Progressing Toward Data Driven Decisions

Jacqueline Simpson
Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services,
Curriculum and Instruction
@JSAvonPPS
Avon Central School District

Taking a step back…. to 1994

What does RTI got to do with it?

➢ The initial mandate went into effect July 2012
➢ Specific to reducing the identification of students as learning disabled who may require additional interventions to support reading development in grades K-4
➢ This definition then expanded to:
   ○ K-5
   ○ Reading and Math
   ○ Secondary level education
   ○ Behavior
➢ But the good news is we understood better our need to make data driven decisions about students' learning and behavior

Education Gurus and RTI

Dr. Mary Howard: "We are at a crossroads. We can either use response to intervention as an opportunity to rebuild a positive climate or allow it to devolve into something that takes us even farther from the reason most of us became teachers."

Dr. Richard Allington: "I would have rather it had been dubbed "response to instruction" because improving struggling readers' access to expert, intensive reading instruction is what might make this initiative different from so many that were similarly developed in federal regulation.'

Fast Forward…. 2018

➢ K-8 Technology Committee began investigating technology based programs to support universal benchmarking and intervention
➢ iReady Diagnostic and Instruction was selected
➢ During the 2018-19 school year, the district piloted iReady, administering two universal benchmarks between January and June for students in grades K-8
➢ The pilot was funded through Title monies
➢ There was hesitation, distrust and concerns about moving to full implementation of a computer-based assessment tool for reading and math
➢ The program is expensive
➢ We are not a 1:1 computing district

Now…. 2019-20

➢ Title monies supported full implementation of iReady
  ○ K-8 Diagnostic and Instruction for Reading and Math
  ○ Includes iReadyCentral.com
  ○ On-site PD (3x/yearly)
  ○ Responsive and timely tech support
➢ 1st Diagnostic assessment took place in September
  ○ Initial on-site PD took place on October 11 at both the elementary and middle schools
  ○ Following this initial PD, staff met in faculty meetings for the first data chats
  ○ Guided questions included:
    ■ What do you know about your entire class and students as a result of the data?
    ■ What are the bright spots and areas for improvement?
    ■ What instructional strategies or plans have you tried?
    ■ What instruction or intervention will you put in place to address the needs of your class or students
    ■ How will you monitor student progress?

Happy, pleasant surprises!

➢ Teachers began self-reporting using the data to in one-to-one conversations with students.
➢ Teachers began setting goals with students.
➢ Teachers began making honest, sometimes, hard assessments of their teaching practices and recognizing their responsibility to provide quality, first instruction vs sending kids elsewhere to receive intervention with a "specialist."
➢ Teachers began blaming kids and their families less and relying on data and their instructional practices more.
➢ Teachers plan to use this data to guide discussions during parent/teacher conferences.

Here are some teacher testimonials

❖ The iReady data helps guide my instruction in many ways. It has helped me focus my interventions with students who are struggling academically. In years past, we would just take the kids through the normal path of interventions at a specific grade level that has been practiced for years (not very customized to the individual). Now that we have all of this very specific data based on the diagnostic and the online instruction, we can pinpoint exactly what skills and concepts need to be targeted for each individual.

❖ The iReady data also helps me target specific needs in guided reading groups through the use of the instructional groupings located inside the iReady system. It helps target a specific skill or strategy that can be worked on and it also gives you suggested activities, lesson plans, and resources for those targeted groups.

❖ I personally love the fact that this data is unbelievably helpful at parent/teacher conference time when discussing progress and goals with parents. Often, parents ask, "What can we do at home to help?" Well.. let me get on iReady and give you some suggestions and resources!

Adam had a lot to say!

❖ This program has been a game-changer for teachers. Being able to push kids to their maximum potential at their pace is something education has needed for a long time. Honestly, I was very hesitant and skeptical of this program from hearing about it from other teachers in different districts. I was afraid the kids were going to be spending hours upon hours on computers and at the primary age level, I was very hesitant to take the human interaction component out of school. But, after implementing iReady online instruction for about 2 months now, I am pleased to say that my kids spend only 20 minutes a day in iReady and all of my hesitations and reservations surrounding the program have been alleviated. It has been an amazing tool to have in my classroom and I know my kids are greatly benefiting from its implementation. ~ Adam W, 2nd grade

A few more from our elementary colleagues

❖ I love the immediate feedback students receive from iReady after each lesson. I showed them how to individually monitor their progress so they are able to gauge how they are performing. While my students still receive instruction tailored to their own needs from myself in Guided Reading or Math groups, I love how they are receiving the same type of tailored instruction during a time where they may not be directly working with a teacher. ~ Heather W, 1st grade

❖ I have been using iReady during center time, which I am really enjoying, because I believe it has allowed my students to be doing more meaningful work while working in centers, and it is differentiated to their specific needs/levels. I am interested to see how they perform on the mid-year assessment, and plan to use this data to create student learning groups based on their strengths and areas of need so I can address these in group time, as well, and therefore further differentiate learning within my classroom. ~ Beth M, Kindergarten

❖ I find iReady to be an incredibly helpful tool. The data provided pinpoints specific skills that students in my class are struggling with, as well as instructional strategies and materials to help teach those skills. This helps inform my decisions about the concepts I teach in small reading groups or individually. ~ Geoffrey C, 3rd grade

.... and from our middle school teachers

❖ Iready is helpful for Math AIS especially to shore up older topics that students haven't mastered as yet and that impact their present-day learning. ~ Kate F, 7th grade & Math AIS

❖ I-Ready has confirmed for me the areas in which certain students are struggling. We often say that these students just need to try harder or just read more to get better. But, I-Ready is showing us specific areas that need improvement while proving that these kids are legitimately behind their peers and need extra intervention with particular skills. From there, we can focus in on those skills either using small group instruction or the lessons provided by I-Ready to hopefully bring those students up to par. ~ Katie M, ELA 7

So here we are!