Pinellas County Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) Evaluation

Pilot School Perceptions and Beliefs Analysis

Research and Accountability

Pinellas County Schools

2011

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Results of the Perceptions of Skills and PS/RtI Beliefs scales administered at Pinellas County's six pilot schools are examined to inform implementation of the PS/RtI project districtwide. Results obtained from the six pilot schools are compared to results obtained from the district as a whole to determine the potential effects of increased attention to training and implementation at the six pilot schools.

Higher perceptions of skills among pilot school staff provide support that increased levels of training and framework development can be associated with higher Perceptions of Skills. An exception to this finding among SBLT members with regard to PS/RtI Behavior Skills suggests the need for more focused efforts in this area. Similarity in Beliefs among pilot schools and the district as a whole suggests that there is general support for the Instructional and Data-Based Decision Making components of the framework.

Recommendations focus upon the necessity of assuring a high response rate at each school for future administrations of these scales to have utility.

PINELLAS COUNTY PROBLEM SOLVING/RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION EVALUATION: PILOT SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS RESULTS 2011

This report summarizes results of administration of the PS/RtI Perceptions of Skills Survey and the PS/RtI Beliefs Survey at six pilot elementary schools in Pinellas County. The Perceptions scale provides an assessment of individuals' perception of their own skills with regard to academic, behavior, and data analysis domains. The Beliefs survey assesses individuals' level of support for the role of instruction and data-based decision making in the PS/RtI framework, as well as their beliefs regarding whether students with disabilities currently achieve benchmarks and can achieve them in the future

These data address five evaluation questions:

1) Are Perceptions of skills related to the PS/RtI framework higher in the pilot schools relative to ratings by the district as a whole in the Spring of 2011?
2) Is the pattern of Perceptions results by SBLT membership status similar for pilot schools and the district as a whole? Do SBLT members rate their skills as stronger for both pilot and total groups? Are there differences in these patterns by domain (Academic/Behavior/Data)?
3) Are Beliefs stronger for pilot schools relative to data obtained districtwide in the Spring of 2010?
4) How do these results inform implementation of the PS/RtI framework districtwide?
5) How may Perceptions and Beliefs data be used to inform implementation going forward?

METHOD

PERCEPTION OF SKILLS SURVEY

The Perception of Skills Survey requires respondents to rate their skill across several PS/RtI items on a five-point scale from NS "I do not have this skill at all" to VHS "I am highly skilled in this area and could teach others this skill". A factor analysis conducted during scale development indicated a three factor solution. Factor one contains 25 items that reflect respondents' perceptions of their PS/RtI skills when addressing academic issues. Factor two contains 20 items that reflect respondents' perceptions of their PS/RtI skills when addressing behavior issues. Factor three contains 12 items that reflect respondents' perceptions of their skills in accessing, interpreting, and graphing data. Internal reliability for each of these scales were excellent at .98, .98, and .94 respectively.

PS/RTI BELIEFS SURVEY

The PS/RtI Beliefs Survey requires respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements that align with the tenets of a Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) model. Responses to each item are provided on a five-point scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'. Factor analysis conducted during scale development yielded a three-factor solution. Factor one contains 6 items related to the ability of students with disabilities to achieve academic benchmarks. Factor two contains 13 items related to data-based decision making. Factor three contains 4 items related to the

functions of core and supplemental instruction. Internal reliability for each of these were satisfactory at .87, .79, and .85 respectively.

RESULTS

PILOT PERCEPTIONS SCALE RESULTS

Table 1: Pilot Perceptions Scale Results: 2011					
	SBLT	Academic	Behavior	Data	N
Bauder Elementary	Yes	3.81	3.28	3.45	10
	No	3.23	2.95	2.65	43
Bear Creek Elementary	Yes	3.91	3.67	3.68	15
	No	3.81	3.53	3.13	25
Belleair Elementary	Yes	3.51	3.53	3.45	15
	No	3.40	3.14	2.95	45
Forest Lakes Elementary	Yes	3.73	3.72	3.25	12
	No	3.63	3.47	3.01	26
New Heights Elementary	Yes	3.67	3.34	3.54	6
	No	3.44	3.32	3.02	21
Woodlawn Elementary	Yes	3.58	3.62	3.18	8
	No	3.23	3.03	2.87	28
Pilot Total	Yes	3.71	3.55	3.44	66
	No	3.43	3.20	2.91	188
District Total	Yes	3.51	3.66	3.33	196
	No	3.10	3.00	2.71	138

Perceptions scale results in Table 1 present data for each pilot school, as well as the pilot and district totals separately by SBLT membership. All mean ratings are between 2.71 and 3.71, suggesting that large changes in mean levels will not occur from one administration to the next. This is a restricted range of scores for a scale with ratings from 1 to 5.

Nevertheless, results indicate that Perceptions of Skills are higher in each case for pilot schools relative to district averages with the exception of SBLT members' skills related to Behavior, where the pilot school mean of 3.55 is below the district mean of 3.66. These results suggest that self-ratings of skills can increase in schools where targeted attention is devoted to developing the PS/RtI framework. At both the pilot and district level, ratings are stronger for SBLT members, suggesting that training and immersion in processes associated with the framework can be associated with improved self-ratings of skills. There may currently be a ceiling with respect to the degree that SBLT members rate their skills for Behavior. These ratings may improve as processes at

the district level provide stronger support for development of behavior components of the PS/RtI framework.

PILOT BELIEFS SCALE RESULTS

Table 2: Pilot Beliefs Scale Results 2011					
	SBLT	Instruction	Student Academic Ability	Data-Based Decision Making	N
Bauder Elementary	Yes	4.23	3.08	4.12	13
	No	4.04	2.88	3.89	48
Bear Creek Elementary	Yes	4.10	2.80	4.19	15
	No	3.59	2.71	3.72	27
Belleair Elementary	Yes	4.33	3.32	4.23	15
	No	3.85	2.98	3.94	54
Forest Lakes Elementary	Yes	4.04	3.44	3.99	13
	No	3.93	3.12	3.99	31
New Heights Elementary	Yes	4.12	3.25	4.25	8
	No	3.85	2.63	3.85	27
Woodlawn Elementary	Yes	3.75	2.42	3.95	10
	No	3.74	2.70	3.79	32
Pilot Total	Yes	4.11	3.06	4.12	74
	No	3.85	2.86	3.88	219
District Total: Spring 2010	Yes	4.10	3.12	4.07	323
	No	3.73	2.90	3.73	376

Beliefs scale results in Table 2 present data for each pilot school, as well as the pilot and district totals separately by SBLT membership. District totals are taken from the last administration of the Beliefs Scale in Spring of 2010. The response rate for each pilot school during that administration was too low to compare pilot Spring 2010 results to the current 2011 results.

Pilot and District results are highly similar. In both cases, pilot and district schools indicate agreement with the instruction and data-based decision making components of the PS/RtI framework and provide Neutral ratings concerning the degree which students with disabilities achieve and can achieve benchmarks. For both pilot and district totals, ratings are higher for SBLT members.

These results suggest that at both pilot and district levels, using data collected a year apart, that ratings support the Instruction and Data-Based Decision Making tenets of the PS/RtI framework.

The strong similarity in these ratings, and their proximity to the "4: Agree" level lend support for the conclusion that as a whole, there is support for the PS/RtI framework.

Lower ratings for the Academic Ability scale are likely due to the wording of the items. Four of the six items ask whether students with disabilities currently achieve benchmarks. These are more fact than belief questions. This is mostly a 'fact' scale. If students with disabilities do not achieve benchmarks then this scale will be deflated, which is evident by the average "3: Neutral" rating. At the district level, the stability of these results suggests that the total means will remain very similar from administration to administration. Differences will likely be evident across schools and finer grained analyses can be undertaken if the response rate is much higher. In order for results to have utility at the school level, a majority of school-based personnel must complete the scale. This is important both to address a positive halo effect where scores will be higher if only those invested in the framework complete the scale. A high response rate is also important to assess differences across schools and changes across time.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ARE PERCEPTIONS OF SKILLS RELATED TO THE PS/RTI FRAMEWORK HIGHER IN THE PILOT SCHOOLS RELATIVE TO RATINGS BY THE DISTRICT AS A WHOLE IN THE SPRING OF 2011?

Yes. Perceptions are higher in all cases except for SBLT members rating of the skills with regard to Behavior. These results suggest that improvement in skill ratings is possible given focused training and attention to the development of the PS/RtI framework.

IS THE PATTERN OF PERCEPTIONS RESULTS BY SBLT MEMBERSHIP STATUS SIMILAR FOR PILOT SCHOOLS AND THE DISTRICT AS A WHOLE? DO SBLT MEMBERS RATE THEIR SKILLS AS STRONGER FOR BOTH PILOT AND TOTAL GROUPS? ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THESE PATTERNS BY DOMAIN (ACADEMIC/BEHAVIOR/DATA)?

Yes. SBLT members provide higher skill ratings for both pilot and district levels across domains. These results also suggest that improvement in skills is possible given focused training and attention to the development of the PS/RtI framework. Ratings of behavior skills of SBLT members were higher for the district as a whole than for pilot school SBLT members in 2011. These results suggest the presence of a ceiling in ratings for behavior. Improvement in training for SBLT members relative to Behavior components of the framework may raise the ceiling on ratings of skills in this area.

ARE BELIEFS STRONGER FOR PILOT SCHOOLS RELATIVE TO DATA OBTAINED DISTRICTWIDE IN THE SPRING OF 2010?

No. Beliefs were similar for pilot schools in 2011 and the district as a whole in 2010. This similarity in ratings suggests that as a whole there is support for the Instruction and Data-Based Decision Making components of the PS/RtI framework. Ratings concerning the ability of students with disabilities to achieve grade-level benchmarks are likely to be closer to the Neutral rating as four of the six items of this scale are more 'fact' than 'belief' items concerning the current status of benchmark attainment.

HOW DO THESE RESULTS INFORM IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PS/RTI FRAMEWORK DISTRICTWIDE?

Results suggest that perceptions of skills can improve with increased levels of training and support. Results also suggest that beliefs regarding instruction and data-based decision making are supportive of implementation of the PS/RtI framework. These are both positive findings that suggest that the foundation for building an effective PS/RtI framework districtwide is present. Results also highlight the need to pay increased attention to the development of skills related to behavior among SBLT members. In addition, results suggest that questions related to academic ability of students with disabilities on the beliefs scale are related to perceptions of facts- whether or not students with disabilities actually do achieve benchmarks at each school, which can suppress these ratings. A central outcome of the PS/RtI framework is whether schools are successful in improving outcomes for students with disabilities; as outcomes improve, so will beliefs.

HOW MAY PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS DATA BE USED TO INFORM IMPLEMENTATION GOING FORWARD?

The 'big picture' concerning Perceptions and Beliefs as rated by these scales is captured well by the data we already have. For these scales to have utility going forward they must be administered with high response rates at each school. Through doing so, differences among schools in levels of these Perceptions and Beliefs can be examined. These ratings can then be examined in light of implementation levels as assessed by the SAPSI. Most importantly, changes at the school level can be examined across time in Perceptions and Beliefs to inform efforts to build the PS/RtI framework at each school.