

## Chapter 1



# Evidence-Based Results

I believe for a program to be successful, it must be done purposefully, professionally and with excellence. At Salem Lutheran School we chose to focus on several specifics at the beginning of the program's implementation. Each year we added subject areas and grade levels to our existing program. Building a program with a strong foundation is the best way to achieve success.

Please note the following timeline. This important information is necessary in understanding the upcoming charts that present the evidence-based data that the RTI implementation plan, outlined in this book, really works.

- Year 1 - focused the RTI program on grades k-2 in the subject areas of **early literacy** and **reading**
- Year 2 - added the subject area of **spelling** into grades k-2 and **reading** into grades 3-8
- Year 3 - added the **spelling** component into grades 3-8 and *only benchmarked* all students in **mathematics**

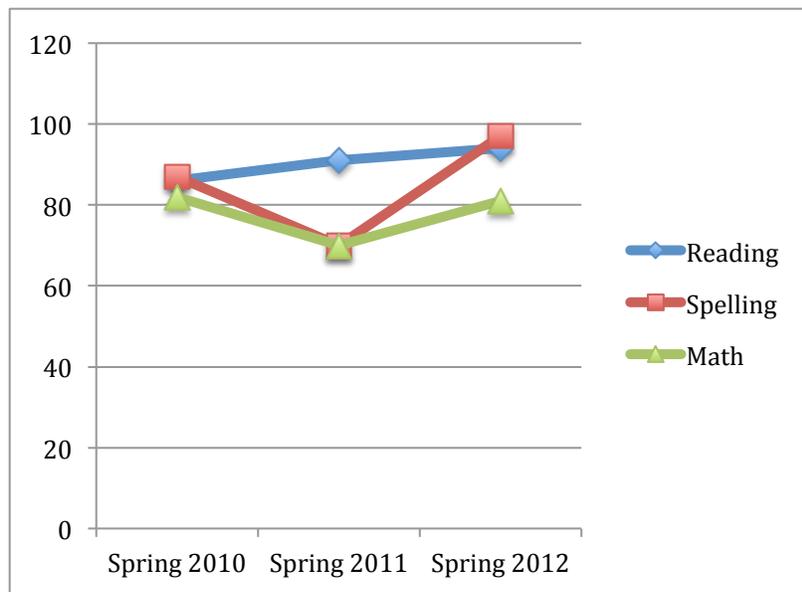
- Year 4 - for the upcoming school year, it is in the plan to provide intervention for **mathematics**

**The following data and statistics provide evidence-based data in regard to the effect of RTI at Salem Lutheran School.**

Tables 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3 demonstrate data provided by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). *The ITBS was designed to provide information about individual student competence in the basic school subject-matter areas. The author states three main purposes of the tests:*  
 (1) *To obtain information for supporting instructional decisions,*  
 (2) *To report individual progress to students and parents, and*  
 (3) *To evaluate the progress of groups of students* (Salvia, 2007, p.384)

**Table 1.1**

**ITBS Subject Area Scores  
 With and Without RTI Implementation for  
 Three Different 3rd Grades**



**Interpreting Table 1.1**

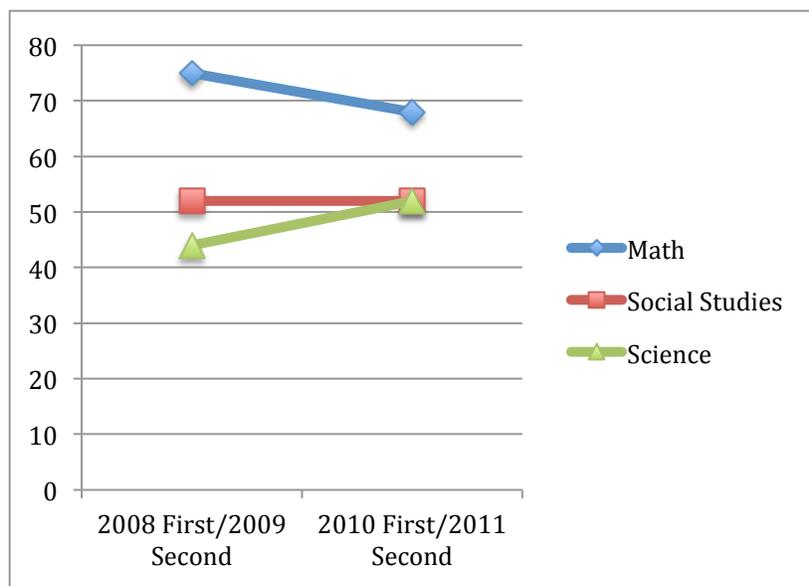
The graph demonstrates three different third grade classes over three years. The scores represent the percentile rank of average standard score: National School Norms. Note the following details:

- The third grade students in 2010 had no RTI implementation in all 3-subject areas.

- The third grade students in 2011 had a two-year RTI implementation in the subject areas of reading and no implementation in the areas of spelling and mathematics.
- The third grade students in 2012 had a three-year implementation in the subject area of reading, a two-year implementation in the subject area of spelling, and no implementation in the subject area of mathematics.

**Table 1.2**

**ITBS Subject Area Scores  
Without RTI Implementation  
1st and 2nd Grades**



### Interpreting Table 1.2

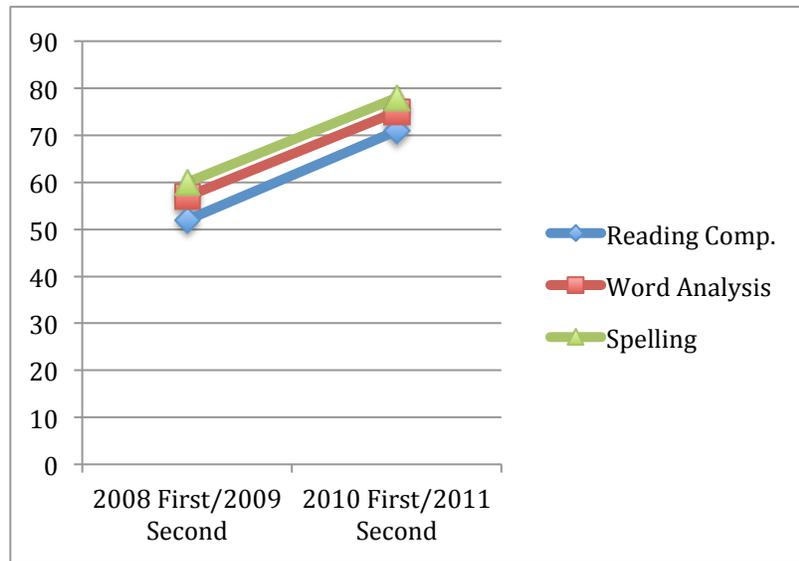
The graph demonstrates two different groups of children over two different years. The scores represent a percent change of Grade Equivalencies (GE) of Average Standard Score over each group of years.

Note the following details:

- No RTI implementation in subject areas for all four years
- Average 3% various change for all subject areas

**Table 1.3**

**ITBS Subject Area Scores  
With RTI Implementation  
1st and 2nd Grades**



### Interpreting Table 1.3

The graph demonstrates two different groups of children over two different years. The scores represent a percent change of Grade Equivalencies (GE) of Average Standard Score over each group of years. Note the following details:

- No RTI implementation for 2008-2009 school years
- Full RTI implementation for 2010-2011 school years
- Average 33% positive change for all subject areas

#### **My Observations & Theories on the Data**

(For Tables 1.2 & 1.3)

- Almost all of the subject areas made at least a one-year gain (regardless of the years being compared). However, in the years that RTI was implemented, there was a 33% positive change difference in the subject areas addressed.
- It is important to take into account that all students (including high and low achievers) were included in the statistics. The year gain was an average of all levels of performance.
- I believe the reason for the 33% positive change difference is the implementation of RTI. Without the implementation of RTI, a one-year gain is possible year after year; however, struggling students would still be struggling and simply thrown into the class average. This would continue to show a year gain by the class as a whole. The 33% positive change difference is making a difference in the lives of the students who struggle academically.

## Tracking Student Achievement and Placement During Implementation

During the first year of implementing RTI, I decided to track the original students discussed at Grade Level Team Meetings (see Chapter 11) to provide an overall picture of how RTI affects students.

The following Tables 1.4, 1.5 & 1.6 represent the original group of students over a three-year span. Fifty-eight students were tracked. The grade levels consisted of grades k-3 the first year and then into grades 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> as the students aged. The charts were calculated at the end of each year.

*To better understand the categories within the tables please note the following:*

**Decline Services:** Students in this category are those whose parents declined the recommendations of either a tier placement or a formal evaluation.

**Continue Tier II:** Students in this category entered a tier II intervention sometime during the year, the intervention is working and the decision to keep them in tier II was made.

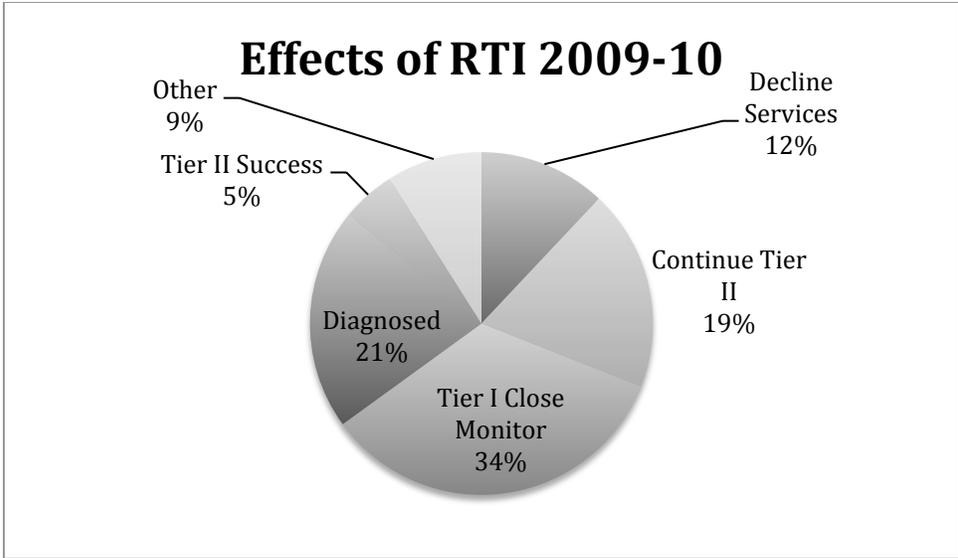
**Tier I Closely Monitor:** Some students may struggle somewhat; however, their benchmark scores and classroom performance may not qualify a tier II intervention and the decision was made to continue in tier I, progress monitor, and make adjustments as necessary.

**Diagnosed:** Students in this category are those who have received a formal evaluation to identify the root to the learning deficit and perhaps were placed in tier III depending upon the diagnosis.

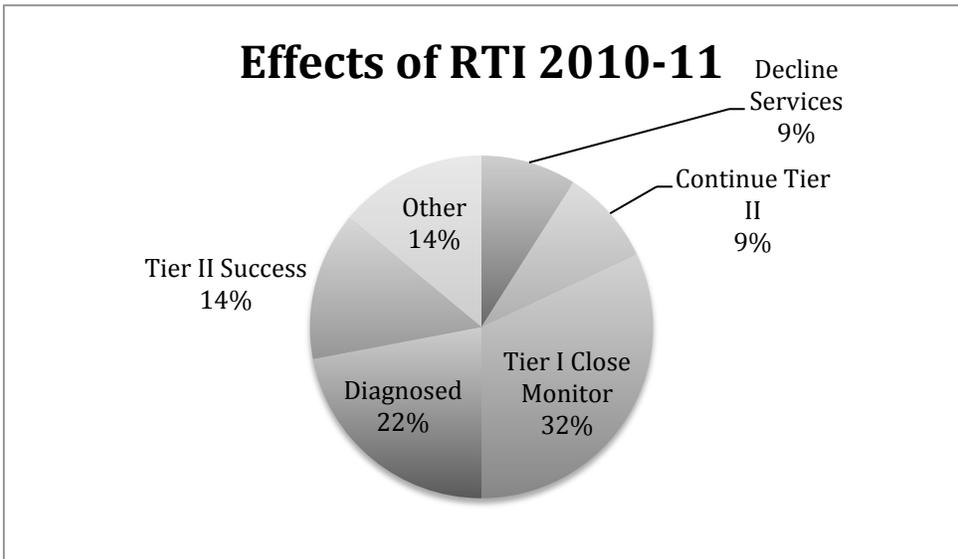
**Tier II Success:** Students in this category went through tier II intervention and according to classroom performance and benchmarks made appropriate gains.

**Other:** Students in this category were either placed in private interventions outside of school or transferred to another school mid-year.

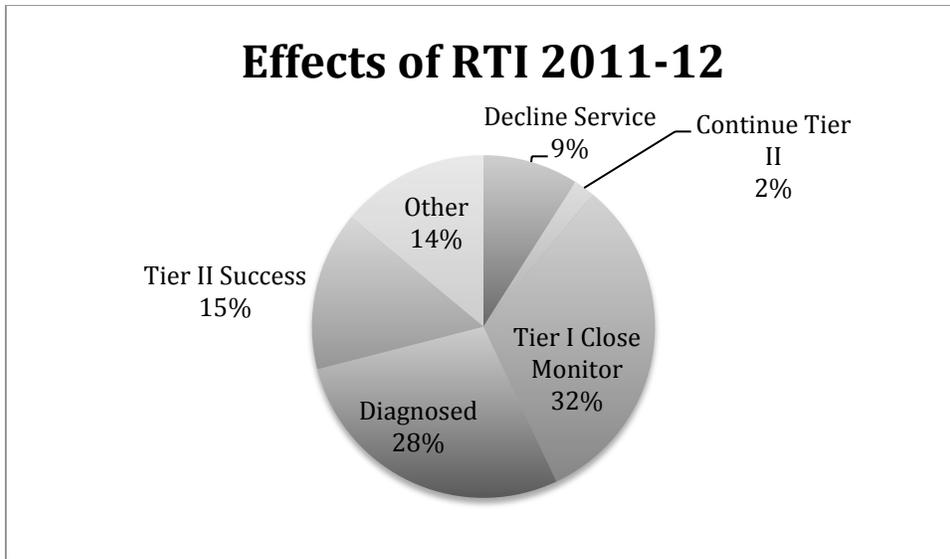
### Table 1.4



**Table 1.5**



**Table 1.6**



### Interpreting Tables 1.4, 1.5, & 1.6

The tables represent the same group of children tracked over three years. Fifty-eight students were discussed each year. During the three years, students were identified, recommendations for tier intervention were provided to parents, students were placed in appropriate tier settings, successful interventions took place, formal evaluations were provided, diagnoses were given, and in some instances, recommendations for services were declined by parents.

#### Important Observations:

- Overall, tier I intervention was successful. Decisions were made for 34% of the students to stay in tier I for the first year. The number changed to 32% the following years due to two different children being evaluated for dyslexia and tracking issues. This warranted a move to a different category within the chart. The rest of the students have been successful in tier I based on classroom performance and benchmarks.
- It is exciting to discover that the “Continue Tier II” category each year became minimized. The reason for this is because students were either, remediated and placed within a tier I setting, sent for formal evaluation to find the root to the learning deficit, or started tier II later (hence the last 2%). This discovery demonstrates RTI’s effectiveness.

- It is also quite impressive to notice the immediate increase in the category of “Tier II Success”. One of the greatest goals of RTI is to intervene early to eliminate a learning weakness that could manifest without intervention.
- It is interesting to note that some of the parents who originally declined services changed their minds the following years. In addition, overall, the decline rate never went up as I believe parents began to put more faith in the program as they witnessed the program’s success in either their own child or perhaps by listening to another parent share their success story.
- Another critical observation is in the category of “Diagnosed”. As previously stated this category represents students who were either sent for formal evaluation and diagnosed or placed in tier III based on a diagnosis. The percentage in this category gradually increased. This means the true root to the child’s learning deficit was identified which allowed for the appropriate intervention to take place. Again, another RTI highlight.

On a side note, of the 16 students represented in the third-year “Diagnosed” category, please note the following:

- 4 received successful intervention and are either back in a tier I or II setting
- 6 are currently still working in a tier III setting
- 3 relocated to another town or school district
- 2 are in the midst of receiving a formal evaluation
- 1 simply needed glasses and is doing fine in school



*RTI, implemented the “right way,” identifies learning difficulties and tracks all student achievement throughout the years.*

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