels. Review students by class, by grade, and by school to review progress.”, “Reading levels are used for class placement.”, “The director or curriculum reviews the progress-I used to see graphs-don’t know if that still occurs”	Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.
Governance	Is student reading data shared with anyone other than the classroom	“reading data is shared if additional supports are needed”, “District office, parents, IST meetings”, “Student reading data is shared with administration and parents.”	Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.

	teacher in your school?		
Accountability	Please identify the strength(s) of the remedial reading program in your school.	<p>“small group, 5x weekly”, “leveled literacy instruction”, “Multiple programs to address student needs: F&amp;P Aimsweb, guided reading, Read 180, and Wilson”, “The students are placed by reading ability and/or grade level in small groups. Students receive the benefit of working within a small group and are provided individualized instruction.”, “Wilson- helps students learn to decode”</p> <p>“Read 180 is a strong program with 3 components. This program seems to be effective for students up to a level P”, “The leveled literacy intervention kits by Foutas and Pinnell have proved very helpful. Specific remedial students are benefitting from the Foundations as well as the Wilson programs.”</p>	
Accountability	Please identify the areas of need of the remedial reading program in your school.	<p>“additional AIS staff would be beneficial”, “another reading teacher”, “More support for ENL students to attend reading programs since it would benefit along with ESL services.”, “Wilson students need a stronger comprehension component. There needs to be a balance between decoding and understanding.”, “The students are placed by reading level in small groups of 6.</p>	

		<p>During reading class, students work on sight words, foundation concepts and guided reading is conducted. Students receive the benefit of working within a small group and individualized instruction.”, “There should be more communication between the ENL and reading departments. This particular school has many bilingual students. It would be helpful for both departments to come together in order to discuss the efficacy and inefficiencies of our programs. Being able to discuss the professional development needs of both departments would be very helpful. Being able to align some of the teaching practices between both departments would be useful too.”</p>	
Accountability	<p>What percentage of students would you estimate are reading on grade level in your school?</p>	<p>“85%”, “Approximately 50%”, “70%”, “75%”, “70-75%”, “75%”</p>	<p>Student reading assessment data pulled from student data management system.</p>
Accountability	<p>Do you have any recommendations to strengthen the remedial reading program in your school?</p>	<p>“Continue PD for benchmarking and reading, additional literacy materials”, “more parent involvement”, “More reading support staff for both pull-out and push-in programs.”, “It would be great if it was for longer than 45 minutes and the groups</p>	

		were smaller.”, “An additional reading teacher would be a great benefit to the program.”, “This particular school has two remedial reading teachers. I’ve always believed that both reading teachers should be implementing the same program (balanced literacy). Unfortunately, this is not the case. I also believe both reading teachers should be servicing all grade levels. Finally, all students should be pulled according to level (not by teacher).”	
Accountability	What occurs in your school if a student is reading below grade level at the end of the school year?	“IST is held and intervention and goals is put in place if needed. Lack of progress monitored by IST can lead to referral to CSE”, “The Reading Teacher and parent of the child is notified.”, “Typically, we monitor the programs that the student has (or has not) been receiving. We then determine what type of instruction and tier I, II or III interventions may be necessary.”	Instructional support team paperwork.
Accountability	Are there strengths of the reading assessment tools in your school?	Align with standards”, “Yes, multiple assessments to better assess and gather data for each student.”, “The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarking system provides reading patterns and behaviors of each student. This system shows us the areas students are weakest and strongest (fluency and comprehension). This information is used to	

		<p>guide instruction and make an individualized reading plan for each child.”, “The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarking system gives the evaluator information on reading behaviors. The teacher will obtain information on how the student is searching and using information, solving words, self monitoring, self correcting and fluency. The comprehension component of the assessment evaluates key understanding and questions beyond the text. The assessment gives a window into a child’s reading behavior. It’s a useful tool for assessing a child’s reading level and finding the areas that need to be strengthened for each individual student. F&amp;P is also a huge part of the IST process.”, “If the Fountas &amp; Pinnell benchmark system is done accurately, it can provide teachers with the strengths and weaknesses of the reader being assessed. However, many teachers score differently than others, this can cause discrepancies.”</p>	
Accountability	Are there areas of need of the reading assessment tools in your school?	“Additional materials”, “Yes, more staff to assess and progress monitor individual students. More training to assess students.”, “No”	

Accountability	Does the Instructional Support Team (IST) in your school follow all remedial reading students?	“If a student is reading well below grade level the IST will follow the student through RTI”, “No, students not making progress and students identified by classroom teachers or administration. We strive to meet for all students but there is a large number so it does not always happen.”, “yes”	Instructional support team paperwork.
Accountability	What is the Instructional Support Team (IST) process for identifying students in you school?	“Classroom teacher makes a formal written request for an IST meeting complete with current levels of performance in all areas”, “leads to testing and special ed if needed”, “Teacher identifies students and completes information/ data collection. Teacher brings student name and paperwork to school psychologist. School psychologist and administration program meetings with teacher, support staff, other team members, and parent to discuss child’s performance in multiple learning areas. The team creates goals and progress monitors in a 6-8 week time frame.”, “The classroom teacher will identify students that they are concerned about academically, socially, and/or emotionally. The IST meets and comes up with a plan for the child.”, “That would be a formal step in helping identify reading candidates. Having the reading teacher test the student after I have benchmarked them is another	Instructional support team paperwork.

		alternative.”, “The classroom teacher will identify students that they are concerned about academically, socially or emotionally. The IST meets monthly. “, “A student should be at least two levels behind according to the Fountas & Pinnell benchmark system. Classroom teacher observation is factored in identifying students as well as AIMSweb Plus results.”	
Accountability	How are remedial reading services and reading progress reviewed to dismiss students from remedial reading instruction?	“When students have made significant reading progress they are discharged from IST”, “by benchmarking”, “Assessment, progress monitoring, team meetings, and teacher observation”, “Once a child is reading on grade level, they may exit the program.”, “Based on the student’s growth from the program’s data and their benchmark level.”, “If a child is reading on grade level in the month of January, they may exit from the program.”, “Typically, anecdotal records and charts are maintained in order to track progress over time. Updated benchmark results as well as strategic and progress monitoring through AIMSweb Plus is considered. If a student has achieved set goals and is considered “on grade” level then typically services are ceased.”	AIS discharge letter to parents.

**Appendix C: Handout for Participants****Handout for Participants**

Thank you for your participation. Your participation will help in identifying perceptions of the remedial reading program (AIS) within the school district. Please answer the questions as they apply to you.

Please Select:    **Administrator**                      **Classroom Teacher**                      **AIS Teacher**

**Teaching Experience:**    < 5 years                      5-10 years                      > 10+ years

**Schools in which you have taught:**    Boyle                      Clinton                      Norwood    Terryville

**Current Teaching Assignment (grade, school, class size):** \_\_\_\_\_

1.     How does the school group or place students in your school?
2.     Who makes grouping or placement decisions in your school?
3.     Is reading ability factored into the decision of placement or grouping in your school?
4.     Are subgroups (English Language Learners or Students with Disabilities) factored into placement or grouping decisions in your school?
5.     How do teachers in the school communicate?
6.     Is common prep time available in your school?
7.     How is enrollment in remedial reading decided in your school?
8.     Who plans or implements a remedial reading schedule in your school?
9.     How are students grouped for remedial reading in your school?

10. Is staff development in the area of remedial reading available in your school?
11. Describe the input that you have in the remedial reading program and the students who attend the program in your school.
12. Describe the different types of readers in your classroom/school?
13. How are students Reading abilities measured in your school?
14. Are all students benchmarked for reading ability in your school?
15. Are previous remedial reading students benchmarked more often than others in your school?
16. How is student reading progress measured in your school?
17. When is student reading data collected and measured in your school?
18. How does the school use the data to determine students reading achievement in your school?
19. Is student reading data shared with anyone other than the classroom teacher in your school?
20. Please identify the strength(s) of the remedial reading program in your school.
21. Please identify the areas of need of the remedial reading program in your school.
22. What percentage of students would you estimate are reading on grade level in your school?

23. Do you have any recommendations to strengthen the remedial reading program in your school?
24. What occurs in your school if a student is reading below grade level at the end of the school year?
25. Are there strengths of the reading assessment tools in your school?
26. Are there areas of need of the reading assessment tools in your school?
27. Does the Instructional Support Team (IST) in your school follow all remedial reading students?
28. What is the Instructional Support Team (IST) process for identifying students in you school?
29. How are remedial reading services and reading progress reviewed to dismiss students from remedial reading instruction?

## Appendix D: Informed Consent for Participation Form

Dear Potential Participant,

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the efforts that your school has made in its instruction, organization, governance and accountability. This study will be conducted by Micheala Finlay, Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership, St. John's University, as part of her doctoral dissertation. Her faculty sponsor is Elizabeth Gil, Ph.D., Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership, St. John's University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Take part in one questionnaire regarding reading in your school;
2. allow the researcher to collect and review artifacts pertaining to reading in your school (memos, schedules, copies of instructional materials, etc.)
3. allow the researcher to collect student reading progress data in your

school

Participation in this study will involve up to one hour of your time: 30 minutes to complete an interview and up to 30 minutes of additional feedback time.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. Although you may receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand how your school has used remedial reading to improve students reading skills.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained, by keeping consent forms separate from the data and by assigning codes to the interviewees to protect confidentiality. The name and the location of the school will not be identified. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others. After completion of the study, all paper files will be shredded, and digital data will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear of that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research- related problem, you may contact Micheala Finlay at [micheala.finlay15@stjohns.edu](mailto:micheala.finlay15@stjohns.edu) or the faculty sponsor, Elizabeth Gil, Ph.D., at [gile@stjohns.edu](mailto:gile@stjohns.edu). For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Human Subjects Review Board, at St. John's University.

### Agreement to Participate

Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Signed): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix E: Adequate Yearly Progress District Model

<b>Z</b>	8+	8+	8+	8+	8+	8+	8+	7/8+	7/8+	7/8+
<b>Y</b>					7	7	7			
<b>X</b>	7	7	7	7				6	6	6
<b>W</b>					6	6	6	5	5	5
<b>V</b>			6	6	5	5	5			
<b>U</b>	6	6	5	5					4	4
<b>T</b>	5	5					4	4		
<b>S</b>					4	4				
<b>R</b>			4	4						
<b>Q</b>	4	4							3	3
<b>P</b>							3	3		
<b>O</b>					3	3				
<b>N</b>			3	3						
<b>M</b>	3	3							2	2
<b>L</b>							2	2		
<b>K</b>					2	2				
<b>J</b>			2	2						
<b>I</b>		2								1
<b>H</b>	2								1	
<b>G</b>							1	1		
<b>F</b>					1	1				
<b>E</b>			1	1						
<b>D</b>	1	1								K
<b>C</b>								K	K	
<b>B</b>						K	K			
<b>A</b>				K	K					
<b>Pre-A</b>	K	K	K							
<sup>^</sup> GR LEVEL MONTH >	<b>Sept.</b>	<b>Oct.</b>	<b>Nov.</b>	<b>Dec.</b>	<b>Jan.</b>	<b>Feb.</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>

**Appendix F: Institutional Review Board Approval**

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Dec 9, 2019 1:02 PM EST

PI: Micheala Finlay

CO-PI: Elizabeth Gil

Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - IRB-FY2020-298 PERCEPTIONS OF READING  
ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A DISTRICT-  
WIDE REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM

Dear Micheala Finlay:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for  
PERCEPTIONS OF

READING ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A  
DISTRICT-WIDE

REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM. The approval is effective from December 6, 2019 through  
December 4, 2020

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data needs  
to be discarded.

Selected Category:

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP

Chair, Institutional

Review Board

Professor of

Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.

IRB Coordinator

## Appendix G: Dissertation Proposal to Defense Timeline

### Micheala L. Finlay Dissertation Proposal and Defense Timeline

- *Doctoral Coursework: Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019*
- **September 2019: Dissertation Drafting**
  - Mentor meetings, revisions as needed, identify committee
- **October 2019: Prepare Proposal, Identify Committee**
  - Mentor meetings, revisions as needed, notify committee
  - Submit final proposal to committee
- **November 2019: Dissertation Proposal**
  - Dissertation Proposal November 12, 2019
  - Apply to IRB immediately
- **December 2019: IRB Approval and Data Collection**
  - Pending IRB Approval – begin collecting Data
  - IRB Approval December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019
  - Distributed consents and surveys December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019
  - Collected surveys and consents through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019
- **January 2020: Data Analysis**
  - Data Analysis and Coding
  - Write Chapters 4 and 5
  - Submit to mentor for feedback
  - Identify defense date and notify committee
- **February 2020: Prepare Defense**
  - Dissertation Draft editing
  - Mentor meetings
  - Submit to committee
- **March 2020: Dissertation Defense**
  - Dissertation Defense March 12, 2020
  - Revisions based on defense committee feedback
  - Apply for graduation
  - Collaborate with SJU to submit final defense document to library

## Vita

Name	Micheala L. Finlay
Baccalaureate Degree	Bachelor of Arts, St. Joseph's College, Patchogue, New York Major: Elementary General Education and Elementary Special Education
Date Graduated	May 2012
Other Degrees and Certifications	Advanced Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (May 2013)  Master of Arts, Long Island University, Brookville, New York Major: Literacy
Date Graduated	May 2014  Advanced Graduate Certificate in School Building Leadership and School District Leadership St. John's University, New York (May 2017)