ISDs

- Allegan Area ESA
- Barry ISD
- Ionia County ISD
- Kent ISD
- Mecosta-Osceola ISD
- Montcalm Area ISD
- Muskegon Area ISD
- Newaygo County RESA
- Ottawa Area ISD
- West Shore ESD (Mason - Lake & Oceana)
Why Reading Now Network?

• There is a moral and economic imperative to the relentless pursuit of early literacy.
• Every student deserves a “Heart Attack Protocol.”
• We must collectively own our successes and struggles.
• We can achieve more together than we have independently.
Fall 2012 Region 3
MEAP vs. Poverty

RDG EL Z-score vs Poverty

$y = -3.3737x + 2.0225$
$R^2 = 0.7773$
$R = -0.8816$
Field Study
Buildings
Field Study Team

• Karen Roy: Mecosta-Osceola ISD
• Laurie Schmitt: Allegan Area ESA
• Nicole Gasper: Newaygo County RESA
• Dorothy VanderJagt: Kent ISD
• Michelle Goodwin: Montcalm Area and Ionia County ISDs
• Erin Brown: Muskegon ISD
• Jen Orton: West Shore ESD
• Kyle Mayer: Ottawa Area ISD
Our Field Study Process
(in a nutshell)

1. Principal Interview
2. Building/Classroom Observations
3. Staff Interviews
4. Modified Instructional Rounds/Data Processing
Why the Action Research Model?

• Our goal was to allow the buildings to tell their own unique stories

• Context matters – “We wanted to be live in the buildings.”
Limitations

• Schools were identified based on one year of MEAP data

• Sample size was 5 of 14 possible “green” schools

• Only reading performance was examined
For Today

• Abbreviated Five Building Stories

• Overall Study Findings

• What It’s Not About

• Network Next Steps / How to Stay Connected
North Godwin Elementary Demographics

- Total District Enrollment: 2,274
- Number of Elementary Schools in District: 2
- Total Building Enrollment: 438
- Grade Levels Served: K-4
- Bilingual: 31.74%
- Free/Reduced Percentages: 89.3%
- Special Education: 13%
- Ethnicity Breakdown:

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RDG EL Z-score vs Poverty

\[ y = -3.3737x + 2.0125 \]
\[ R^2 = 0.7773 \]
\[ R = -0.8816 \]
Courageous Principal

• Teacher candidates must teach a “live classroom” in front of hiring committee

• “You earn respect when you get rid of people who aren’t effective.”

• “It’s not about fear but everyone knows the expectation is high.”

• “We screen dozens of teachers per job opening with one question screener interviews: ‘Why should we hire you?’”
Education is Not Just a Profession, It’s a Calling

- “No one gives up” mindset
- Sense of urgency for every child
- Ticket out of poverty; hopefulness
- A high-morale family school culture
All Hands on Deck!

- Utilize all volunteers
- Focus on whole child, whole family
- Shared responsibility for all
- Purposeful and intentional family/community involvement
- Summer school
- Transportation to PAT
Lakeshore Demographics

- Total District Enrollment: 7,215
- School Enrollment: 403 students
- Grade Levels Served: K-5
- Bilingual: 17.87%
- Free/Reduced Percentages: 43.1%
- Special Education: 7.2%
- Ethnicity Breakdown:

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Emergent Themes

• Leadership that “sets the destination” and then “walks with” the staff toward that destination
• Tight schedule/flexible instruction
• A focus on DOING SOMETHING with the data
• Supported and guaranteed interventions
• Parent volunteers target reading
• Culture of professional pride
**Tight Schedule/Flexible Instruction**

- Guaranteed daily minimum of 120 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction in addition to 45-60 minutes of writing instruction. This is district policy.
- Data-centered intervention time is at least 40 minutes per day
- Small group instruction is mandatory
- Multiple methods: Guided Reading, Reading Workshop, Accelerated Reader, word walls, Daily 5 Cafe
Parent Volunteers

• Active PTO

• Many parent volunteers

• Principal and teachers discuss active recruitment of as many parents as possible from the beginning of the year for the purpose of assisting readers

• Parent volunteers are coached by teachers in how to support guided reading. In many classrooms, support is available for 1.5 hours each day.
Brown Elementary Demographics

- Total District Enrollment: 3,725
- Number of Elementary Schools in District: 3
- Total Building Enrollment: 538
- Grade Levels Served: K-4
- Bilingual: <5%
- Free/Reduced Percentages: 28.4%
- Special Education: 6.69%
- Ethnicity Breakdown:

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Intentional Leadership

- A passionate positive leader who “seizes the day”
- “She makes me want to be a better teacher.”
- 9 years as principal, instructional coach background, MA in reading, Doctorate in Leadership
- “There is no one way.”
- Passion for all students to succeed
- “You can quiz her on the current reading level of any student and she will almost certainly know it.”
Give Them What They Need

- Super Switch—30 minute daily reading re-group
- Academic support interventionist
- ALL staff know the reading data of each child and collaborate for EVERY child
- Weekly contractual before school PLC time (60 min)
- Committed to a PLC Culture
- All teachers do running records—this data drives RtI process
- Push & support
- Understand how to use the data
- Data drives conversations

Independent Reading with Teacher Conferring with Readers
Shared High Expectations

• Expect all K students to read “level C” texts AND get there
• “It shouldn’t be too much to ask a child to read at grade level.”—view it as a very achievable goal
• “Get to level ‘P’ by the end of second grade for ALL kids . . . plan the increments to make that happen with short term goals.”
• Every child (and parent) knows their reading goals and there are celebrations for goals achieved
Coit Creative Arts Academy
Grand Rapids Public Schools
Coit Demographics

- Total District Enrollment: 15,989
- Number of Elementary Schools in District: 28
- Total Building Enrollment: 280
- Grade Levels Served: K-5
- Bilingual: 9.64%
- Free/Reduced Percentages: 85%
- Special Education: 25%
- Ethnicity Breakdown:

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RDG EL Z-score vs Poverty

- R = -0.8816
Year-round School

- Year-round school for 7 years prior to 2013-2014.
- “We’ve all noticed a change in reading loss with the longer breaks of a traditional school year.”
- “Teachers never felt burned out in a year round calendar.”
- Interventions were scheduled during intercessions.
- “We’re worried about our new traditional calendar.”
Culture of Self and Mutual Accountability Among Teaching Staff

• Staff consistently spoke of strong relationships based on stability of long-term staff
• “We have a poke your head in my classroom culture”
• High staff continuity
• “We’re all on the same page”
• Time & flex to meet and share ideas
We Must!

- “I am the last line of defense between now and the rest of their lives.”
- “These are all of our kids.”
- “We do whatever we have to do to get done.”
- “Vested staff.”
- “Vested parents.”

Coit Creative Arts Academy
Sunfield Elementary Demographics

- Total District Enrollment: 2,019
- Number of Elementary Schools in District: 4
- Total Building Enrollment: 154
- Grade Levels Served: K-5
- Bilingual: <5%
- Free/Reduced Percentages: 75.2%
- Special Education: 13.64%
- Ethnicity Breakdown:

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RDG EL Z-score vs Poverty

Free/Reduced Lunch Percentage Fall 2012

$y = 3.8757x + 2.0225$

$R^2 = 0.7773$

$R = -0.8816$
26 Year Commitment to “Structured Language”

• Orton Gillingham-based Structured Language – multi-modal
• Long-term focus on Structured Language
• Aides receive same professional development as teachers
• Push in title support aligned with classroom instruction around structured language and reading groups.
No Magic Tricks...We’re Reading

- “I feel like there should be more tricks going on . . . but we’re reading.”
- Focus district resources on K-3
- Paraprofessionals focus on K-3 reading
- No magic pill
- Small group instruction
Few Irons in the Fire

• “As few irons in the fire as possible”
• 3-5 year school improvement
• Slow and steady
Be Safe, Be Nice, Work Hard

• Culture of reading, even reading during transitions like bathroom breaks
• Routines, procedures very evident; whole school is very orderly
• Principal reinforces his 3 rules: Be safe, Be nice, Work hard during pledge and classroom visits
Goal Oriented Readers

- Self-selected reading with Accelerated Reader program
- Students monitor progress with AR; students know their goals
- Students sign their reading goal sheet
- Students check reading data on volume and comprehension regularly ("I look every day", a second grade student)
- Accelerated Reader, goals, data, leveled readers
- Teachers know where students are: reading levels and language skills
- Common language and common methods in all classrooms–kids know common language
Overall Study Findings
1. Uncompromising Focus: Everything Revolves Around Reading

**Observed Evidence**

- Guaranteed daily morning reading block of uninterrupted reading instruction
- Reading data discussions at all staff meetings
- Literacy evidence (posters, student work, word walls, etc.) throughout the building (classroom walls, hallways, etc.)
- “I feel like there should be more tricks going on, but … we’re reading.”

**Jump Start Action**

- Guarantee daily minimum 120 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction in the morning
- Have students bring books whenever they might be waiting in line in the hallway
- Open school library all day rather than scheduling it as a special
2. Reading Data Drives Leadership, Staff and Students: Everybody Knows Where They Are and Where They Are Going

Observed Evidence

- Common, specific grade level goals (i.e. all students will leave Kindergarten reading at a level __)
- Principal seemingly knows the reading level of every student he/she encounters
- Designated time for staff to have purposeful data discussions
- Common district professional development
- Reading data posted in classrooms, on desks and in hallways
- Wide varieties of reading resources are readily available

Jump Start Action

- Principals and teachers commit to knowing the reading level of all students at any given time. “Live the data”.
- Assure that the students themselves have written down reading goals based on data and create incentives and celebrations at intervals for reaching goals.
3. Principals Define the “WHAT” (Goals, Priorities and Parameters) Teachers Define the “HOW”

**Observed Evidence**

- A core curriculum is evident (Curriculum Crafter, Houghton Mifflin, Story Town, MAISA units, etc.)
- Teachers are seen as experts who supplement their curriculum as they see fit; Use “tools in the toolbox”
- School improvement efforts create consistent strategies and language led and modeled by teachers
- Teachers use multiple structures and strategies flexibly (whole group interactive mini lessons, small group instruction, book clubs, partnership work, independent reading)
- Relationship leadership – “The principal trusts us and walks with us.” Leadership fits the context

**Jump Start Action**

- Living your school improvement plan
4. Sustained Commitment, Consistency and Follow-through to the Determined Path

Observed Evidence

• 26 year commitment to Structured Language, commitment to time in text
• “Students read a lot! There is no wasted time.”
• “Willing to do whatever to improve.”
• Two years of meticulous planning–designed instructional practices
• Community resources are leveraged to maximize human capital: (Kent School Services Network, DHS, Kids Hope), student teachers, Title 1, 31A, Special Education, Reading Buddies (4th graders with 1st), Volunteer Grandparents, ELL, RTI, MTSS

Jump Start Action

• 6 minute “Why should we hire you” screening interview
5. Classroom Management and Student Behavior is Remarkable

**Observed Evidence**

- Agendas are posted; students know what they need to be doing individually or in small groups.
- School-wide behavior expectations in some schools. Students are happy readers as evidenced by their non-verbals and student conversations.
- Well-established rules and procedures are focused on learning.
- School focus on “Be safe, be nice, work hard.”
- “If they can manage the class and build relationships with kids, we can teach them curriculum.” –principal

**Jump Start Action**

- Revisit and verify building-wide student behavior systems for consistency
6. Collective Responsibility to Target Each Child’s Needs

Observed Evidence

• Students know their reading levels and goals.
• “Staff is eager to keep the kids and not have them pulled.”
• “Teachers responsible to get kids to 80% proficient before interventions are provided.”
• “We expect our kindergartners to read at level 7. Our kids can do it. A high percentage are at 12.” (This was in the highest poverty school.) “We all feel like they are all of our kids.”
• Leadership is invested in and understands the community.
• Teachers work to get 100% parent/teacher conference attendance, even if that means meeting on a Saturday morning to accommodate work schedules.
• “We know we’re the last line of defense between them and the rest of their lives.”

Jump Start Action

• Request parents to sign a document for individualized reading goals
• Proactively recruit volunteers for the purpose of daily guided reading support during the entire reading block
What It’s Not About
It is Not About . . .

• Class size
• Condition of the building
• District size
• Building size
It is Not About . . .

- Technology resources
- Principal’s resume or understanding of reading practices
- A specific reading program
- A specific reading intervention
It is Not About . . .

- Years of experience in the classroom
- Number of volunteers or community supports
It is Not About . . .

• Teacher evaluation

• “A” reading assessment

• The MEAP
Implications of this Study

• The study findings have strong research connections
• A “knowing-doing gap” persists in education
• What can be learned from these buildings’ ability to implement more deeply? More artfully?
• What is needed to help other buildings/districts create a pathway for change?
Next Steps

- March 11 Symposium with Building Personnel at Kent ISD
- Profession video production
- Steelcase Partnership
- MDE Partnership
- “Summer Slide” Resource Compilation
- Further Research (addressing the limitations of this study)
Stay Connected

- www.gomasa.org/readingnow
- @ReadingNowNet
- Request more information or study presentation in your area:
  - hainesp@greenville.k12.mi.us
  - kmayer@oaisd.org
ISDs

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