NCII 2.0 Lessons Learned from the Center’s First Five Years

Webinar Transcript

[Slide 1 – Hello! Welcome to NCII 2.0 Lessons Learned from the Center’s First Five Years]: Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Good afternoon and welcome to the National Center on Intensive Interventions webinar.

[Slide 2 – NCII 2.0 Lessons Learned from the Center’s First Five Years]: NCII two point “O,” lessons learned from the first five years of the Center. My name is Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds and I am the Deputy Director of NCII and I will be moderating today’s webinar.

[Slide 3 – Introductions]: Excuse me. So today we have a wonderful panel that will be joining us. We have Chris Lemons who is a Senior Advisor to NCII and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education; Special Education at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Kim Moore who is a School Psychologist and Coach for the NCII project in the Columbia Public Schools. And we have Rod Teeple who also serves in a similar role for the Grand Haven Public Schools in Grand Haven Michigan. He also serves as the MTSS Coordinator for the; that District. And then we have Amy Peterson who is our Technical Assistance Liaison and Coordinate; who also coordinates all of our dissemination activities for the center. She will be talking about the TA perspective on these lessons learned.

[Slide 4 – Agenda]: So, the agenda for today’s webinar is to first talk to you a bit about what we have learned from a number of different sources over the last five years of the project. We’ve; will be ending our first cycle of funding as of this Friday. And so we will start with a recording from Chris Lemons about a; an in-depth set of interviews that we have done looking at the Center and the lessons learned from practitioners who have been implementing from several of these intensive TA sites with whom we have worked.

We will also get the perspective from folks who have worked as coaches in their districts about what implementation has looked like for them and what they’ve learned from the process. And then also from our technical assistance staff from; on the center. We will then talk a bit about what’s next for NCII and we are very fortunate to have another five years of grant funding starting next week. And so, we have some new opportunities coming down the pike and wanted to make sure that our audience was aware of those. And that we will be continuing to operate our website and continue to add resources to the field. And so, we’ll talk a little bit about that.

[Slide 5 – Webinar Format & Questions]: So as we are presenting; as our panelists are presenting, you are more than welcomed to ask questions and just enter them into the chat box. And that will allow us to see your questions. We will stop periodically throughout the Webinar and in between presenters to address any questions that do come up during that period. And then, we will also have some time for questions at the end.
So please feel free to submit your questions through that chat box. And please keep in mind that we would like; for this format, questions that are broadly applicable to the audience will be most useful. If you have questions specific to your context then we would be happy to answer those through our mailbox.

[Slide 6 – National Center on Intensive Interventions]:

[Slide 7 – What is NCII?): And with that, I am going to turn over the first part of our webinar which is going to talk a little bit about; bring you a little bit to what the center’s mission and work has been. Excuse me. And also report on the findings from our lessons learned project that Chris Lemons has been leading. So with that, I am going to turn these slides over to Chris and thank you for participating.

Chris Lemons: Thank you very much Rebecca. So, I’m Chris Lemons from Vanderbilt and I am very glad to be here. I serve as a senior advisor on this project. And so, I’m going to provide a pretty quick overview of NCII and what we mean by intensive intervention. And then I’m going to get into the lessons that we’ve learned from many of our school sites. And I look forward to hearing from the other presenters who I think are going to offer some great contributions based on their experiences at schools.

And so, first of all; the National Center on Intensive Intervention is a technical assistance center that is funded by OSEP. And as Rebecca said, they are entering their second year; second phase of five years of funding. So, the mission of the center is to really build capacity of local educations agencies, practitioners and other stakeholders to support the implementation of intensive interventions in both academics and behavior for students with severe and persistent learning and behavioral needs.

I’m going to provide an overview of these basics. But, if this is the first webinar that you’ve joined for NCII; I do suggest that you go back and look at some of the other webinars that are available. Especially the one; An introduction to Intensive Intervention that was first aired on October of two thousand twelve. So, that would be a good starting point if you are just now getting connected to the Center. Nick, you can go to the next slide.

[Slide 8 – What is Intensive Intervention?):: So, when we talk about intensive intervention what we’re talking about is a data driven process to individualize and intensify academic and behavioral interventions for students who have the most significant needs. This diagram here is a flow chart that outlines the data based individualization process. It has kind of been the core of NCII’s work. You can see that this process involves selecting and evidenced based program; a validated intervention program to start with. Selecting some tools to monitor progress.

And if you’re not familiar with the tools charts that are available through the website. That would be a good place for you select and learn more about validated interventions and tools to monitor the progress of both academics and behavior. And then you can see that we make some decisions about when students are responsive or non-responsive. And for students who are not responsive, we collect some additional diagnostic information to help us adapt the interventions that we started with. And that’s an ongoing iterative process of basically trying to ensure that student do respond to the interventions that we’re providing.
And most of the time intensive intervention is characterized by more intensities in smaller groups, more time, more intensities in instruction and more closely matching an intervention to the student’s needs. You can advance to the next one please.

[Slide 9 – What is NCII’s approach to intensive intervention?]: So again, the approach that NCII has really focused on is data based individualization or DBI. And so this is really a systematic method for using data to determine when and how to provide more intensive interventions for the students. And this really originated in the work of Stan Deno and Mirkin in nineteen seventy-seven. And looking at their initial ideas of data based program modification or experimental teaching. And as I mentioned on the previous slide, it starts with an instructor selecting an evidence based or research validated program and then using progress monitoring to determine when adaptations are going to be made to that program.

And to learn more about DBI; if you go to the intensive intervention website under implementation support. There is a very detailed DBI training series that is very useful. And so, if you would like to learn more information about the specifics of DBI then I encourage you to look at that resource. You can also look at a special issue of Teaching Exceptional Children that was published in twenty fourteen that includes very in depth examples of using DBI in grading, math and behavior. Okay, next slide.

[Slide 10 – Who needs intensive intervention?]: So, one of the questions that schools always asks is “well who is intensive intervention for?” Who are the students that you are talking about? And who is this appropriate for? So, I think that there are at least three groups of students that DBI is necessary for. So first of all, students with disabilities who are not making adequate progress in their current instructional program.

Also students who present with very low academic achievement and or high intensity or high frequency behavior problems. And these would typically be students with disabilities. But, it may have not yet been identified that present persistent and severe academic challenges. It is also appropriate for students who are in a Tiered Intervention System who have not responded to the secondary intervention programs delivered with fidelity. So, the students who are typically moving into Tier Three in a MTSS or RTI system.

Additionally, I think it is important to note here. That as this is an OSEP funded Center, we really are focused on students with disabilities. And I think that school staff need to ensure that students with disabilities are receiving the most intensive academic and behavioral services in their schools. So, any school where students with disabilities are receiving less intensive services than those participating in MTSS or RTI systems, I think that should raise a red flag. And that schools should consider whether they need to provide additional training to their Special Educators to implement a process like intensive interventions. Next slide.

[Slide 11 – NCII Technical Assistance]: So, NCII has done several different types of technical assistance activities. And so, they’ve provided intensive technical assistance to twenty-six schools in twelve districts in four different states. This technical assistance involved consultants going to school and doing training. Having a coach and interacted with the school staff over this period of time. And then having people like me a Senior Advisors come in and do some observations and interviews at the end of each academic year.
There were over four hundred professional development events. And then the website represents a really great effort at disseminating universal Technical Assistance resources. And so, the website has provided many webinars and training modules that are focused on intensive interventions. And so, if you haven’t explored the website; I do encourage you to do so because it has some very valuable resources for schools. Next slide

[Slide 12 – Lessons Learned: Five Years of Implementation]: So, now I’m going to talk a little bit about some lessons learned. You can actually go to the next slide as well Nick.

[Slide 13 – Lessons Learned]: So, what we’ve done and kind of the points that I’m going to share next. Is, we’ve; at the end of every year we do what is called a pulse check. Where someone who is kind of familiar with the school and then someone who is less familiar with that school. Goes to the school and meets with administrators and teachers and really tries to determine what are the successes that are happening at that campus and what are some of the challenges?

The challenges help inform the development of technical assistance in the next academic year. And what we’ve done for this paper; you know as we’ve kind of come to the end of the five year cycle. We conducted some additional follow up interviews with some practitioners and some leadership in the school to really see if we could come up with some themes of lessons that were learned that might be useful for schools that are considering implementing intensive interventions in the future.

And so, we’ve interviewed the people at the schools and then we also reviewed the pulse check data that was collected over time. And we kind of just did a qualitative synthesis of what are some of the themes that we discovered? And so, we’re putting out a manuscript that’s going to be a little bit more detailed on these themes. I’m going to give you a little preview of that today. And then, that will be available soon on the NCII website.

[Slide 14 – Lessons Learned: #1 Planning for Implementation]: Okay, so lesson number one. And Nick you can change the slide. And so one of the things that many schools focused on is that planning for implementation is critical as you can imagine. And so schools; personnel at schools really thought that starting smaller and moving forward one step at a time was a strategy that would really ensure success. And that administrators expressed that it was really better to have some initial successes than to overcommit and end up frustrated and that planning needs to take into account realistic challenges at the school.

And so, in some of our schools the administrators were very gung-ho and decided to you know jump fully in. And in those schools they really had many more challenges with implementation because they were trying to do too much at once. And so the schools that decided to really implement in a much smaller way tended to see that as a pathway to success. And so, a couple of quotes that I have from a school psychologist who was leading a DBI team at her campus.

She said “you’ve really got to trust the process.” And “to start by being very honest and reflective about where you are as a building.” And we had to start small and build that foundation first. And so, this school psychologist really felt that one of their keys to success was critically analyzing where they were. Being honest about some of the challenges that they had in
that building and trying to address them one at a time in a slow systematic process. And so, I really think that was one of the first lessons that was learned across these schools. Okay, lesson number two Nick.

[Slide 15 – Lessons Learned: #2 Linear Implementation]: So, this lesson; many school administrators really felt that rolling things out in a linear fashion had some advantages and really made things make some sense. So, schools that were able to connect the implementation of DBI or intensive intervention to their broader RTI or MTSS systems. Seem to feel that that provided more opportunities for success. And that school staff had a better idea of how students might move into intensive intervention and back out of intensive intervention.

I do think it’s important to note that schools expressed that they couldn’t wait to implement DBI until tiers one and two were perfect. But, that the more solid that those foundations were, the easier it was to implement RTI or DBI. And so I think what’s important here; this is kind of balancing question. So, the more likely you have a firm foundation the more likely you are to be successful with DBI. But, I do think that if there are schools where students with disabilities are not receiving very intensive services, it’s also not fair to those students to deny intensive intervention until an RTI system has worked itself out.

So, although schools did express that it was easier when those foundations were in place. I do think it’s important to realize that you can’t wait to start implementing with kids who really need these services until everything is looked at.

[Slide 16 – Lessons Learned: #3 The role of Leadership]: Okay, lesson three. Okay as with most school change, projects we know that leadership is very, very important. And so, in schools that had success they felt strong Administrator support from both general and special education was really important. And that the support needed to be at the district and campus level. I think that it is important to state that at the campus level, this doesn’t necessarily have to be the principal.

We saw in many schools that there were other people like an MTSS coordinator or a school psychologist that played the role of the campus Leadership. So, it doesn’t always have to all fall on the Principal to do this. There were some challenges in schools where there was only district; I’m sorry. Only campus leadership involved and not as much district leadership. And in those places, I think it was just harder for the schools to connect the DBI process with the broader MTSS or RTI system that was occurring in the school.

So, it seemed to be a good facilitator to have district support as well. And then, that leadership support really helps to ensure that DBI connected or embedded into the broader initiatives that are going on at the school. And there are a couple of quotes from an administrator. I think this is a nice quote from a Director of Student Services in one the districts.

She says, “Get ready because it is hard work.” “Don’t think that there is anything in this process that does not change your intellect and professional knowledge.” “You need a level of commitment that even when it gets difficult you will not sacrifice the time that you’ve set aside or the direction that you’ve given in terms of implementation of an intervention.” “This has to
be a priority, the administrator has to be able and willing to commit services; or commit resources in order to be able to maintain fidelity of the plan.” “That’s my word of advice.”

So, this administrator really kind of recognized that the best way to get school staff to buy into this process and to commit to the challenge. Is to have a district level administrator who was committed to the process. And that she felt that her role was really one of the things that really facilitated success in her district. Okay, lesson four.

[Slide 17 – Lessons Learned: #4 School Processes & Protocols]: So lesson four is really about thinking about the processes and protocols that are taking place and being used in the schools. And so, school staff felt that strong standard programs and clear procedures helped sites focus more time on students’ response to intervention and that it basically facilitated more discussions about instruction and adapting that instruction. And the school staff established; in successful schools, they established protocols like scripted meeting agendas and really tried to systematize procedures to help when there was staff turnover.

So, one of the challenges you know in almost all school initiatives is that teachers and staff change over time. And that if you’re consistently having to kind of re-invent the wheel or having to re-train someone it really can limit your successes. And so, the schools that expressed successes with implementing protocols; basically what they tried to do was ensure that even if teachers were changing that the same discussions would be occurring in meetings. There were clear procedures for when students moved intensive intervention, when an adaptation was made.

And that the more that those session can be systematized; the more that those decisions can be systematized. The more likely they are to be maintained even with school; staff turnover.

[Slide 18 – Lesson Learned: #5 Trust the process]: Okay, lesson number five. So the final lesson that we’re highlighting on this Webinar today is the need to trust the process. So, in every district that we worked one of the things that we consistently heard was that the implementation is hard work and it requires commitment and often time creative thinking. Creative thinking about staffing, scheduling, who’s going to keep up with data, who’s going to keep up with decisions. But, the schools that had success really felt like it was their commitment to implementing the process that really got them through kind of the bumpy parts.

And so most of the schools indicated that really there has to be a commitment to not giving up. Even though there are definitely times that it’s going to be challenging. I have another quote from an MTSS coordinator that I really enjoyed this quote. “Data based decision making is not for wimps.” “You’ve really got to go in know that it’s hard work and once you’ve made that commitment you can’t just give up.”

And so I think that the school’s that realized there are going to be some challenges, it’s going to be a little bit messy, we’re going to learn along the way. But, they committed to improving and learning along the way. They felt that they had the most success with implementing the DBI process and integrating it into their systems.

So those are sort of some of the summaries from the lessons learned that I have. Again, this will be provided in more detail in a manuscript that will be available soon on the Intensive
Intervention network. And I look forward to any questions that you may have and I definitely look forward to the next presenters who have been off in schools.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Thank you very much Chris. As a reminder to our participants, if you have any questions please feel free to enter them into the question or the chat box.

[Slide 19 – District Coach Perspective]: So far we have not received any questions but we; the line is open if anything does come up. And we’ll also have a chance to hear from Chris again in terms of responding to questions at the end of the webinar as things come to mind. So with that, I would like to turn it over to Kim who will talking a bit about her perspective in doing this work as a district coach.

Rod Teeple: Okay

[Slide 20 – District Coach Perspective: Columbia Public Schools]: Hello, can everyone hear me? Just say yes.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Yes

Kim Moore: Yes, okay great thank you. Okay, yeah I became a coach actually the third year of this five year project. And so, I helped support two elementary schools that came on board at the beginning of this NCII project that had already had training. And then in my last year, we also added a middle school to our project. And so what you see on your screen are some sample demographics; actually, it; these demographics are pretty accurate for one of my two elementary schools as well as the middle school.

So you can see that these two schools presented with a lot of challenges in terms of how we could provide academic and behavioral support for a fairly high number of struggling students. My other elementary school was a little less diverse and a little more sort of middle of the road. They didn’t have quite such a high mobility rate. They didn’t have any ELL students in that building. And they had significantly less students who have received free and reduced lunch.

So, because of that they were not actually a Title One school. Whereas my other elementary school was a title one school. Next slide please?

[Slide 21 – District Coach Perspective: Columbia Public Schools]: So, my coaching role was really just to support the training that the school teams in my two elementary schools had already received before. And I just did some; typically would do just a little bit of mini follow up training as needed. I also helped to provide the school teams with resources; resources for good instructional materials or other things like that. And often times, it was really just a matter of re-directing them back to the NCII website where a lot of these great resources reside. And then also providing them with assistance with data analysis.

And so, that was pretty easy to do. I definitely; also one of my key roles was to help them especially in the beginning when they were looking at their data in data team meetings and when they were trying to do these Individualized problem solving plans. We; all of my schools used the NCII forms that are provided as example forms when you’re trying to do an Individualize
Problem Solving process. And those were so helpful. Again, they were; we had roles assigned, we had definitely a nice structure to our meeting format.

And so, we were able to do those meetings in a pretty efficient manner. I think in all three of my schools I made some slight tweaks to the forms just to make them more applicable to the school environment. But for the most part, we used those forms and found those forms to be really helpful in setting that up. Another thing that we found really helpful in all of my schools was that we needed to make those plans available to all of the; the teachers who would be potentially implementing the plan or needed to know about the plan. In our district we used Google Docs as a way to share out that individual plan so that teachers and Administrators could have easy access to it.

And then the other really key part of what we; we found to be a good lesson learned was that we really needed to set regular follow up meetings. And to really do that follow up meeting to set that at the end of that initial problem solving meeting. So that we didn’t forget to go back and review the data and review the student progress in a timely manner and fashion. Next slide

[Slide 22 – District Coach Perspective: Developing an Identity]: So, as it has already been pointed out. Leadership is absolutely critical and I was very fortunate that all of the principals in this project were very supportive and active leaders in the process. And also in all three of my schools, the School psychologist took a lead on; especially on the data gathering and data analysis part. That’s really important in making sure that we know how students are doing when we put these interventions in place.

The other really key thing that we tried to do in my buildings was to ensure that our Special Educators were a part of those meetings. That they were part of those Data Team reflection meetings even if it didn’t involve children already on their caseload. Because, we wanted this to be sort of a seamless process of students; students who needed interventions getting the intervention and we don’t really have to worry so much about the label. Down the road, many of these students; if the interventions needed to be more and more intensive they might become Special Education students. But, we wanted to build; build their participation and so we did.

We made that a priority. It was not always easy but we did. In terms of rigor and fidelity; we, we really worked to be certain that those kids; that we put into our tier three groups and or that we gave those individualized learning plans to. That those teams were meeting on a regular basis and that those interventions were happening on a regular basis. And that they were using Evidenced Based Practices when working with those students.

And it’s already been talked about but staff turnover. That’s always a challenge and we always try to sort of plan for that at the beginning of the school year. Not only in training new staff to the building. But also, it was kind of important to do a refresher with existing staff. Just to get them back in the mode of kind of thinking in this new sort of DBI way. Okay, next slide.

[Slide 23 – District Coach Perspective: Using Data]: So, in terms of looking at our sort of overall schoolwide data. We saw very different results in my two elementary schools. One of the elementary schools; the one that I mentioned that was more rural. We saw screening data that
pretty much looked like the pyramid that you would want to see. And so we had just a pretty small amount of students who fell into that Tier Three category.

And that was pretty manageable and easy to plan for. And that was helpful in implementing those tier three small group interventions and also developing those plans for students who were not successful in those interventions. My other school however; the one that we showed you the demographics for earlier for on the slide, that was a little more challenging. They didn’t have the perfect pyramid.

Instead, they had a; almost an inverted pyramid. It was definitely a situation where we almost had a significant number of students in our tier three group when we looked at that initial screening data. That became very challenging and I’m going to talk to you a little more about that. About how we sort of creatively kind of solved that issue.

The other thing that I would say is a lesson learned is that we definitely needed to build in a grade level review meetings on a very regular basis. And it was most beneficial if we built those into the school calendar at the beginning of the year. So that those meetings did happen regularly and so that they didn’t get kind of pushed to the side in the madness of the middle of the year rush. So, that would be another kind of pointer that I would say would be really helpful if you’re going into this process.

And the other thing that we did is that we only started with one area in the beginning. We really only started with our Reading data and looked at trying to do intensive intervention in the area of Reading. Okay, next slide.

[Slide 24 – District Coach Perspective: Creative Scheduling Elementary]: So, creative grouping. At my school where we had this large number of tier two to three students based on our initial screening data, we really had a challenge. In terms of how we could possibly support all of those students. Because, we know that for a successful tier three group you need to keep the group size down and it needs to be cohesive. All of the students need to have similar needs and that became really difficult.

So, the next slide please.

[Slide 25 – District Coach Perspective: Creative Scheduling Elementary]: So, what we did in this particular school. We first of all grouped our students and I can show you the things that we used to help make those initial groupings. And when we; what we found out is that almost every grade level we had a significant number of tier three students. And so, talking about this little school that had about; well a little over five hundred students in the school. And so at every grade level we would have somewhere between fifteen and eighteen students who were clearly tier three students. Some of them had been identified already with IEPs but many of them had not.

And so, we were trying to brainstorm about what we could possibly do. Our principal kind of came up with this great idea. And her great idea was instead; because traditionally the classroom teacher teaches a ninety minute block of reading and we would take part in the ninety minute block. And pull out and do like a twenty to thirty minute intervention time. And so, we kind of decided collectively with her support that these kids really needed more intensity than that.
And so, we completely did grouping of the entire ninety minute instructional block for all of our students. And so we; and the other part, the other thing that they did at this school was that we combined fourth and fifth grade together and then we combined second and third grade together for instruction. So that we could also do some cross-grade grouping if that seemed appropriate for a particular student. Now as you can imagine, that was sort of a scheduling nightmare. But we worked it out and set it up that way so that fourth and fifth grade had their reading instruction at the same time of the day and second and third grade did likewise.

And then, the other really important thing that we did especially; and we sort of kept refining our process each year. But by the second year, we definitely in those tier three groups. Which I remember consisted of; sometimes it was fifteen to eighteen students. We definitely made sure that we had our very best reading teachers in those; teaching those students. We made sure that the students were getting an evidence based interventions for sure. And also supplemental evidenced based instructional approaches were happening with them.

So, in order to make that group work we backfilled that ninety minute block with at least two supplemental teachers. And because this building had of course special education teachers, English language learner teachers; we actually had two of them because we had so many ELL students. And then Title One reading teachers. We were able at each grade level; starting with first grade. To add two teachers to that entire ninety minute block.

So, during that ninety minute block those struggling readers actually got small group pretty intense dosage of reading with all three teachers. And so; like one teacher for maybe thirty minutes would be doing a Wilson’s lesson. A second teacher in the same classroom would be doing another small group, maybe a skills based lesson. And the third teacher would be doing; like a Reading comprehension lesson or something. And they would switch off.

And so it; I would say the biggest kind of take away from that. Not only did we see some really great results. Great improvements in student reading outcomes by the end of the year. But, we also saw a lot of the teacher satisfaction. Teachers really felt like kids were being supported appropriately instructionally and that they were making great progress. And the teachers also felt supported in the process.

So, next slide

[Slide 26 – District Coach Perspective: Integrate Academics & Behavior]: Another thing that happened in our schools. Our schools were already strong PBIS schools. And they already had some great tier two interventions set up. And especially in the two elementary schools. They had a nice systematic check-in check-out process for some of those tier two struggling kids.

But, we also were lucky enough to receive some outside support from a supplemental coach through some mental health dollars that we had in our community. And what we found between the combination of having this coaching support that could come in and help do some individualized behavioral plans with some of those high flyer discipline kids. That combination of changing up how we taught reading to those struggling readers. Just within one year’s time; we significantly reduced the number of office discipline referrals in the school.
And so, we really felt like it was that combination of giving kids instruction at their appropriate level. Plus having really good systematic behavioral supports in place for those most struggling students. That really made a huge impact in that. Okay, next slide.

[Slide 27 – District Coach Perspective Developing an Identity: Middle School]: And then, the very last year of our project or just basically last year. We added a middle School to our project. And definitely there were some differences working with the middle school. You certainly could not do any kind of real school wide planning. They were tenth grade level teams. And in our middle school’s case, there were actually two distinct grade level teams per grade level. It was a six, seven eight middle school model. And so, rather than doing any school wide thing we had to just work with the grade level Teams. In terms of how we would do this work. And so, we really did focus just on developing individual student plans for the most part. There were a few times where we actually did create a sort of grade level wide plans. That when we saw several students having the same issue.

But for the most part, we were focusing on really working with those most struggling students. And how did we identify those students? What data did we use? Actually we just used a lot of data that we had on hand that maybe people don’t think about. But, we had the data and so we took that data and we used; we have. In our District we use STAR Reading and Math.

So, we; as our benchmark measure for students. So, we took their fall STAR Reading and Math scores as one of our District data. We looked at the number of office discipline referrals that the student had received the previous year. We looked at their attendance from the previous year. And we also looked at the number of D’s and F’s that they had received in the previous year.

And we used sort of that whole combination of data to determine who our top; like eight to twelve high flyers were on each grade level Team. We then took those names to the teachers on the Team and let them choose who they wanted to start problem solving on first. And so we sort of went from there. And then almost every case; in our data team meetings twice a month and we would start with one student and then we would work on the next student the next time. And then we would build in checks of progress along the way.

And that seemed to work out really well for them. And really by the end of the year we had some of our school Teams that were functioning pretty well independently without me having to support them. You know be the leader of the Team. So that was really great. So that’s kind of how we did it at the middle school. And then the last slide I think.

[Slide 28 – District Coach Perspective Creative Scheduling: Middle School]: Okay, so some of; kind of the differences at the middle school to keep in mind. Is that we did have; in this particular middle school. They did have sort of an RTI timed intervention block built into some of the student’s schedules. Not all of them.

And; but what we found was that there was really no expectations about what was supposed to happen during that RTI time. There was really not a lot of guidance given to the teachers who were teaching during that intervention block about what they were supposed to be doing. And so, sometimes kids were not always grouped appropriately for the intervention block. And so, that’s a barrier that the school is continuing to work on kind of this year.
And then the other thing that we found that when we were trying to develop individual student plans; especially when we were talking about behavioral types of plans. We had to be really careful that we made sure that everyone was sort of on the same team. That we all were doing the same thing. And so, it was fairly easy for the core academic teachers to implement the plan. Whether that was making sure that the student got to class on time or making sure that they were doing their work during the class period.

But, we also had to impart that knowledge to like their electives teachers for example. So, lots of little differences in the middle school that are less able to control for some of those things. But, there are ways around it. You just have to kind of work smarter. So, I think that’s everything unless there are some questions about what I have presented.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: There were a couple of questions that came in.

Kim Moore: Okay

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Sorry about that everyone. The; there were a couple of questions that came in for Kim and then a couple that were general for the entire panel. So, our start with the questions that were targeted for Kim. First was a question from Barbara and it was; she’s asking. With the class that Kim is describing with the ninety minutes of intervention considered their core ELA class or was it in addition to the core class?

Kim Moore: No, that was their core; their core reading and writing class.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay

Kim Moore: I would say that that was their core Reading instructional class. They also had another hour of writing later on in the day. But, that was their core Reading.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay and how about; there is a question from Rebecca. It is, were the intervention groups done within the classroom or was this a separate literacy block? I guess basically the same question. I guess I should have read that one ahead of time.

Kim Moore: Um hum

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: It’s a similar question. So I guess for the most part, this was done as the core reading time with some supplementation. Some additional time for writing done separately?

Kim Moore: Right

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay

Kim Moore: And one thing that I could add to that that I guess I didn’t before was. Not only did our intervention teachers love it, because they saw so much more progress with our little readers. But actually our teachers who had the tier two students as well as our teachers that had the tier one or what we called some of them tier one plus; our accelerated readers. They loved it too because they could do more extension type of reading activities with those higher readers. And
really just target instruction so much more easily without have to wait for the rest of the; you
know be there, try to teach to all levels at one time.

So, it was really a win-win I think for all of the students in the school. And with that high
mobility rate and just the high number of students that were struggling. It was just what made
sense and so I; the school is continuing to do it because they really liked this model.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay, great thanks. And then this is a question that is probably for
more general for the panelist. So Kim, please jump in but others; Rod or Chris. Also feel free to
jump in. Do you have a recommendation for an MTSS job description? One that has maybe one
hundred percent of a person’s time would be geared towards data administration or even one
where maybe half the time with the students and half of the time was working with MTSS? Are
there any thoughts on that?

Rod Teeple: This is Rod here, can you hear me?

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Yes

Rod Teeple: I guess my thought on that is that it depends a lot on how things are organized
within the district and how big the job is. So for example, I coordinate seven elementary
buildings. But I’m only point five percent doing that. So, for me to take time out of that and
work individually with students as a part of that job. I don’t know how I would manage to do
that.

But, I’ve also heard of people that for one building might be coordinating MTSS at the building
level and working with students would be a significant part of the job. So, it could be that it
matters a lot on kind of what you’re looking for. You know, they may actually be doing some of
the interventions as well as coordinating.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: And given your role Rod, what kind of expertise would you put
into a job description like that?

Rod Teeple: Well, obviously I think the data part is really important and being able to work with
Teams and with adults. I think to me, that’s the bigger trick of this.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Um hum

Rod Teeple: It’s how to get the people to do what you’re asking them to do. And see the value
in what you’re doing. And give it a try even though it might not be their most comfortable thing
to be working on.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: That’s a very good point. And then, we have two more questions.
But in the interest of time I am going to hold those towards the end because again, they’re more
general questions. And I am going to go ahead and turn it over to Rod Teeple now who is from
the Grand Haven Michigan schools. And he’s going to talk a little bit about their experience.

Rod Teeple: Alright, thanks Rebecca. Well, hello from Michigan.
[Slide 29 – School Staff Perspective: Grand Haven Area Public Schools]: We really do appreciate all of the support and the work that the Center had provided to us over the last five years. We’ve just really gotten top notch coached and just really good technical assistance from the group. So we are really pleased to be a part of the project. Nick, if you go to the next slide.

[Slide 30 – Grand Haven Public Schools: Elementary MTSS Coordinator]: Really kind of telling a little bit about myself and the district. We’re really very fortunate that we have some support and some time to put away for MTSS. So, in Grand Haven we have about six thousand students total. We have seven elementary building that all have very separate personalities as neighborhood schools. One of our principals likes to say that they’re more like seven different districts of their own. And so, they’re really kind of unique that way.

But, for this project we focused a lot on Ferry Elementary School and our emphasis being on behavior with them. And so when we started; I think it was back in the spring of twenty twelve. One of the first things that we did after we had sort of the initial introduction to NCII. Was to recognize that we really needed to re-tool our PBIS system at tier ne. Because, we just had a really high number of kids who were looking like tier three and it was a lot to even start to try to wrap our heads around doing the DBI process. Just because there’s a lot of; sort of time intensive to deal with a lot of kids.

So, what we did was; we worked very hard on overhauling and just completely sort of reinventing PBIS at that building. And at the end of; at the end of a couple of years what we saw was that we still had more ODRs, Office Disciplinary Referrals. Really than any other building in the district. And if you look at the slide you’ll see that we only have two hundred and eighty-five students. And so, we’re kind of like a nice little slice of Grand Haven.

But, we’re different from the rest of the district. In that many of our buildings don’t have nearly the amount of free and reduced lunch that we have. Or some of the difficulties that we know intervene in the life of kids and cause them to have difficulty. So in twenty fourteen and twenty fifteen we began to focus more systematically at tier two. Thinking that when we looked at those numbers we were really trying to tighten up check-in check-out as a procedure and trying to add some fidelity to it.

What we saw when we looked at our numbers of ODRs is that really about a third of them; that entire count of them was accounted for by just a handful of students. So, we were trying to invent some ways that we could work with those kids in a meaningful way. And to help them to improve their behavior and again reduce the number of kids that would have to go on to tier three. And what we determined at that point was that we had a little bit of success with that. But things were kind of all over the board with tier two even after a year of focusing on it.

So, what I mean by all over the board is that what we saw was that; in you’re familiar with the check-in and check-out intervention. The idea is that we have an adult mentor who checks in with the student in the morning and gives them a behavior rating card. The teacher then fills the behavior rating card out throughout the day. And then the child takes the card back to that adult mentor at the end of the day and checks them out. They talk about different sets of goals and get ready for the next day to talk about what they need to do better or if they’re doing well what they can continue to do.
And what we found was that we had some students that were only getting sort of the mentorship. So, they would check-in with someone at the beginning of the day and check-out at the end. But, there was no behavior rating card and yet that was being called check-in check-out. We found some students who were really just carrying around a behavior rating card. When they really didn’t have an adult mentor to just kind of supervising and rooting for them and helping them and developing that relationship.

And so what we really wanted to do was to improve the fidelity of that. With the idea that again we could get the number of kids that we really wanted to move onto tier three; making that more of a manageable number for us. So, if we look at the next slide. We were asked to take a look back at what was Ferry Elementary school like before NCII came around ad at that time we were using a child study system to manage all of the behavior interventions.

And so, those are meetings with a lot of professionals. You might call them different things in your building. Nick, can you go on to the next slide?

[Slide 31 – Ferry Elementary School: Before NCII]: Maybe I can; maybe your computer froze up? Oh, there it is. So, we had a lot of professionals that were involved in those child study meetings. So, we had a school Psychologist, a Speech and Language Pathologist would come to everyone. The school social worker, the resource teacher, the reading specialist and then as well as the principal and the classroom teacher. And so with all of those people in the room it often became sort of seen as the road to Special Education or the way to get a Special ED referral.

But, the system was being overwhelmed by too many students that behaviorally in particular hadn’t even had some very low level kinds of interventions. So the; with those numbers we focus often times with just trying to get every student that there had been a request on to at least have one meeting during the year. There wasn’t a lot of time leftover to go back and intensify interventions or to work with fidelity to move systematically between Tier Two and Tier Three. And so, as a result we had a lot of recommendations that came out of that Team that were kind of based on a small menu of medium intensity interventions. So, we really weren’t getting to what we wanted to happen at Tier Three.

But as we’ve been working with NCII and had some really good trainings on. The idea of getting some sort of functional behavior assessment as part of what we did. And then from that developing a more formal behavior intervention plan. Those things were kind of rare and often times seen as the last resort. Almost; people almost looked at them as hoop to jump through right before a student went to a more restrictive kind of educational setting or different Special ED room that might take up more of their day. And so we were really trying to manage how to get around that.

So, the next slide.

[Slide 32 – Ferry Elementary School: After NCII]: Really looks at what happened after we came to be part of NCII. And especially; a lot of this occurred just during last school year, twenty fifteen and twenty sixteen. We were able to take some of the pressure off of the Child Study Team. Mainly by developing a behavior team that met and managed tier two and made
decisions about moving students on to Tier Three. So, this was kind of a parallel Team that we put in place.

It was parallel to the child study team. It also was parallel to our grade level meetings that were going on. Focusing; focusing very well on academics. We’d always had this kind of dream that grade levels; they were meeting every six weeks. Would focus on behavior as well. But we just hadn’t gotten; we always were busy with Reading and Math and didn’t have time to get into behavior in those. So we didn’t have that specific focus.

So, one thing that we talked a little bit about and we were glad that we able to do in many ways. Was that we had the Behavior Team that we developed have some of; well many of the same members that were also on the Grade Level Teams are on the Child Study Team. And so that way even though it was somewhat parallel, it wasn’t completely in isolation. And what we were trying to do with that idea is that a lot of behavior problems are rooted in academic deficits. And sometimes academic deficits are developing because kids are having behavior problems and are out of the classroom.

And so, what we wanted to do was to try to develop a system where we could take care of those things in a unified way. But having some separate teams that focus on sort of individual pieces of the puzzle. Also so that they could really get in and try to focus on moving interventions to more intensive levels. So, one thing that really helped us too is that NCII was essentially relentless on having us develop some written guidelines so that we could answer a couple of simple questions.

Those were things like is the intervention that we’re doing working? Is it not working and what should we do next? And we found those things to be very, very critical when it came to those meeting times when we had kids that for a variety of reasons; we can talk about those a little bit in a second. Maybe people didn’t want to move them up a Tier or sometimes wanting to move them down a Tier. And so it was nice to have something that was written and that we developed that we could focus on.

And of course, just trying to keep records of that and accountability. Those are things that we developed too and that those are; have been really successful for us. So Nick, if you go to the next slide.

[Slide 33 – Ferry Elementary School: How did we get here?]: One thing that we found that made a really big difference for us was to focus on data that was beyond just the Office disciplinary referrals. So, we added data from those daily report cards; the check-in check-out intervention. And that gave us something that we could graph and that we could look at for the changes from day to day. And it also gave us some insight into what the student was doing very well rather than just focusing on when they were; you know when they were getting caught doing the wrong thing. So it gave a lot of things to work with for students in that way. And those were invaluable for coming up with the extensions and the modifications to the child’s intervention.

So another important lesson that we learned was that we had to make sure that we weren’t operating again in isolation like we talked about. That shared staff really helped us look at the
academic needs to make sure that we were trying to address those in various ways. So what I always felt like; it was sort of like if we were looking at it in difference pieces. Then the behavior team was freed up a little to focus on some behavioral strategies and interventions. Knowing that the academic part was being taken care of by a different team that manages interventions in reading.

For example that provided the interventions in reading and monitored those. They made decisions about moving kids up those tiers. Because, we were doing pretty well in that area. It was in the behavior that we were having more difficulty with. So, Nick if we can move onto the next slide.

[Slide 34 – Ferry Elementary School Lessons Learned: Staff Development]: So what were some of the lessons that we learned? I think that they were very similar to the ones that we’ve been talking about all afternoon. And so, staff development was really important as we tackled some of these changes. What we found is that the team itself had to understand what they were doing and why they were doing it. Before they could really successfully communicate that back to the teachers and the other staff and do that in a really meaningful way to staff.

What we found was that gaining trust in the system was difficult. For some teachers, it still didn’t feel like it moved quickly enough for some of them. And so we found that within staff development one thing that was a good avenue for us was to approach it from both sides of the issue. So that we could get information to the staff but we were also getting feedback back from the staff. So that we could kind of modify our approach and modify communicating to various different stakeholders in the building to make sure that we were; we were moving in a positive way with that.

You can go onto the next lesson that we learned.

[Slide 35 – Ferry Elementary School Lessons Learned: Meetings are Critical]: And that was that meetings are critical. So, that was really one of the biggest things that we learned. I think a lot of time; especially in smaller buildings like this one where we have you know two hundred and eighty-five students or so. So, they’re small, there’s only a couple of teaches at each grade level. In fact, some grade levels even only had one teacher I think prior to the time that we were working with this.

And what we found was that being small creates some of that sort of informality. And so, instead of sitting down and meeting with people. People just kind of wanted to just talk in the hall or talk over lunch and make some quick decisions that way. And so, what we found is as we tried early in the first few years to be more systematic with the meeting part. We often kind of hit rough water because meetings were being postponed. Or sometimes they didn’t have the right staff members there to be present to be a part of it.

And for me, that became really, really clear just a couple of years ago. When one of our external coaches from NCII; we’re in Grand Haven Michigan. So, we’re along the shore of Lake Michigan. A good part of our district bumps right up against the water. So, it’s a nice place to visit.
But, we had a coach come in from Chicago which is about a three or four hour drive. And so, at the last minute the coach had to cancel her attendance at one of the behavior team meetings. And I was already in the lobby of the school, the weather wasn’t great but I’d made it over from another building because I didn’t have that fare to go. And I was in the lobby of the school waiting for some other meetings to be over. And the building staff just decided oh, well if we aren’t having the coach from Chicago then why should we have this meeting and they cancelled then entire behavior meeting for that month. To me that was a really important message about the why that they were having that meetings for at that time. And it also clued me in to what we really needed to focus on.

So, the following year after that. So this last school year we changed that. And the first rule; ground rule was that we will set our meeting schedules at the beginning of the year and we will adhere to it no matter what and no matter who is there. We never got down to the point of only one or two people there. We always had pretty good attendance and we were able to have teachers rotating and even worked with their schedule to make them be able to do that more; kind of more conveniently.

Where we were meeting before school hours and so we were at least able to give them a little bit more of a schedule. So that they knew when to arrive and what portion of their time before they got ready for students to be coming in that they would be meeting with. So, the meeting part was critical and it really did turn things from formal; somewhat less data based to really creating this little arena where we could just sit down. Look at the data, look at the decision making rules, apply those together and then make some decisions about the kids that it wound up making sense for them.

So, if we can go to the next slide Nick?

[Slide 36 – Ferry Elementary School Lesson Learned: Data & Processes]: So, that whole idea of data and having the process where really, really important to us. One thing that we had to do was to help show that the data lines up to what the teacher’s perception of what the real world experiences that they were seeing on a day to day basis. And what we found is the more that they felt that the data didn’t match their real world viewpoint then the more they tended to be a little bit more challenging of what we were doing and the decisions that we were making an so forth.

Another thing that we found that we thought was really important was to have that process just be easy. So the data had to be easy to collect. The graphs had to be easy to make and had to be easy to understand. And so, we went through a variety of different formats. We had a school psychologist in the building that was really good with Excel and was good with Google Sheets for a while.

And so we had some various ways of organizing data within those. But they were really complicated and we only had one person that really could even understand how the graphs were made and how to get what we needed. And that system didn’t work very well. And so, we went back to a graphing program that’s been around for years and years. But it was easy to understand and that seemed to make all the difference. We could just put in a little portion of the
shared drive and it was easy to put data in and it was easy to pull one button up and look at student’s graph for each student. And that really made all of the difference.

I also found that the rules for moving student’s around through the tiers had to be pretty simple. So, even though there’s a lot weight and thought went into why we developed those rules. In previous years we had rules that were a lot of in/an statements and a lot of contingencies; if they do this but not that but the other thing. And so we really made them pretty clear.

And for us what it finally amounted to is that we wanted to see some sort of progress on their daily point sheet. So even if they weren’t at; sort of that mythical eighty percent points for the day we still felt like we were successful if they were making progress towards that eighty percent or were hovering somewhere around that eighty percent. We set up this idea that we didn’t want more than two ODRs in any one month. That was the rule and what we found is that we wanted to be able to give children the idea that you know we don’t expect them to be perfect.

We know they have difficulties and that’s how they wound up on tier two or they wound up in tier three. But we also didn’t want to give this sort of open blank check to have as many ODRs as they wanted. So, two ODRs seemed like it worked for us pretty well in a month and it identified the kids that were struggling.

Now, even with a simple rule like that. What we found was that there were still people who wanted to challenge that. They wanted to try and look for loop holes and some of them were questionable. Okay, what if it’s the thirtieth of the month and this student has an ODR on the thirtieth and then a couple of days later, the first of the next month. And now he has an ODR again? So, that’s technically two ODRs but they happened in two different months. So how do we apply the rule?

Number one is that only happened maybe once in the whole year and we figured out what to do. Because, that student had also had more than one ODR in either of the other two months around it. So, it was really kind of an isolated case. That we had had a student that only had an ODR one in each month and yet were within like four days or thirty days within each other. But we found again, trying to make those rules simple so we had people wanting to challenge them and asking about them. But, it did work well for us and it would limit the way that we looked at kids now to a very simple method.

One of the other things that we worked really hard to simplify was just the way that we kept records and documented. And what we found was that having some kind of redundancy was actually a really good thing. And so the record keeping had to be really practical. So we found that it just made sense to have two separate systems. Because on one system we wanted to track an individual child; and have sort of an artifact for that child. So that at the end of the year we could put it in their permanent folder.

But it would allow students; because we have a little bit of a transient population in our building with about sixty-nine percent free and reduced lunch. We also have a good number of kids who move in and move out over the course of the school year. And so, it gave us a way to track data and put that into a file before it got; a child moved or put in the file at the end of the year so that
we had some way of keeping track for others that might work with that student. Or for ourselves if they came back the next year.

So, we found that that was really important. But then the other thing that kind of emerged from that is that it really would have been nice and we figured out a way to do it. But we realized it would be very nice to have a system to keep track of kids in a way that; that allowed us to look at everybody all together. So, what we found that worked best for us was a combination of electronic records where we kept those individual sheets at the end of the year or is a student was moving. Or if their file was mailed out then we could just print that and put it in the file.

But, we also had just good old fashioned pencil and paper kind of a worksheet that we put together. It became the agenda for each meeting. And it just had the students that we were working with. How many ODRs did he have? What percentage of the points have they gotten for that time period overall? And then what the trend was? Were they trending up or down or staying the same?

And at the end of the class we could kind of look at the work of that team. We found that that was really important too because the team had to be able to look and say, you know what some of these kids when you hide them in the weeds. It feels like we’re not making so much success with those individual students. We could look at the big picture and say but you know what, here’s three kids that really have done so well that they don’t even need tier three interventions anymore. Or here’s a couple of kids that need to move up or here are a couple of kids that are maintaining.

So, it just allowed us to be more; I think accountable to our self and look to how the team was functioning and how things were going that way. And so, we just; we kept that pencil and paper stuff in a binder and at the end of the year we even printed the electronic things and put those in binders. So it sort of old fashioned but it worked for the Team that we had. And I think we have a few new; different members on that Team this year. And so I’m sure that as the course of the year goes on they may modify that again.

But hopefully they can keep up with those two main candidates that we were working with. Because they were really important. And then the last slide. There was a question about kind of tough barriers.

[Slide 37 – Ferry Elementary School Lessons Learned: Tough Barriers]: And things that we either overcame or in some ways still working to overcame; working to overcome. And one of the big one’s of those is just dealing with the belief system. And what we found is that when we talk about behaviorally based interventions that we’re talking about rewards and sometimes response costs and how kids are moving through that kind of a system. There are some people that have really strong feelings one way or the other. And what we were surprised with was that that was actually true for both the teachers as well as for the intervention staff.

That team that was running those behavior team meetings. Some of those as well had strong feelings that weren’t necessarily positive about giving kids rewards or working that way with kids. So, we were able to make some inroads with training. But it took more than just an
understanding of what an FBA or a BIP were to get staff on board with using them. And that played an important role in the intervention menu.

Often what we found was that the team as well as the teacher wanted everything to be built around kind of a bunch of small layers. Because you’re almost avoiding that FBA because it was either a lot of work or if felt like it was going to be way too much reinforcement for what the teacher wanted to give out. So, they wanted to build a; just a bunch of small layers for their reinforcement menu or their intervention menu. So, they would say well let’s have check-in check-out and that doesn’t necessarily have rewards built into it. Let’s maybe have some scheduled break times or maybe small reward strategies.

But then, that kind of layering. What we found was that sometimes we were giving so many small breaks and we were doing check-in check-out with so much strength that it almost was becoming tier three. And so we had to; the Team started to recognize that sometime tier three wasn’t so much doing a complete FBA. But it was also looking at those other elements around kids. And looking at how many different small things we were doing. And so what we had to do was help the team to recognize that what we were doing with those kids was out of tier three. Even though they looked like they were getting just a bunch of tier two plans.

And then, another thing that we frequently came up against was that idea of an in-school versus an outside of school intervention. And really what that boiled down to was that an in-school intervention at tier three would often be doing an FBA and then a behavior intervention plan. But then the outside interventions were things like working with outside mental health agencies. Working with medical doctors that often times involved medication for kids. And those are things that were not necessarily at tier three. Sometimes those things happened at a much lower Tier as well and I think it kind of captures up that whole idea that we deal with in education as a whole.

That it is how does that fit in with what we’re doing? Are the parse out what we’re responsible for? And how do we deal with the fact that there are some kids that do have some needs that do fall within the medical realm. And so, trying to make sense of intervention plans that are kind of more comprehensive was one of the things that we started. And I think something that we want to keep building on as we continue to work through these lessons that we’ve learned from NCII and keep moving forward.

So, overall we’ve feel like we’ve made a lot of progress. And I think like a lot of schools out there we can still see that there some ways to go. So what we try to do is focus on individual kids and yet keep working with the process to make things improve the outcomes. I think that’s my last slide. Are there any questions?

[Slide 38 – TA Provider Perspective]: Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Hi Rod, thank you so much for that. There are a couple of questions that have come in. One was; one participant was wondering what graphing program you used?

Rod Teeple: I don’t know where it originated from. We have; I’m pretty sure that you can find it. We have this state program in Michigan called; the acronym is MIBLSI. And I know that I got it from them probably sometime in the last ten years. And it’s really just a little short Excel
program. I always call it the Beatles program because sort of the phony students that are entered in it are John, Paul, George and Ringo.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Um hum

Rod Teeple: But if they were to Google MIBLSI you could get it. That would; you could get to the MIBLSI website and it’s pretty well organized. I am about ninety percent sure that it’s actually probably still on there somewhere under check-in check-out. If not, I could get; I could probably send it to someone and they could send it out or make it a part of what we talked about. Would that be possible?

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Sure, yeah and actually if you share it with Amy she we can include that in the follow up questions.

Rod Teeple: Okay

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: The follow up Q and A.

Rod Teeple: Okay, I’ll send that to Amy then. Yeah

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay

Rod Teeple: It’s just a little Excel program. It’s so easy though. Once you look into it it’s ridiculously simple. But the graphing is really powerful out of it.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Yes and we’ve also created a similar tool on the NCII website and we are just about to post that one as well. I think we’ve just finished all of the trouble shooting and making sure that all of the bugs are out. So, that should be available very soon.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds Two: It’s actually posted already and I am happy to include the link in the chat.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay, good. Great, I know that that was just getting finalized in the last few days. So, this is from Michael and probably relevant for both Rod and Kim and also Amy. But, in general did you find that DBI implementation was more focused or successful at sites that also had behavior supports in place?

Kim Moore: This is Kim. Absolutely because in many cases you needed that combination of supports to help students.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Great

Rod Teeple: Right

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Oh, go ahead Rod.

Rod Teeple: I would agree with that one hundred percent. I think that’s why we went back within our one building and kind of revisited early on. Because, we realized that we didn’t have
the supports as well developed as we wanted. And so, we started going back to tier one just to get that; to build a place and the ability to be more successful with tier three.

**Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds:** Yeah, and I think that building on what both Kim and Rod have said. Anecdotally across all of the sites that we’ve worked with. We’ve found that often in doing this where schools were attempting to do this implementation. If often pointed to needs in behavior. So even through many places didn’t start initially with an implementation focus on behavior.

But as they got into intervention planning it became very apparent that student’s had a lot of avoidance behaviors and other kinds of destructive behavior that may have been impacting their ability to process academically. And then also more generally the kinds of students that they were seeing be referred more often were ones that had co-incurrent behavioral problems.

And so there was; they realized that there was a need for a more structural behavior support system to be in place in the schools. Not necessarily just at the tier three level but obviously it pointed to a need across the board. And so we definitely did see that in many places. Okay, so with that we have a couple more questions but they are more general and I’m going to hold them until the end. And so, I’m going to turn it over to Amy Peterson who is going to give the perspective of the TA staff from the Center and then some of the lessons learned that we have had.

**Amy Peterson:** So, I’m excited to kind of be able to add on to some of the lessons learned that Chris and Kim and Rod talked about already. So, I’m going to keep these at a pretty high level and go through some of them fairly quickly. Because, some of them are ones that we’ve already talked about in a little bit of depth and I want to make sure that we makes sure that there is that time for questions at the end.

**[Slide 39 – Intensive Technical Assistance]:** So Nick, you can move onto the next slide. Just to back us up a couple of seconds, I wanted to make everyone aware of who we were providing technical assistance to. In addition to Michigan and Missouri whom you’ve heard some representatives from those states. We also were providing some assistance to Minnesota and specifically to Saint Paul Public Schools and then a couple of districts within Rhode Island as well.

You can go onto the next one.

**[Slide 40 – Approach to TA]:** So when we started thinking about our approach to TA we noticed that things looked a little bit different from when we initially doing our technical assistance and our approach and as we worked through the technical assistance over time. So, I wanted to share with you some of the history with that and the progression. Our initial approach really had all of our DBI; all of our intensive TA sites really moving through that DBI training series that Chris mentioned at the beginning. And then we included follow up coaching sessions and had a Coach assigned to each of those schools that we were working with.

We also developed district level technical assistance plans that really aligned with kind of a district approach to implementing intensive intervention. And looking at that DBI training series and some milestones and really getting that in place. One of the things that we noticed over time...
was that we needed to customize that a little bit more as we moved away from kind of the initial training with sites. Into the implementation and kind of the contextual differences that each school was having. Really let us; lead us to develop individual school level technical assistance Plans rather than just rely on a district level plan.

So, they were still housed within a larger district plan but they really had individual goals and activities related to each of the individual schools. We also had to be a little bit more flexible over time with the training and the support that we provided. Especially to the sites that came on a little later. We had as Kim mentioned a middle school both in Missouri as well as in Rhode Island that came on at a later date. We had some additional pilot sites that came on in different school districts that were added in an expansion.

So, those trainings looked a little bit different. Minneapolis also came on slightly later than some of the other training sites. And one of the things that we had to do for providing support in Minneapolis was to really shift our trainings. From; originally they were developed as kind of a half day training. But, they didn’t have the time in their schedule for that half day time. So we really had to shorten those into hour long sessions that happened more frequently to really meet with their professional learning needs.

So, just making some customizations and adaptations over time. We also introduced something call case examples that I’ll talk a little bit more about on the next slide. But one of the other things that I wanted to talk about in our approach is around the coaching. So Kim, as you mentioned was one of our coaches that was really supporting work in Missouri. But, our coaching looked a little bit different across our different sits. Just depending on what was available in the different states and what; who we could rely on for coaching support.

So we had coaches that were both embedded within the school district providing support. We also had external coaches. So, we had coaches for example in Rhode Island that represented state level staff as well as folks that provided support through an MTSS project through Rhode Island. And so that allowed us to kind of connect with that group and link into that group. But in other; some of the other sites it was either folks that were related to universities, professors or graduate Students or project staff at universities that were providing that coaching support.

And as Rod mentioned you know in some situations it was someone coming from a distance. And so, it was different strategies in different places to see how that coaching looked. But, one of the big things that we noticed was how important the coaching was across all of the sites that we worked with. So, if you want to go on to the next slide.

[Slide 41 – Start Small & Expand]: This slide hits home a little bit of some of those pieces that we’ve talked about already. Starting small and really thinking about being strategic about the number of school sites that you take on originally. Also thinking about the specific content area. So, we had a lot of sites that really targeted perhaps first on Reading but then expanded into Mathematics or behavior. Over time as they started to feel a little bit more confident with the process.

And the other thing that we noticed; that we had sites really work on is to select a couple of students to really solidify the process before extending to a huge large group of students. When
we’re talking about intensive intervention we’re really talking about a targeted group of students anyway or a pretty small group of students. But really thinking about getting the process down and about getting faster with the process in order to facilitate this more as we move forward.

So, the case studies that I mentioned on the previous slide; and you can see an example of what that looks like here on this slide. This really helps the sites to really dig into the process and really help them to document kind of what it looks like to provide DBI to an individual student. And also really making sure that they’ve gotten the documentation down. That they’ve gotten the grass down that they’re developing for the individual student.

They’re noting the adaptations that they’re making. That they’re going back again as Kim mentioned and checking in regularly enough so that we really making sure that we’re not just developing a plan for a student and then not moving forward and not checking whether that’s working for the student. And so, those case study forms really help the schools kind of solidify their processes and then expand to other students.

And one of the things that we saw even for the sites that were selecting perhaps a couple of students to start with. They were still embedding the learning that they were learning through the training series into supporting other students outside of the students that they would be providing case examples on. And then over the time; over the course of the project you know if in the first year they might have provided a case example information for one or two students. And then they next year more students. So, they were really able to grow that over time.

Alright, so the next slide.

[Slide 42 – Allow for Customization & Be Flexible]: The next piece is about customization and being flexible. I think one of the big lessons that we had to learn or that we continue to learn. And I think everyone who is on this call I’m sure really understands the challenge around language and people using different language to mean the same thing or could mean slightly different things. One of the things that we were less concerned about was what people were calling the DBI process in their school setting. We had some sites that really adopted the language of DBI and we had other sites that really talked about it as it being their Tier Three or being an intensive intervention.

And we were less critical about what the language was than what were the essential components supporting that process. So, if they were doing DBI and calling it tier three great. But we wanted to make sure that then when we were doing things like our implementation checks that Chris referenced. That we were being conscious of their language as well and not using language that didn’t fit with their context. So being careful about that I think is an important piece.

We also saw that they really needed to customize the tools and resources that we provided. So, some folks talked about the different meeting data tools and making them their own. We had some sites that really needed to adapt data meeting processes and we had others that had some really strong processes in place. And so instead of starting from scratch they really used the data meeting tools as kind of checks to see whether or not they were collecting the right kind of information or if they needed to think about that slightly differently.
So, for example in Minneapolis they have a data system that really asks a lot of the questions that we were asking on the data meeting forms. We weren’t asking the Minneapolis schools that we were working with to then use a separate form in order to do the work with us. We wanted them to use the platform that they had in place. But, we wanted to make sure that they were getting the right information in that platform. And they instead of focusing on kind of creating a new product or a new tool, they were really focused on making sure that the tool that they had in place was being used and being used appropriately.

So really kind of thinking about that fidelity piece there. In addition, really being flexible with the training. So we had to think about some creative means to share the training content as I mentioned before. As well as revisiting training elements as the sites progressed. So sites might have initially had some training on something and then said oh we have a lot of new staff, we need some retraining. Or we’re still really struggling to grasp this concept we need a retraining. And being really responsive to that was important as well.

You can go on Nick.

[Slide 43 – Highlight Key Features & Flexible Features]: I’m not going to spend a ton of time on these essential elements and flexibility within the implementation because we have talked about this on some of our other Webinars previously. But this had been a really important part for us as solidifying what we really saw as essential as part of the DBI process. And it really led to some other pieces of the work as well.

So, our initial; and it really came from the work of the coaches that we were working with as well as the school sites and our lessons learned from implementing with them. So we clearly started to lay out what were some of the essentials pieces that needed to be in place? And where was there flexibility within those pieces. So, we’re not going to tell you which progress monitoring tool you need to use but we’re going to say that we really need you to be collecting progress monitoring data using a valid and reliable tool. Graphing that data and collecting it regularly enough to make decisions.

So really kind of thinking about where is the flexibility? And where are those essential elements that really need to be in place in order for this to actually be happening? You can go on Nick.

[Slide 44 – Use Formative Implementation Data]: So this is just an example of those post check implementation data forms that we were talking about. They are available on the website along with some additional fidelity tools that look at the process at the meeting level or at the individual implementation of a plan level that might be helpful for folks. But, we really found the formative implementation data helpful both to drive our technical assistance planning as Chris mentioned but also for sites to really reflect on where they are in the process and where their goals are for implementation in the future.

And really thinking about what’s going well and what challenges are arising? It both allowed for us to make changes as well as them make changes at the school level. So Nick you can go on.

[Slide 45 – Turnover & Changing Priorities Can be a Challenge…]: We talked a lot about this already in the Webinar but, I wanted to reference a great video that up there from one of the district administrators in Swartz Creek Michigan who talked about the importance of having a
plan. A systemic approach for their; the implementation of intensive intervention and embedding that in their larger MTSS plan. And I think Chris referenced that as an important feature that had been found through their analysis as well. So it’s really important to think systematically if you’re developing kind of this work. And how does DBI fit within the other work that’s going on at the school level, at the District level and so on?

So you can go on.

**[Slide 46 – Partner with Leadership]**: Again, the importance of leadership really came through throughout our Technical Assistance. We found states that had supportive technical; supportive leaders really much stronger and more able to; much more able to get things going. And to get things sustained over time compared to the sites that didn’t have that strong leadership level. So, it was important for commitment, reinforcing buy-in as well as readiness.

And we also saw as other folks have mentioned that leadership differs from site to site. There were some sites that had the principal at a school within each of the data meetings that they were having on individual students. There were other sites that really had instructors or administrators empower other folks in the school or the district in order to support that. And so, it looked; it definitely did look different but it was really an essential piece for us to be able to move forward with sites. As well as to be successful in their implementation. You can go to the next one.

**[Slide 47 – Stress the Intersection of Academics and Behavior]**: And this is something that Rod just mentioned as well as Rebecca. But the importance of intersecting; the intersection between academics and behavior. And I think it came to the forefront for a lot of the sites as they were working with individual students and really trying to understand the individual needs of the students. They noticed that interplay between academics and behavior. And I think it’s an important point to continue to think about as you’re thinking about what are the individual needs of the student.

Are there behavioral aspects that are influencing the academics or vice versa. So really thinking about breaking that down and looking at the individual student level was really important.

**[Slide 48 – DBI is a Process & Takes Time]**: Alright and just you know as a reinforcement. And this is something that Chris said as well. But the importance to be relentless. There’s a lot of hard work that’s going on within the implementation of intensive intervention. Across the school sites at the individual student level and the teachers working with individual students.

As well as expanding up to implementation at the school level or at the district level and so on. So, it’s really important to think about this as a process. It’s a learning process, it’s a formative learning process and there is always room for improvement. And to really get that process in place.

**[Slide 45 – New Center Kicking Off]**: I know that we’re running out of time but I just wanted to talk a little bit about the new center before we ended today. So you can flip to the next one actually.

**[Slide 50 – New OSEP Priority]**: So as Rebecca mentioned at the start of this webinar. We recently just won a re-compete on the National Center on Intensive Intervention which we’re
really excited about. It will look a little bit different going forward compared to what we looked at; looked like in the past five years. Some shifts are up on the slide here. And so we’re really focusing again on that importance of that academic and behavioral integration.

Thinking about identification and intervention for culturally and linguistically diverse students and really thinking about what are the needs for English Language Learners within this process. We’re shifting away from looking specifically at the school and local level to also embed a little bit more of a focus on the SEA level or the state level and to help the state assist with their schools and Districts to implement intensive interventions. And in that they will be connecting in with the Results Driven Accountability and State Systemic Improvement Plan work that many of you are probably aware of.

We will also be extending our work to IHEs to really help teacher prep programs. And then continuing to leverage opportunities for collaboration and targeting new audiences as we move forward.

[Slide 51 – The Next 5 Years of NCII]: So, the next couple of slides really just break that down a little bit more. So, what it will; will it look like perhaps in the next five years. And stay tuned for what I think is the big tea takeaway for this work. We will be coming out with more information about what the new Center looks like. How you might be able to get support if you’re a state level folks.

How you can connect in with us for the next five years of the center. And so, definitely stay tuned if you’re not already on our mailing list. Definitely join, come back to our website. We will have additional information coming out about what the next five years of the center will actually look like as well.

[Slide 52 – Save the Date: Upcoming Webinar.]: Alright, I just also want to.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Thank you Amy.

Amy Peterson: Oh, go ahead.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Sorry I interrupted you.

Amy Peterson: No, that’s not problem. We just wanted to put a plug in for another upcoming Webinar that we’re having in October. It’s part of the disability awareness month and focusing on work that we’re doing here through the NCII. As well as work through an IES funded project that really looked at research around implementation; really research around intensive intervention.

So definitely an exciting opportunity. That will be October seventeenth at two PM. And additional information on that one will be coming out shortly as well. Alright, go ahead Rebecca.

[Slide 53 – In Summary]: Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Great, thank you Amy. So with that we are just about; we’re actually just a little over our time. So we will get to these last couple of questions that have come in. And then we will sign off.
First, Mark asked if any of the students that were participating in intensive intervention services in your schools were students that were considered low-incidence with high needs or perhaps who were pre linguistic learners without any formal communication skills? Or formal means of communication I should say. So Rod or Kim, in your experiences did any of your students who received intensive intervention fall into any of those categories?

Kim Moore: In our building none of them did. We had some students that were on IEPs but none of them would have been low-incidence.

Rod Teeple: In my building not super low-incidence. We did have some students who because of the intensity of their behaviors. Maybe they were students with autism or maybe they were; their Reading skills were so delayed that they wouldn’t really fit into our tier three group even with a Special Education teacher in the room to support them. We did do some pull out for some students. Out English language learner students because we would have them coming in all the time. Some of them had very limited English proficiency. We would typically put them into our tier three reading groups. But they would also get supplemental English language instruction outside of that reading block too.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay, thank you.

Chris Lemons: Rebecca

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Yep

Chris Lemons: Can I just add one thing? This is Chris. I do reading research with students with intellectual disabilities. And I would just say that I have successfully used the DBI process with that population of students. Although they might not always be incorporated into an RTI or MTSS system. The DBI process itself is still very applicable for many of our students with intellectual disabilities.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Thank you Chris, I’m you said that. We; some of the schools that we worked with did have teachers that were on the Intervention Team who did teach self-contained classes that worked with kids with more significant disabilities. And we also did; do have some of our resources on our website that do address some of the needs of the students in regards to that population or who have alternative communications needs. Though it was not a primary focus.

We also had a couple of questions from Dean. Number one was about how many; actually this was talked about throughout the Webinar. But, how was fidelity assessed and then how many schools did we work with? And so again, with worked with over the course of this project we worked with about twenty-six schools. On a couple of related projects there are about twelve more that we’ve worked with using NCII materials and the framework of the DBI process.

But then; and also with respect to his other question, this might be one that we can speak to more generally. Which is about fidelity and how is it assessed? One of the things that we did at the
center was we have an implementation rubric that actually defines what full, partial and minimal implementation looks like. And we did do a structured interview process with folks in the schools that; using an individual who was affiliated with the center but who didn’t work directly with those schools. And then also with the school coach where they interviewed the school team about their implementation and asked specific pieces of information and artifacts related to implementation to get a sense of the level of implementation fidelity as a broader system.

We also asked questions and encouraged sites to evaluate fidelity of the delivery of interventions and of their assessment procedures. So we did find that those were done with kind of variable levels of implementation fidelity. And then finally, we’ve developed some materials related to monitoring fidelity of implementation of the DBI process for an individual student. So, for when you get to the point of adapting an intervention that may not be something where you’re following a script within a particular intervention program or where the process is manualized or scripted out for you.

So, it may be then that there are different components of the plan that you’re actually going to follow. So that in those cases, fidelity would really be did you adhere to your plan? And we’ve created a series of check lists and tracking tools for teachers and intervention teams to use to monitor that as well. And we can provide a link to that on our transcript; on our, in the chat box and also as a part of the transcript for the webinar.

Amy Peterson: And I actually just posted that link to the fidelity resources for everyone in the Chat Box.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Okay

Amy Peterson: That houses all of the fidelity resources. And you’ll find both the rubric as well as the other tools that Rebecca just noted.

Rebecca Zumeta Edmonds: Great. Well we are a few minutes over but I think we managed to answer all of the questions that came into the chat box. They were excellent questions so thank you for asking them. And thank you for sticking with us through this webinar.

And also many thanks to our panelists for the great information that they presented. We look forward to working with you in the next five years.

Chris Lemons: Thank you.

Kim Moore: Thanks, you’re very welcome.