

INCREASING ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH GRANT NORTHWEST COLORADO BOCES Mid-Year 2: October 1, 2013-February 19, 2014

The 15 elementary schools who are participating in this grant through NW BOCES continue to be grateful for the opportunity to refine and improve instruction for students with disabilities. Teachers and administrators are engaging in action research to determine what it will take to enable students with disabilities to achieve at rates similar to their peers. Through this work, our theory of action has developed to include two main leverage points for this work: 1) the quality of data analysis that is occurring at all levels within a school and 2) the quality of instruction that teachers are able to provide for students. The goals below reflect the actions that we believe will drive change at these two leverage points.

Goal 1: Increase regional collaboration to support students with disabilities

We are successfully increasing regional collaboration in several ways:

- 1) Each school has designated a “Literacy Lead” (some are shared between schools) who is a teacher leader dedicated to supporting and coaching staff in improving literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. These lead teachers are experts in literacy instruction and are committed to leading change in their schools. Together, the Literacy Leads form a Regional Literacy Committee (RLC) which meets quarterly with monthly supplemental webinars to collaborate and engage in professional learning around improving literacy instruction for students with disabilities. These meetings are a fruitful time to share ideas, plan collaboratively, and learn from other schools’ successes and struggles. Grant funding has supported a stipend for each of these teachers for this work.
- 2) We are currently planning for teams of Special Education teachers from each school to have the opportunity to engage in structured observations (using instructional rounds protocols/structures) at other schools. The purpose of these observations will be to learn and discuss ideas around meeting the needs of students with disabilities in both core and supplemental instruction. Grant funding will support substitutes and mileage for teachers to visit other schools. The literacy grant coordinator will attend and provide guidance for the structured conversations at these meetings.

Goal 2: Provide coordination and coaching to support improved literacy instruction for students with disabilities

The literacy grant coordinator is a full-time employee of NW Colorado BOCES funded through the grant. In addition to managing logistical and budgetary aspects of the grant, the grant coordinator provides coaching and professional development to Literacy Leads, administrators, and teachers. These activities include:

- 1) Quarterly RLC meetings and monthly webinars - topics have included origins, prevention, and intervention of reading disability and MTSS for students with disabilities. Anticipated topics include diagnostic data analysis and increasing the effectiveness of interventions.
- 2) Site visits - the literacy grant coordinator visited each school site this fall to support Literacy Leads and administrators in improving literacy instruction for students with disabilities through data analysis. Additional support visits are planned for the spring.
- 3) Professional Learning Community/Book Study for Special Education teachers - beginning in February, the literacy grant coordinator will facilitate a book study of *Reading in the Brain* by Stanislas Dehaene for Special Education teachers. Teachers will read the book and collaborate with colleagues to determine how current research on the brain can influence and improve reading instruction for students with disabilities. Teachers will have the opportunity to earn graduate credit for participation.
- 4) Instructional Rounds for Special Education teachers - the grant coordinator will facilitate Sped teacher teams in visiting regional schools and having team conversations about how to better support students with disabilities both in the general education and intervention settings and how to use instructional rounds for the same purpose within their home schools.

Goal 3: Provide professional development to support high-quality literacy instruction for students with disabilities

Our primary goal is for students with disabilities spend 100% of their time with teachers who are highly trained to meet their needs. We are also working to build sustainable systems within our schools by developing strong local leaders who can carry the work of this grant forward after the project is over.

Professional development in year 2 includes:

- 1) Training and materials for the Amplify Burst intervention program - a technology-supported intervention program that uses robust data analysis to precisely target students' needs.
- 2) Motherhead - an at-home literacy program to be implemented with the parents of students with disabilities in each school.
- 3) Student-Centered Coaching - training for Literacy Leads from Diane Sweeney on using student data to coach teachers. This training specifically focused on digging deeper into the data of students with disabilities to precisely target needs for intervention as well as providing strategies for Literacy Leads to use when leading others in their buildings.
- 4) Systems of Support for Students with Disabilities - Melody Ilk led a two-day training for principals on understanding reading disabilities, the foundations of reading, and building systems within a school that support Special Education students' success in reading.
- 5) Foundations of Reading and Diagnostic Assessment - Danielle Thompson presented an overview of the foundations of reading and how to diagnose children's struggles with reading both during the IEP referral and evaluation process and after a student is already in Special Education in order to intervene effectively.

- 6) Planned for summer 2014 - Orton-Gillingham training, Neuropsychology of Reading Disability (by Steve Feifer from Learning and the Brain), iPads for Literacy Intervention (from 21st Century Classrooms), and Seeing Stars (from Lindamood-Bell).

Beginning with the Motherhead workshop in November, participants in all grant-funded professional development have completed surveys that specifically ask about the workshop in relation to the goals of the grant. Those ratings (5-point scale) are compiled here.

Average participant ratings of professional development workshops	Motherhead	Student-Centered Coaching	Systems of Support for SWD	Foundations of Reading
Increased my capacity to support or provide improved literacy instruction for students with disabilities			4.4	4.2
Increased (or will increase) regional collaboration	4.3	4.4	3.6	3.4
Increased (or will increase) local collaboration (school/district level)	4.2	4.5	4.2	3.9
Increased my capacity to be a leader in my building	4.3	4.6	4.4	3.9
Increased my understanding of how to use technology to support students with disabilities	1.4	3.2	2.6	1.9
Increased my capacity to support parents in home literacy for students with disabilities	4.5	2.9	2.2	2.7

Goal 4: Support schools with developing systems for ongoing fidelity of implementation, professional learning, and local collaboration

Literacy leads are provided stipends through the grant to monitor fidelity of implementation and lead professional learning and collaboration around effective literacy instruction for students with disabilities. Literacy leads are doing this work in a variety of ways including: coaching teachers on-on-one, leading professional development/training with staff, providing classroom coverage to facilitate observations, leading/coordinating PLC and data meetings, and working with administration to plan and implement systems of support. This work has been impressive and robust. The Literacy Leads have taken on the task of being sure that everyone within their buildings is able to provide high-quality, targeted instruction for students with disabilities. They have been able to support cultural shifts to increased collaboration and accountability. They have also been able to act as a resource for teachers who are

struggling to know what to do with individual students. The skills and work of these teacher leaders will be a critical piece of creating sustainability after the grant period is over.

Goal 5: Increase school readiness and at-home literacy for students with disabilities

We have addressed this goal in several ways:

- 1) Include ECSE teachers in professional development including Orton-Gillingham, Foundations of Literacy, and *Reading in the Brain* book study.
- 2) Conduct Motherread parent sessions for the parents of students with disabilities in each elementary school/preschool. After Motherread training in November, the grant coordinator worked to pull themes out of the curriculum that would be particularly relevant to the parents of students with disabilities. This information was compiled and shared with the teachers who will be conducting these parent sessions. All parent sessions will be completed in Spring 2014.

Goal 6: Increase teachers' skills in technology integration to support access to core curriculum and intervention for students with disabilities

We are working to build teachers' skills in technology integration in several ways:

- 1) Increasing precision of instruction by more effectively utilizing data. Our partnership with Amplify through the CDE ELAT grant has helped with this goal. Literacy Leads have also led a lot of this work in their schools to help support data conversations about students with disabilities.
- 2) Utilizing technology tools to design instruction. All schools are using the Burst intervention program for students with disabilities (as appropriate to the student's needs). This program uses technology to analyze benchmarking and progress monitoring data and design effective intervention lessons that precisely target students' needs.
- 3) Utilizing technology to support access to core curriculum and intervention for students with disabilities. We have done some work to help teachers understand how iPads can be used to support both access to core and intervention for students with disabilities. This summer, 21st Century Classrooms will provide further training in this area.

Data Analysis

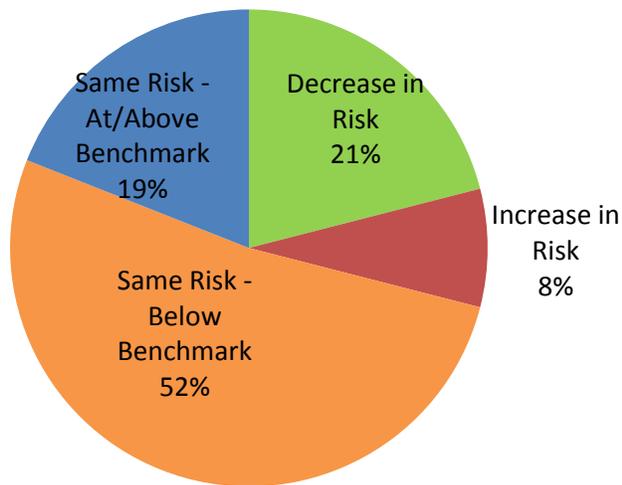
In order to evaluate the growth of students with disabilities for the Increasing Achievement and Growth grant, we created a cohort group of students who were on IEPs at the beginning of implementation of the grant on September 30, 2013. These students are reflected in the data reported below. If they have been exited from an IEP and are now in regular education rather than special education (n=9 students), their data is included here because we believe that the success of these students reflects the success of the grant, as the large majority are exited from special education when they are deemed to be proficient in reading. This scenario would indicate a success on the part of the grant, so these students' data are included in this report. This cohort group will be followed throughout the 3 years of the grant. In future reports, a group of students currently on IEPs will also be included. This group is not included at this time because this is the first growth report and this group is not a significantly different group of students from the cohort group.

The chart below shows that across all disability categories and all K-3 students in NW BOCES, the number of students scoring at benchmark or above increased by 7.1% (13 students). The number of students with disabilities scoring in the intensive range on DIBELS decreased by 9.1% (21 students).

K-3 Students with Disabilities – DIBELS Composite

Primary Disability	At/Above		Below		Well Below		Total							
	BOY	MOY	BOY	MOY	BOY	MOY	BOY	MOY						
04 S.L.D.	4	8.5%	5	10.6%	5	10.6%	38	80.9%	37	78.7%	47	47		
08 Speech/Language	21	27.3%	29	38.7%	18	23.4%	18	24.0%	38	49.4%	28	37.3%	77	75
All Disability Categories	46	22.7%	59	29.8%	33	16.3%	36	18.2%	124	61.1%	103	52.0%	203	198

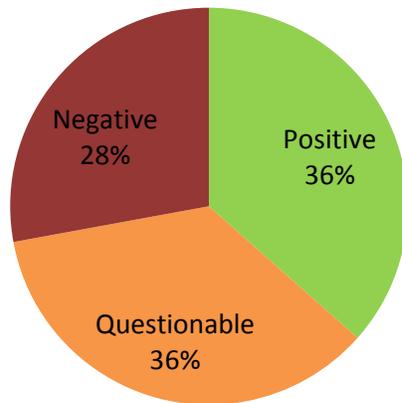
DIBELS Risk BOY-MOY



The chart above shows the percentage of students whose category of risk (red, yellow, green) changed from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year.

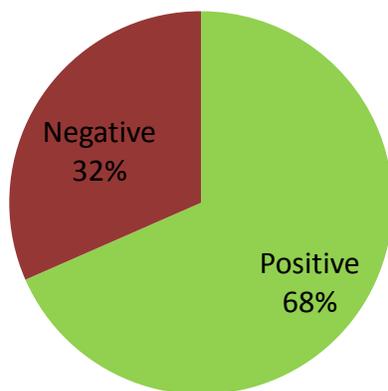
- Students in green on the chart (21%) showed a decrease in risk – they moved up a category (red to green, red to yellow, or yellow to green). This shows a positive response to the interventions and supports that they are receiving.
- Students in blue above (19%) were at benchmark at both the beginning and middle of the year.
- Students in orange above (52%) were below benchmark (either yellow or red) at the beginning of the year and did not move up at mid-year. Both of these categories (blue and orange) show a questionable response to intervention and are broken down further on the following pages.
- Students shown in red above (8%) increased in their level of risk from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year.

Same Risk - Below Benchmark



Students who were below benchmark and did not change their category of risk (n=104) are shown above. These students' percentile rankings were determined using the DIBELS Next 2011-2012 System-Wide Norms. In order to make the accelerated growth required to catch up, these students need to have an increase in their percentile ranking in order to show that their intervention program is working. Students whose percentile rank increased (n=38) are shown in green as having a positive result. Students whose percentile rank stayed the same (n=37) are shown in orange as having a questionable result. Students whose percentile rank decreased (n=29) are shown in red as having a negative result.

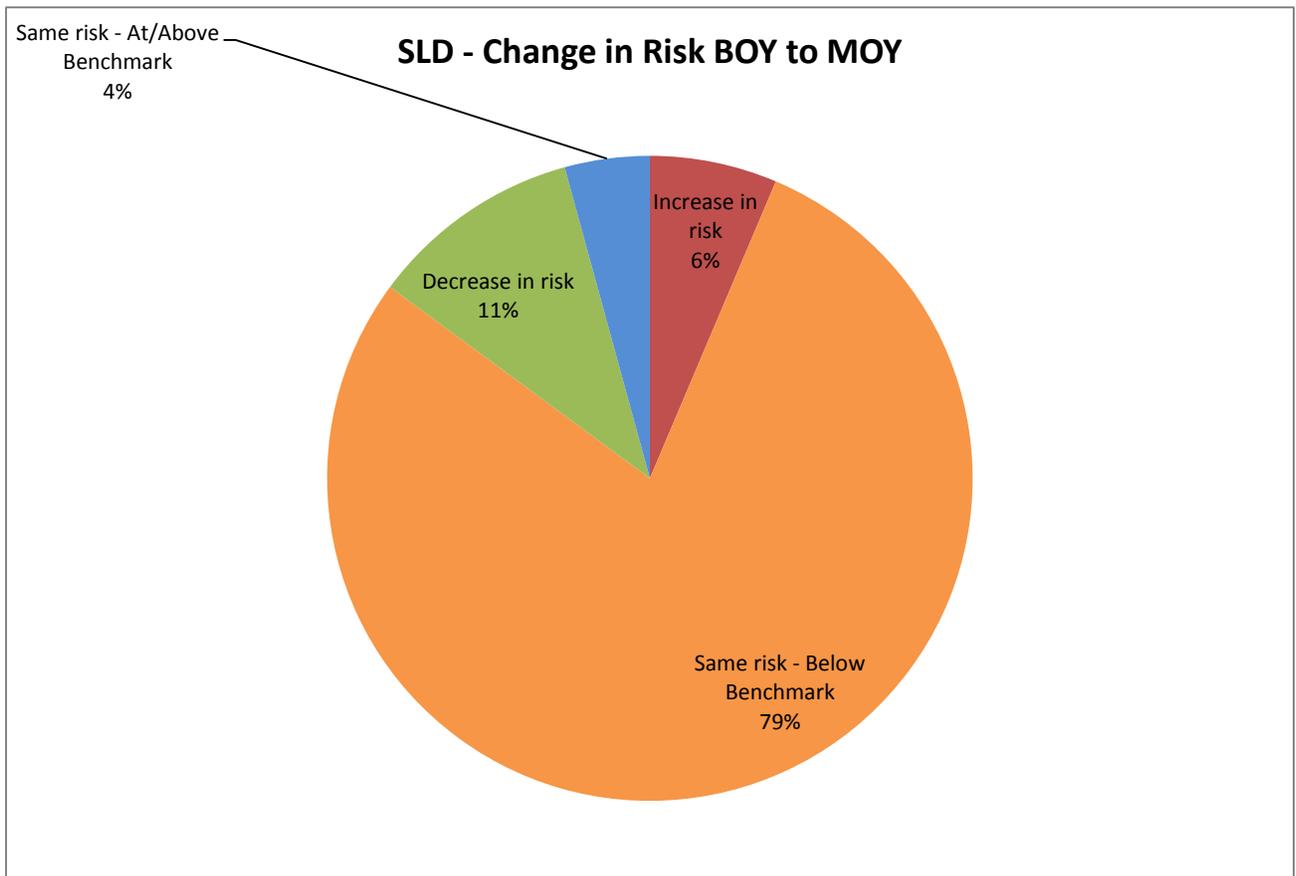
Same Risk - At/Above Benchmark



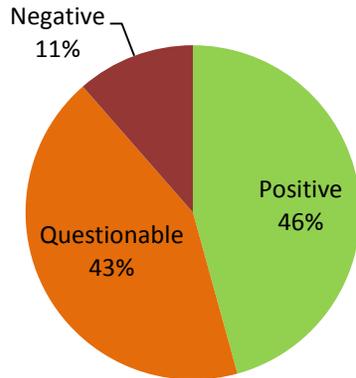
Students who were at benchmark at both BOY and MOY (n=38) are shown above. These students' percentile rankings were determined using the DIBELS Next 2011-2012 System-Wide Norms. Because these students are at grade level, a positive result would be either increasing in percentile ranking or

staying at the same level (which would be equivalent to one year's growth in one year's time). Students whose percentile rank increased or stayed the same (n=26) are shown in green as having a positive result. Students whose percentile ranking decreased will be watched closely so that they do not fall out of the benchmark range. Students whose percentile rank decreased (n=12) are shown in red as having a negative result.

The two largest categories of disability in the NW BOCES are SLD and Speech/Language, and these are primary target groups for this grant. Changes from BOY to MOY were smaller for these two groups than for students with disabilities as a whole group (see tables above). Further analysis of the growth of students in these two categories follows.

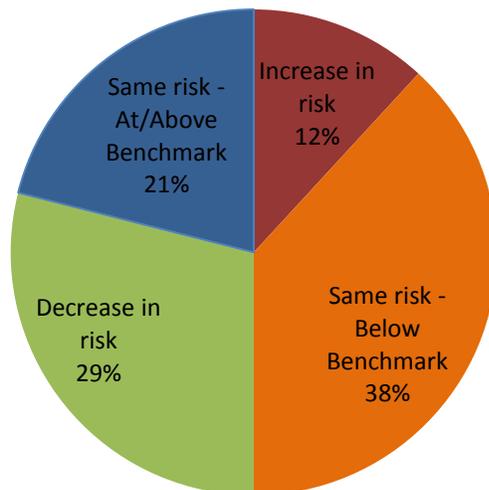


Same risk - Below Benchmark

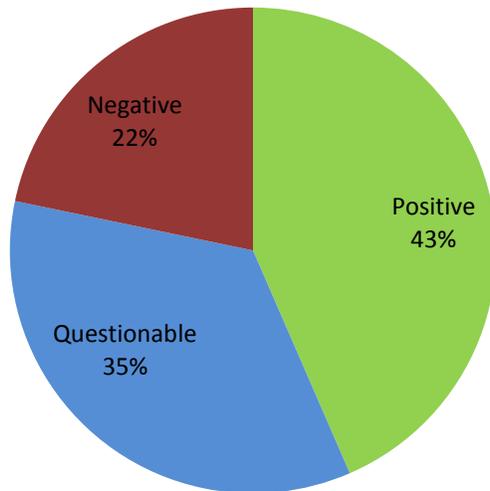


Students identified as SLD who were below benchmark and did not change their category of risk (n=35) are shown above. These students' percentile rankings were determined using the DIBELS Next 2011-2012 System-Wide Norms. In order to make the accelerated growth required to catch up, these students need to have an increased in their percentile ranking in order to show that their intervention program is working. Students whose percentile rank increased (n=16) are shown in green as having a positive result. Students whose percentile rank stayed the same (n=15) are shown in orange as having a questionable result. Students whose percentile rank decreased (n=4) are shown in red as having a negative result.

Sp/L - Change in Risk BOY to MOY



Sp/L Same Risk - Below



Students identified with a speech/language disability who were below benchmark and did not change their category of risk (n=29) are shown above. These students' percentile rankings were determined using the DIBELS Next 2011-2012 System-Wide Norms. In order to make the accelerated growth required to catch up, these students need to have an increased in their percentile ranking in order to show that their intervention program is working. Students whose percentile rank increased (n=10) are shown in green as having a positive result. Students whose percentile rank stayed the same (n=8) are shown in orange as having a questionable result. Students whose percentile rank decreased (n=5) are shown in red as having a negative result.

Next Steps

Our next step in data analysis will be to evaluate the students whose outcome was negative from BOY to MOY. This group would include any students who are not making adequate growth to catch up to their peers – students whose level of risk did not change (or increased) and/or students whose change in percentile ranking does not show that they are making accelerated growth with their current system of supports. Each school and literacy lead will analyze this data to make adjustments to the instructional programming for these students in order to design a program of core instruction and intervention that better meets these students' needs. We believe that continued professional development for teachers will be necessary in order to ensure that both general and special education staff have the skills to design and implement such a program for each student with disabilities.

Conclusion

Overall, the impact of this grant is starting to be seen across the region. Schools and districts are analyzing data collaboratively and more closely than they ever have before in order to meet the specific

needs of students with disabilities. Special Education and general education teachers are increasing collaboration in order to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are being met through a multi-tiered system of supports. General education and Special Education teachers show an increased understanding of remedial instruction for Special Education students and are showing an increased understanding of the individual needs of each student with disabilities and how to address those needs both in the general education classroom and in a Special Education intervention setting. Cultural shifts are beginning to take place as all educators and administrators are beginning to understand the role of all tiers of instruction in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. These changes have begun to show in the data analysis of K-3 students. Fewer students with disabilities are in the intensive range than at the beginning of the year. Students with specific learning disabilities are also beginning to show growth. This growth is expected to continue and increase as teacher knowledge and collaboration increases throughout the grant. Students with specific learning disabilities would be expected to show the slowest growth in reading, and the number of student whose percentile rank increased from fall to winter is a promising indication that the work done through the grant thus far is making a difference for these students. We expect that our increased emphasis on time, intensity, and targeting of intervention work as well as knowledge development of the general education teachers will lead to an increase in these students' rates of proficiency.