



# **Improving Reading Scores for Students with Disabilities**

By Lalita Waites

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# Identification of Need

**Data Analysis and  
SMART Goal**

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# Data Review



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA (28)



**Level 1**  
43%

- K. Hensley
- E. Wright
- P. Henson
- L. Lowe
- A. Mitchell
- J. Young
- T. Crosier
- T. Ward
- D. Camara
- T. Tonic
- E. Finger
- M. Jones

**Level 2**  
46%

- J. Ector
- N. White
- R. Roseberry
- C. Spivey
- J. Wilkins
- F. Renteria
- S. Turner
- M. McDonald
- C. Baldauf
- L. Gaddis
- S. Newsome
- C. Sanders
- D. Brown

**Level 3**  
11%

- S. Agebmashiar
- V. Koontz
- C. Miller

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA (28)



**Level 1**  
41%

- A. Lattery
- D. Horton
- M. King
- J. Smith
- J. Bramwell
- A. Beasley
- M. Taylor
- G. Stover
- M. Smith
- M. Pugh
- G. Meade

**Level 2**  
37%

- K. Davis
- J. Daniels
- C. Soomdat
- A. Erb
- L. Garcia
- I. Alexander
- J. Bailey
- G. Granville
- S. Wood
- V. King
- A. Crump

**Level 3/4**  
22%

- A. Allen
- A. Land (4)
- J. Lopez
- S. Proffitt
- J. White
- M. McGinnis

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA (28)



**Level 1**  
54%

- K. Jackson
- M. Francois
- S. Lalor
- J. Brown
- A. Clay
- T. Dennis
- S. Daniels
- A. McCoy
- M. Jackson
- F. Baehre
- L. Pendelton
- J. Rolle
- C. Totten

**Level 2**  
39%

- D. Young
- A. Brown
- C. Coggins
- J. Cohen
- L. Dupree
- K. Strother
- E. Finger
- R. Dean
- A. Findley
- J. Piper
- D. Jones

**Level 3/4**  
7%

- T. James (4)
- E. Green



# Data Review



## Hot Spots:

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA





# Data Review



## SWD CCRPI:

### 2018- 2019 Targets:

- ELA 31.33
- Math 36.28
- Sci 26.65
- SS 31.85

### 2018- 2019 Results:

- ELA 35.64
- Math 36.17
- Sci 15.52
- SS 31.26



# Data Review

## What are your next steps?



- Add additional services where we can
- Special Education Teacher Training and Support for New Teachers
- Star Administration





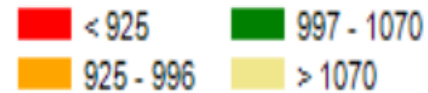
# Data Review



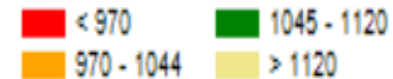
Current Grade

Classroom Lexile Performance

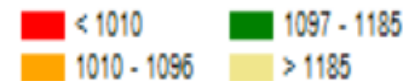
06



07



08





# Data Review



MilestonesEOG Spring Main 2018 - 2019

Achievement %

[-] ELA



[+] Grade 6



[+] Grade 7

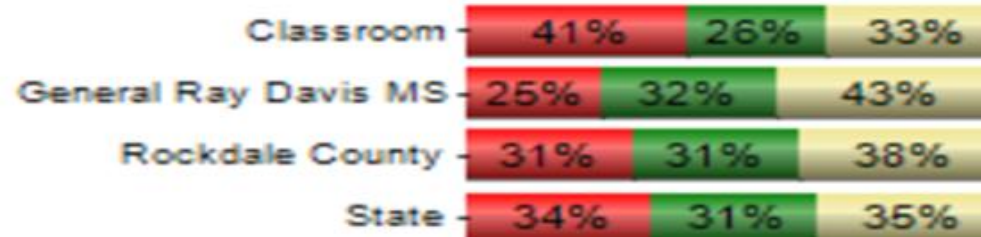


[+] Grade 8



## 2019 SPRING MilestonesEOG

### English/Language Arts





The 2019 EOG Milestone scores indicated 41% of students receiving additional reading support at General Ray Davis Middle School Scored in the low growth in ELA.

The 2019 EOG Milestone scores indicated 75.4% of students receiving additional reading support at General Ray Davis Middle scored in the Beginning Learner achievement in ELA.

The 2019-2020 STAR Reading results (most recent assessment per student) indicated that 21.4% of students fall in urgent intervention

# **High Priority Issue Identified**

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- Kimberly Dyer – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Assistant Principal
- Sabrina McCray – Lead Teacher for Compliance
- Karen Ravenell – Reading Connections Teacher
- Rachel Stroman – Special Education Department Chair

## **Team Members**

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# SMART Goal



With the use of LanguageLive  
as an intervention tool the  
subgroup, students with  
disabilities, will meet or  
exceed the SGP Target of 40-  
60 as measured by quarterly  
administration of STAR  
Reading.

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# EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Rockdale County Public Schools  
General Ray Davis Middle School

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# District Overview



## Overview

### DISTRICT INFORMATION

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED	18,511
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	18
TITLE I SCHOOLS	88.9%



### Student Subgroups

Student Subgroup ▲	Total enrollment ◆
Am Indian or Alaskan Nativ	28
Asian	220
Black	11,217
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	56
Hispanic	2,746
Multi-Racial	627

### Student Subgroups

Student Subgroup ▲	Total enrollment ◆
White	1,721
Special Ed	2,019
LEP	714
Economically Disadvantaged	11,464
Male	8,387
Female	8,229

# District Demographics



# School Overview



## Overview

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED

1,230

SCHOOL GRADES

06, 07, 08

ADDRESS

3375 E Fairview Rd SW  
Stockbridge, GA  
30281-5651

DISTRICT WEBSITE

<http://www.rockdale.k12.ga.us>

TITLE I STATUS

Y



Student Subgroup ^	Total enrollment
Am Indian or Alaskan Nativ	2
Asian	10
Black	779
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5
Hispanic	77
Multi-Racial	52
White	199
Special Ed	120
LEP	1
Economically Disadvantaged	600
Male	506
Female	618

# School Demographics



## Grade Levels

Grade Level ^	%Special Education
06	9.71%
07	12.35%
08	9.76%

## HOW DID STUDENT GROUPS IN THE SCHOOL PERFORM?

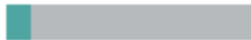


### LITERACY

	RATE
ALL STUDENTS	72.40%
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE	Too Few Students
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER	89.47%
BLACK	70.49%
HISPANIC	66.67%
MULTI-RACIAL	70.00%
WHITE	80.19%
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	64.49%
ENGLISH LEARNERS	40.00%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY	34.04%

# Educational Setting



Students served in grades 6-8 are the focus of this research (13 students)

Grade Levels		
Grade Level ^	%Special Education	
06		9.71%
07		12.35%
08		9.76%

## Target Group Demographics





# **ANTICIPATED BARRIERS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

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# Anticipated Barriers



- Lack of intervention strategies
    - Effective utilization of data
  - Teacher instructional strategies and implementation of strategies
    - Teacher adhering to pacing-guide
  - Inadequate identification of student disability
    - Student attendance
    - Unreliable results due to lack of motivation and "buy-in" from students
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# Assumptions



- Teachers are using the data from the STAR Reading Universal screeners to determine areas of deficits, differentiate instruction to develop student growth, and conference with students for goal-setting.
  - The District Lead Teacher for Compliance provides SWD teachers with additional support through professional learning opportunities.
  - Professional learning opportunities cover student achievement, reading strategies, planning, data analysis, and best practices for student instruction.
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# ROOT CAUSE ANALYSES

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# Five Why's



1. Why is the reading level of the SWD subgroup below the targeted SGP?
  2. Why is the SWD subgroup Lexile level below grade level?
  3. Why aren't reading programs implemented during Study Skills to remediate the reading deficits for the SWD subgroup?
  4. Why aren't teachers for SWD using STAR Reading screeners to inform instruction?
  5. Why isn't literacy implemented across all content areas?
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# Five Why's

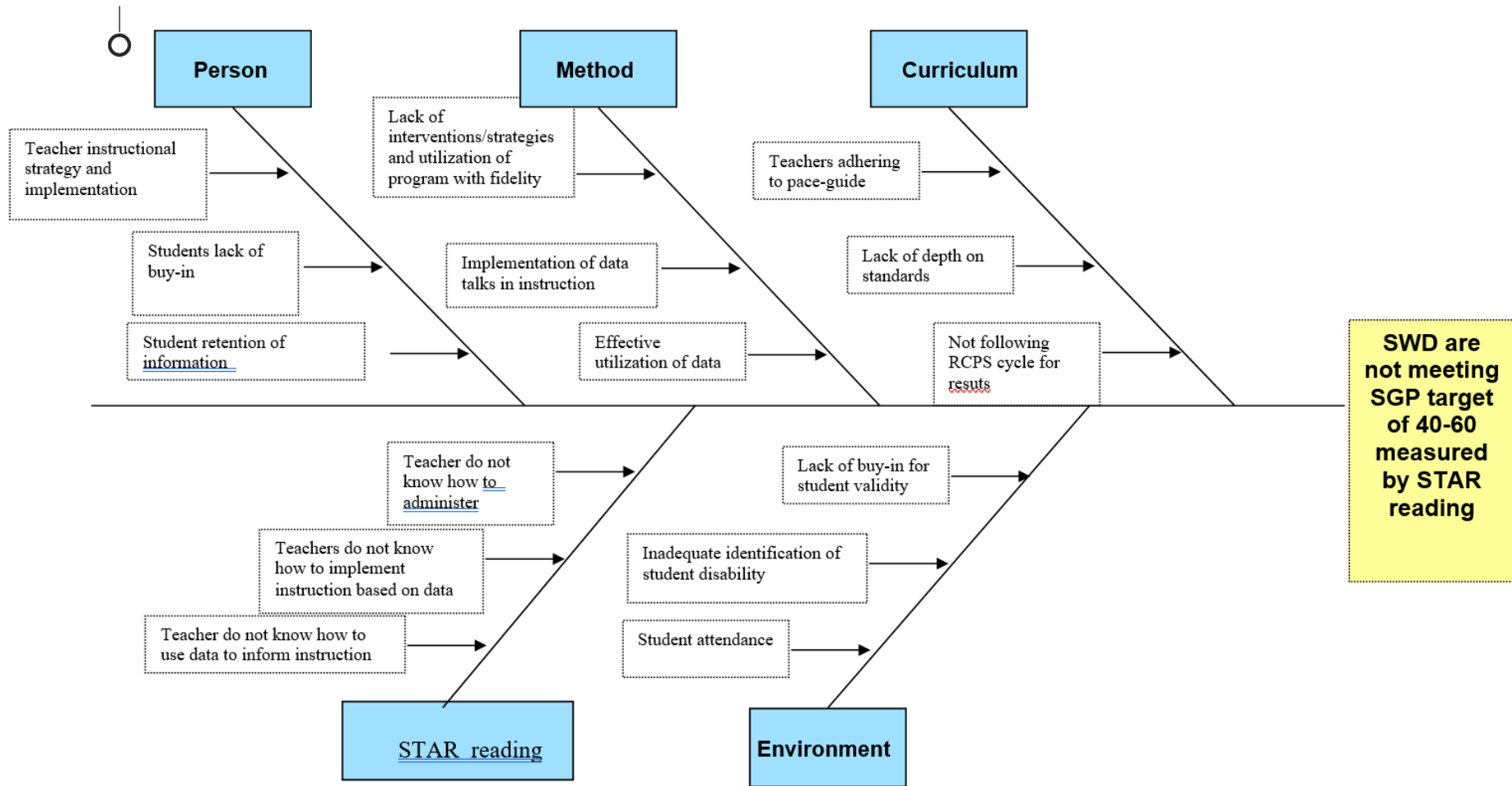


After reviewing the school improvement plan with the leadership team, I discussed the utilization of the reading program, Language Live. The program would be used as a remediation tool for the SWD subgroup. We also discussed utilizing the STAR Reading universal screener to progress monitor SWD students through quarterly administration. The action research team developed the "Five Whys" and agreed to use Language Live as a remediation tool.

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## Cause and Effect ("Fishbone") Diagram

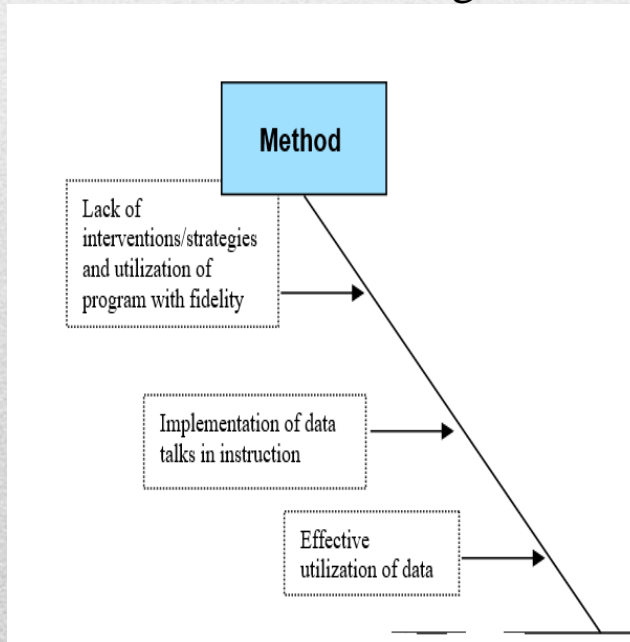




# Comparison of Root Cause Results



After analyzation of the preliminary data, fishbone diagram, and the five why's, it seems there's a lack in implementation of reading programs taught, and an inadequate use of data to inform reading instruction/strategies.



## Five Why's

1. Why is the subgroup SWD reading below the target?
2. Why is the subgroup SWD Lexile levels below grade level?
3. Why aren't reading programs implemented during 1<sup>st</sup> period block to remediate the Lexile Level and reading deficits for the subgroup SWD?
4. Why aren't teachers for SWD using STAR Reading screeners to inform instruction?
5. Why didn't the SWD subgroup not meet progress in the subjects Science and Social Studies?



# **VERIFICATION OF CAUSE(S)**

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# Verification of Cause(s)



Teachers admitted more time would allow for a deeper data dig.

Teachers stated they believed the validity of the STAR reading screeners are invalid due to lack of student motivation.

Students did not understand what the STAR Reading scores meant.

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# LITERATURE REVIEWX

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**Ciecierski, L., & Bintz, W. (2016). Paired texts: A way into the content area. Middle School Journal, 47(4), 32–44.**

Finding materials to help students make connections is difficult yet important. Textbooks do not naturally make connections across the text but are the primary resource for teachers. **Best practices and common core standards state the need for students to make connections across the text.** Students should demonstrate the ability to analyze two or more texts for a variety of purposes, build knowledge, examine similarities and differences in the approaches authors take, and make connections between themes and topics, events, and characters of texts. Students make connections with past readings, prior ideas, and previous literary experiences to construct a developing text. This is known as intertextuality.

# **Literature Review: Educational Significance**

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**Manset-Williamson, G., & Nelson, J. M. (2005). Balanced, Strategic Reading Instruction for Upper-Elementary and Middle School Students with Reading Disabilities: A Comparative Study of Two Approaches. Learning Disability Quarterly, 28(1), 59–74. <https://doi-org.proxygsu-sroc.galileo.usg.edu/10.2307/4126973>**

**Comparison of two supplemental reading interventions that targeted the decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension of upper elementary and middle school students with reading disabilities.** All students had significant delays in decoding, fluency, comprehension, and language processing. Two comparable, intensive tutorial treatments differed only in the comprehension strategy instruction. Meaningful progress in students' reading decoding, fluency, and comprehension were reported.

# **Literature Review: Educational Significance**

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**Pittman, P., & Honchell, B. (2014). Literature Discussion: Encouraging Reading Interest and Comprehension in Struggling Middle School Readers. Journal of Language & Literacy Education / Ankara Universitesi SBF Dergisi, 10(2), 118.**

This was a qualitative study exploring how literature discussion affects middle school struggling readers. The focus was on 16 middle school struggling readers in a rural Title I school in the southeastern United States. Findings indicated that (a) literature discussion increased student enjoyment of reading, and (b) students understood a text better during literature discussion when they used reading strategies along with prior knowledge to make connections between a text and their own lives. The discussion focused on the practice of literature discussion.

# **Literature Review:**

# **Educational Significance**

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**Stevens, M. B. (2014). Explicit Expository Text Structure That Improves the Reading Comprehension of Struggling Middle School Students. Kentucky English Bulletin, 63(2), 14.**

This article discusses the importance of teaching knowledge of text structure to support the comprehension of expository texts for middle school students. The article also discussed writing development as a tool for improving understanding of text structure, teaching organizational structures to help students realize the reciprocal nature of reading and writing, and structural elements of various expository text structures. The Comprehension Focus Group intervention is also described.

## **Literature Review: Educational Significance**

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Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Close Reading as an Intervention for Struggling Middle School Readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), 367–376. <https://doi-org.proxygsu-sroc.galileo.usg.edu/10.1002/jaal.266>

The article discussed an intervention focused on close reading procedures and improving student achievement. Close reading of complex text involves annotations, repeated reading, text-dependent questions, and discussions. The study involved 75 students in grades 7-8 who received close reading intervention and compared their outcomes with 247 students who received a traditional intervention. Results suggest that close reading can be an effective intervention, with significant increases in student attendance, self-perception, and achievement

## Literature Review: Educational Significance

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- Word Fluency & Decoding drills
- Literature Discussion Groups (LDGs)
- Paired Texts
- Model/Guided Practice/Independent Practice
- Close Reading
- Guided Reading
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Teaching knowledge of text structure

# **Research-Based Interventions**





- Building of Reading Stamina
- Thinking/Character Maps
- Think/Pair/Share
- Pre-teach/Review/ Re-contextualize Passage Vocabulary

# **Research-Based Interventions**





Research shows that intense instruction in reading strategies such as close reading, literature discussions, fluency and decoding drills have a positive impact on a student's comprehension and academic performance. Research has shown that Literature Discussion Groups (LDGs), fluency drills, and close readings are working with students similar to the students at General Ray Davis Middle. The literature discussion groups have proven to be effective in increasing student engagement and reading comprehension. Fluency drills are linked to improved understanding of text and reading comprehension. Students first need to focus on reading accurately. Once they know the words well, they can focus on speed. When students can read words with automaticity, it frees up space in their brains (cognitive desktop space) to think about the meaning of what they read.

# Reflection on the Literature

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Reasons why readers struggle:

- lack of phonics and decoding foundation,
- exposure of literacy during early years,
- lack of vocabulary acquisition,
- and text complexity

# Reflection on the Literature

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# ACTION PLAN

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- ☐ Word Fluency Drills
- ☐ Literature Discussions
- ☐ Close Readings

# **Interventions Selected**

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The leading data used for the action research project is the STAR Reading universal screener.

## **Leading Data**

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# Plan, Do, Check, Act



## Intervention 1:

### ❖ Word Fluency Drill:

#### Who

- Reading Teacher

#### When

- 2-3 days during reading connections

#### Monitoring

- Lesson Planning/Observation/Progress Chart in Student Workbook
-



# Plan, Do, Check, Act



## Intervention 2:

### ❖ Literature Discussion

#### Who

- Reading Teacher

#### When

- 2-3 days during reading connections

#### Monitoring

Lesson Planning/Observation

Feedback shared as a class as by asking /answering questions and referring to key details in the text.

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# Plan, Do, Check, Act



## Intervention 3:

❖ Close Reading

### Who

- Reading Teacher

### When

2-3 days during reading connections

### Monitoring

Lesson Planning/Observation/

Feedback was shared as a class when students discussed their  
answer to text dependent questions.

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- Students had to be monitored more closely while completing word training sessions of the reading program, Language Live.
- Pacing Guide made it challenging to remediate on texts that students struggled with understanding.
- Student attendance slowed pace of groups.
- Students lacked motivation to complete word training sessions.

## **Results of the Monitoring Process**



- Ensure students are not being pulled out during intervention segment.
- Create an incentive program to promote student participation and improve attendance.
- Monitor students closely to ensure they are completing word training activities online.

# Revisions to the Plan

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# **DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION**

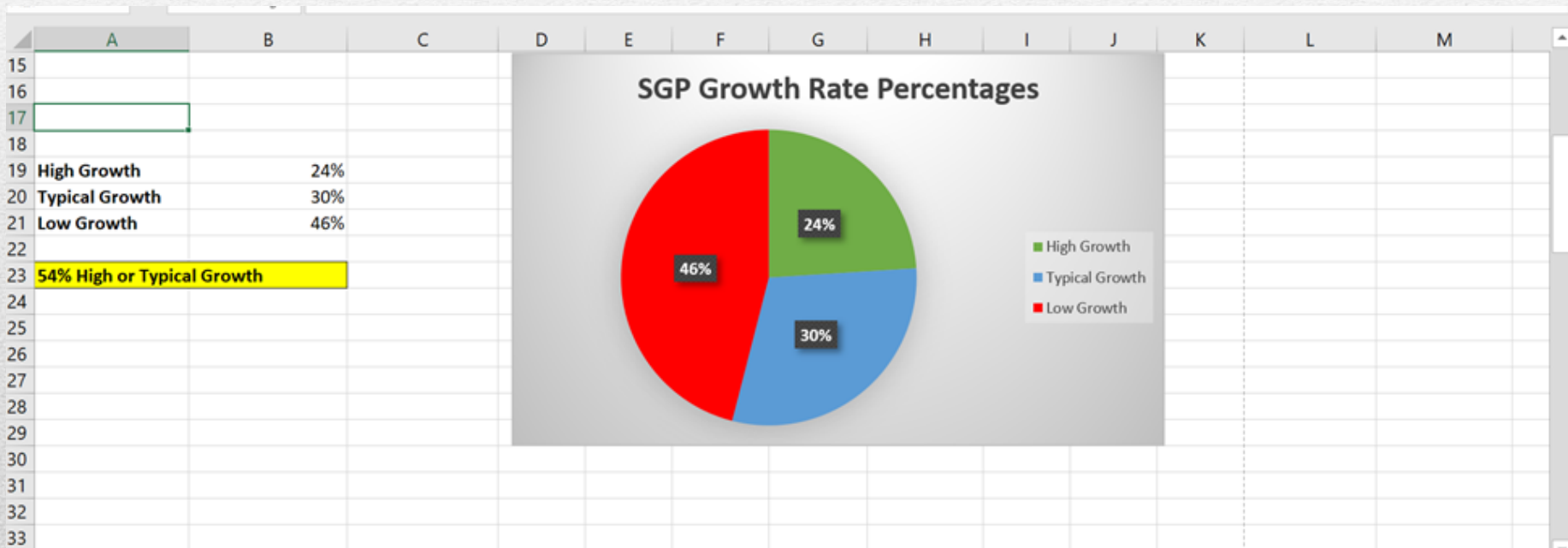
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A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	
Last name	First	Case Mgr	Grade	AOE	Baseline	October	December	Feb	April	Final	Current SGP	Growth Rate	
S	G.	Nimons	7	OHI	519	552	622	723			97	high	
K	V	Nimons	7	SLD	357	452	560	513			82	high	
J	M	Brooks	8	SLD	128	101	136	228			61	typical	
B	J	Hardy	8	SLD	459	418	378	499			58	typical	
H	D	Thomas-Newton	7	SLD	254	312	217	343			58	typical	
M	A	Brooks	8	SLD	353	425	469	437			53	typical	
S	C	Jewel	8	SLD, OHI		489	462	512			42	typical	
J	M	Manomano	6	SLD	399	471	491	477			32	low	
D	S	Brooks	8	SLD	197		216	225			22	low	
J	K	Hardy	8	OHI	316		89	250			16	low	
S	M	Nimons	7	OHI	411	329	311	307			9	low	
D	T	Brooks	8	SLD	462	235	346	221			2	low	
P	L	Jewel	8	OHI	296	75	86	88			1	low	
			SGP Growth Rate Percentages										
													
High Growth	24%												



# Results by Subpopulations







# **SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

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# Summary of Outcomes



54% of the students in the subgroup SWD met the student growth percentile target of 40-60 SGP.

When grades 6-8 were compared, 7<sup>th</sup> grade had the largest student growth. The greatest growth was observed in 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The lowest growth was observed in 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. When grades 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> were compared, 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA made the Hot Spot list. This is a list of students needing additional targeted instructional strategies based on identified focus skills from STAR which is directly aligned to Milestones. These students still failed to show growth.

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- ❖ One 6<sup>th</sup> grade student growth rate was lower than expected due to an unexpected low performance on February administering. Student was re-assessed two days later and scored with a typical performance relative to first semester.
- ❖ One 7<sup>th</sup> grade student showed a 200-point increase in scale score from baseline to February administering.
- ❖ One 8<sup>th</sup> grade student's behavior likely impacted his performance due to multiple behavior resolutions (suspensions).

# Unexpected Results

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- Students required motivation even on skills they were aware were challenging to them.
- An incentive should be considered to promote student attendance
- A system should be considered to ensure students are not missing instructional time due to other activities scheduled during the school day.
- Rockdale County Public Schools should consider a more comprehensive reading diagnostic.

## Lessons Learned

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- ☐ Expand the reading program (Language Live) to the 1<sup>st</sup> Period intervention block.
- ☐ Help teachers to implement the reading program who will teach the 1<sup>st</sup> period intervention block for reading.

## Next Steps

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Questions?

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