

# Three Tier Reading Project

Del Valle ISD  
in Collaboration with the Vaughn Gross Center for  
Reading and Language Arts  
University of Texas at Austin  
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# Del Valle ISD

8,000 Students

- African American: 15%
- Hispanic: 72%
- White: 11%
- Other: 2%
- Economically Disadvantaged: 74%
- Limited English Proficient: 23%
- Mobility Rate: 37%

# Geographically Large District

- 174 square miles
- 6 elementary schools
- 2 junior high schools
- 1 high school
- 1 alternative campus
- Schools are rural, suburban, and urban.
- Some bus routes are 1 hour to and from school-each way.

# Objectives for This Presentation

- Overview of the Three Tier Model
- Implementation of the Three Tier Model
- Impact, Lessons Learned and Sustainability of the Model
- Future Challenges

# Collaborative Relationship with UT

- Currently completing a 5-year study
- Targeted reading beginning in kindergarten
- Added a grade level each year
- Ended with third grade in 2005-06
- Final results are not completed
- General findings will be shared today

# Research Purpose

- Five year, longitudinal study
- Trying to reduce the number of students who are at risk for reading problems
- Reduce the number referred for special education assessment
- Reduce the number not meeting grade level benchmarks in reading

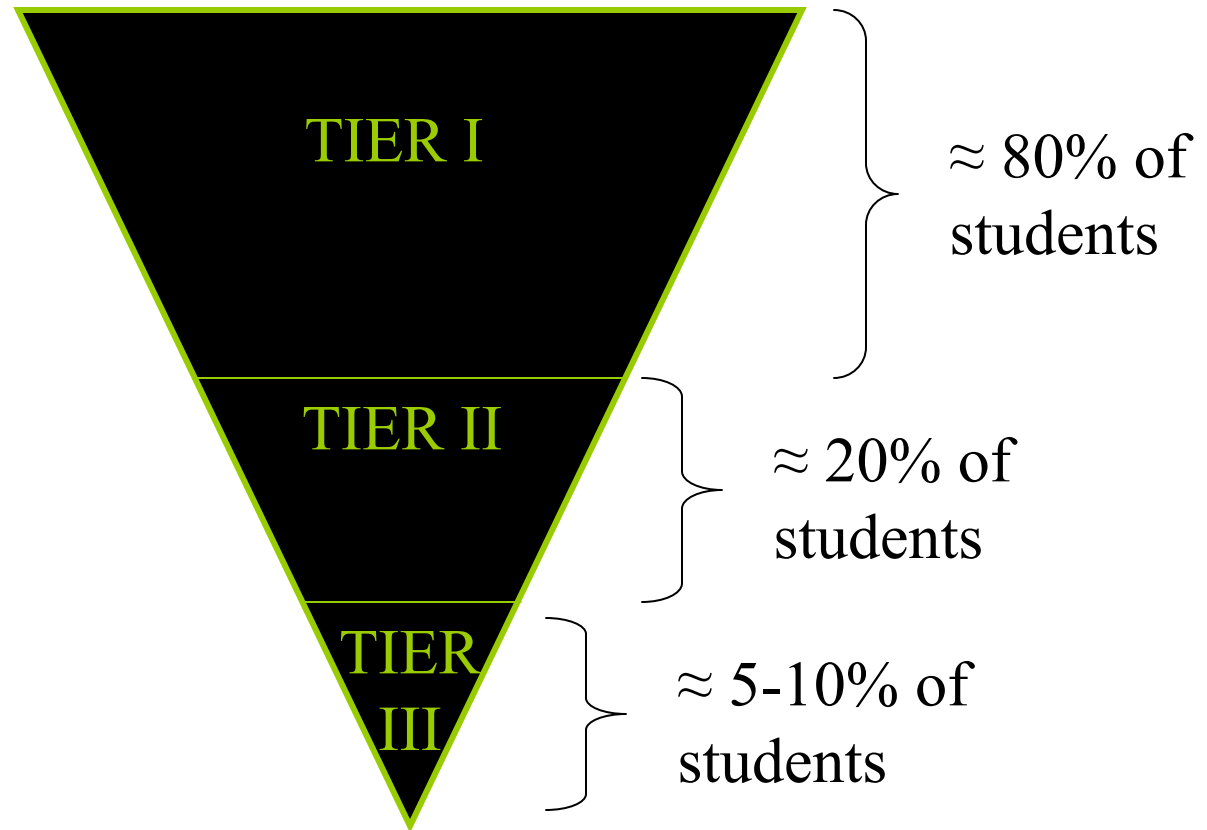
# What is tiered intervention?

- Layers of intervention responding to student needs
- Each tier provides more intense intervention
- Aimed at preventing reading difficulties

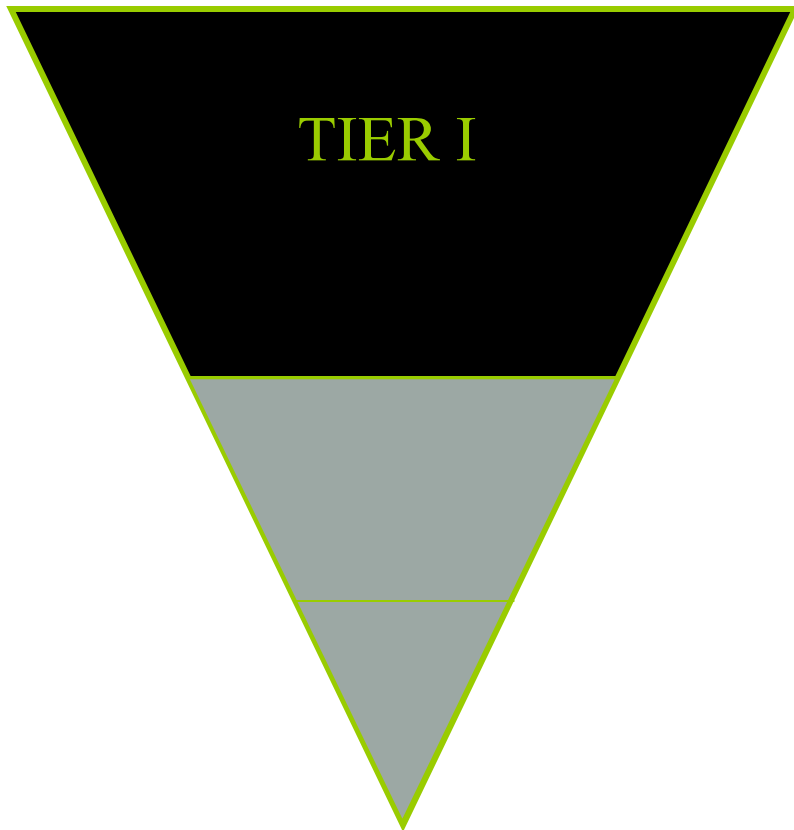
# Why tiered instruction?

- Importance of prevention
- Dissatisfaction with achievement/IQ discrepancy model
- Provides a framework for strengthening core reading instruction

# Who is served?



# Tier I: Core Class Instruction



Tier I is comprised of three elements:

- progress monitoring of at-risk students
- ongoing professional development
- in-class support and mentoring

# Tier I: Core Classroom Instruction

- Prevents struggling students from continuing to struggle
- Progress monitoring-- using data to positively impact instruction
- Teachers received coaching and excellent staff development
- Results were monitored with instruction and resources adjusted as needed
- All students received Tier I instruction.

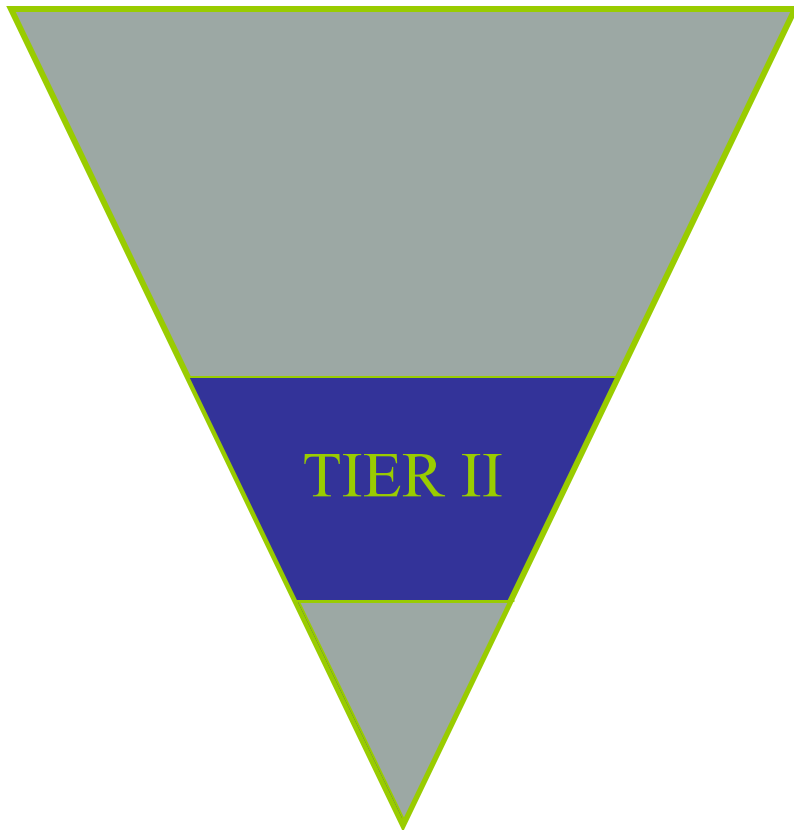
# Tier I: Core Class Instruction (cont'd)

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus           | For all students K-3                                                                                                                                                              |
| Program         | Scientific-based reading instruction and curriculum emphasizing the five critical elements of beginning reading (vocabulary, comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency) |
| Grouping        | Multiple grouping formats to meet student needs                                                                                                                                   |
| Time            | 90 minutes per day or more                                                                                                                                                        |
| Assessment      | Benchmark assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year                                                                                                       |
| Interventionist | General education teacher                                                                                                                                                         |
| Setting         | General education classroom                                                                                                                                                       |

# Core Instruction: Not a New Program

- Did not bring in a new program
- Did learn new strategies for struggling readers
- More difficult for veteran teachers to be open to new ideas about teaching reading
- Teachers with less than 5 years of experience were more open to new techniques.

# Tier II: Small group intervention

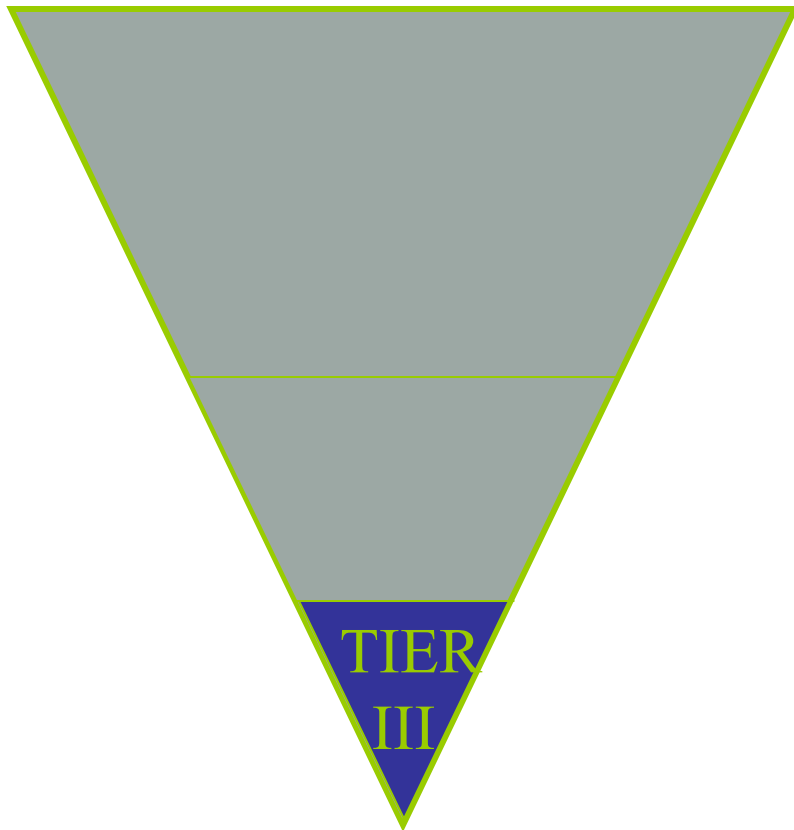


- Tier II is small-group instruction in addition to the time allotted for core reading instruction.
- Tier II includes programs, strategies, and procedures designed and employed to *supplement, enhance, and support* Tier I.
- All students in need received interventions from someone.

## Tier II: Supplemental instruction (cont'd)

|                 |                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus           | For students identified with marked reading difficulties, and who have not responded to Tier I efforts           |
| Program         | Specialized, scientifically-based reading program(s) emphasizing the five critical elements of beginning reading |
| Grouping        | Homogeneous small group instruction (1:5)                                                                        |
| Time            | 25-30 minutes per day in small group in addition to 90 minutes of core reading instruction                       |
| Assessment      | Weekly progress monitoring on target skills to ensure adequate progress and learning                             |
| Interventionist | Research-provided interventionist                                                                                |
| Setting         | Appropriate setting outside the classroom designated by the school                                               |

# Tier III: Intensive intervention



- Tier III is intensive, strategic, supplemental instruction specifically designed and customized small-group reading instruction that is extended beyond the time allocated for Tier I and Tier II.

## Tier III: Intensive intervention (cont'd)

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focus           | For students with marked difficulties in reading or reading disabilities who have not responded adequately to Tier I and Tier II efforts                       |
| Program         | Sustained, intensive, scientifically-based reading program(s) emphasizing the critical elements of reading for students with reading difficulties/disabilities |
| Grouping        | Homogeneous small group instruction (1:3)                                                                                                                      |
| Time            | 50 minutes per day in small group in addition to 90 minutes of core reading instruction                                                                        |
| Assessment      | Weekly progress monitoring on target skills to ensure adequate progress and learning                                                                           |
| Interventionist | Research-provided interventionist                                                                                                                              |
| Setting         | Appropriate setting outside the classroom designated by the school                                                                                             |

# Number of students receiving Tier II and Tier III interventions varied among schools.

- UT criteria for selecting students depended upon cut off scores for Dibels and resources available for interventionists.
- Overall, the number of students referred for Sp. Ed. assessment has decreased since core instruction has improved.
- All students in need received intervention—if not from UT staff then from the teachers or after school tutoring.

# How do they differ?

|                                    | <b>Tier II instruction</b>              | <b>Tier III instruction</b>                         |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Daily instruction</b>           | <b>Minimum of 30 minutes (+ Tier I)</b> | <b>Minimum of 30 minutes twice a day (+ Tier I)</b> |
| <b>Duration</b>                    | <b>10 - 12 weeks (1 or 2 rounds)</b>    | <b>10 - 12 weeks (possibly several rounds)</b>      |
| <b>Group size</b>                  | <b>1: 3 to 5</b>                        | <b>1:3</b>                                          |
| <b>Ongoing progress monitoring</b> | <b>every 2 weeks</b>                    | <b>every 2 weeks</b>                                |

# Research questions...

- What is the relative value of Tier I and Tier II interventions in kindergarten, first, second and third grades?
- What is the impact of effective professional development on the critical elements of reading instruction?
- What is the impact of supplemental interventions for at-risk students?

# Three Reasons for Three-Tier Model

- Tier I: Prevention (quality core classroom reading instruction for all students; quality reading intervention staff development for all teachers at the involved grade levels)
- Tier II: Intervention (small group targeted and explicit instruction)
- Tier III: Identification (for more intensive interventions, such as referral to Sp. Ed. for assessment)

# Participation by principals...

- Scores were higher in schools where the principal regularly participated in the staff development and monitored implementation of best practices for reading.
- Teachers were expected to try at least one new strategy and report the results to their teams within a week of the training.

“I may not be able to try it all....but I can try something.”

- Resulted in sharing of ideas and problem solving for ways to help struggling readers
- Prevented the overwhelmed response
- Held teachers accountable but provided support
- Expectations were reasonable.
- Put the focus on teams of teachers learning and sharing

# Maximizing Time for Reading Instruction

- Continuous challenge of time
- Maximizing time for instruction is even more important for students from poverty and who are mobile.
- Have to make up for the lack of experiences outside of school
- Teachers have to rethink what works with each student.

# What we have learned about reading instruction.....

Balanced program focusing on

- Comprehension
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics

# Continuous Monitoring

- Student progress
- Teacher focus
- Provides the framework to adjust instruction as students' progress
- Prevents non-productive use of instructional time

# Scientific Study

- All teachers at the targeted grade level received the staff development.
- Randomly selected students who met the criteria need received Tier II interventions from UT tutors.
- All students below level and in need received additional instruction from school staff (teachers and school provided tutors).

# Issues we faced....

- Student mobility significantly impacted our groups
- Keeping the momentum going
- Finding time for added instruction
- Training new teachers when they were hired
- Scheduling refresher training during the summer for returning teachers

# More challenges....

- Adjusting instruction expectations
- Moving from a developmental model to an academic model for kindergarten  
(Naps had to go!)
- Using existing basal reading adoption and adding supplemental materials to cover all areas for reading instruction

# Equity vs. Research

- Equity was an issue due to the need for some students to be excluded from the UT tutoring intervention.
- Methods and the program used by the UT tutors was not shared with teachers or administrators.
- Agreed that in-school tutoring would not be provided for those students served by UT. They were served after school.

# Impact of Progress Monitoring

- Teachers knew that the progress of their students would be monitored as a class and as a grade level.
- Although district-wide the results were compared, they were not used for teacher evaluation or shared among the different schools.
- Results were used to focus on students and interventions.
- Did not result in “gotchas” but awareness was heightened.

# Newer Teachers' Students Outscored Veteran Teachers' Students

- Buy-in due to results
- Wait and see became “I need to do that.”
- The data was used to improve and target instruction.

# Added a grade level each year...

- First year: planning
- Second year: kindergarten (training for teachers with support from reading coach from UT)
- Third year: first grade with support in kindergarten
- Fourth year: second grade with support in first grade

# Current year: #5 of the study

- Fifth year: Third grade with support in second grade
- This year 92% of our third graders passed the state test in our school. Results were similar throughout the district.
- Benchmarking second graders with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade assessments to prepare for 06-07
- Reading achievement ranges from high 70's to low 90's in grades K, 1, 2.

# Overall Results

- Students achievement improved in all grade levels as the project expanded to each of four grade levels.
- Teacher effectiveness for reading improved.
- Accountability for instruction became more of a focus for the primary grade levels.
- Teachers became more sophisticated with the use of data to improve instruction.

# More “unofficial” results

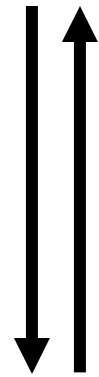
- Decrease in the number of students reading below grade level
- Decrease in the number of students referred for special education assessment

# Sustainability of the 3-Tier Model

- Crucial factors: resources and buy-in
- Considerations:
  - Leadership
  - Expectations
  - Personnel
  - Organization
  - Accountability/evaluation
  - Training

# Sustainability Crucial Factors: Resources

- Funding
  - No additional funds
  - Some additional funds
  - Various additional funds
- Changeability of funding
  - Must have a plan in place that considers the consequences of reduced funding



# Sustainability Considerations: Leadership

- Help and encourage teacher implementation
- Observe instruction
- Check on student status
- Challenge of change

# Sustainability Considerations: Leadership

|                                   | <b>No<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> | <b>Some<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> | <b>Various<br/>additional funds</b>                 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Teacher<br/>implementation</b> | Principal                          | Principal                            | Principal and<br>reading specialist                 |
| <b>Observe<br/>instruction</b>    | Grade level<br>leaders             | Grade level<br>leaders               | Reading<br>specialist and<br>Grade level<br>leaders |
| <b>Student status</b>             | Principal                          | Teacher<br>leader/Title I            | Data coordinator                                    |

# Sustainability Considerations: Personnel

- Training
  - More individualized (“IEP”)
- Trainers
- Interventionists for Tiers II and III
  - Part-time tutors, reading specialists, special education teachers, classroom teachers
- Utilizing existing personnel most effectively
- Training and using parents in school and at home

# Sustainability Considerations: Personnel

|                                                    | <b>No<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> | <b>Some<br/>additional<br/>funds</b>               | <b>Various<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Training for<br/>New Teachers</b>               | Teachers on<br>the Team            | Grade Level<br>Leader<br>(with help from<br>a sub) | Consultants                             |
| <b>Additional<br/>Support for New<br/>Teachers</b> | Teachers on<br>the Team            | Grade Level<br>Leader                              | Consultants                             |

# Sustainability Considerations: Organization

- Assessment and progress monitoring schedule
- Meetings to discuss student progress
  - Time built-in for this to occur
- Professional development plan
- **Tier I instruction**
- Tier II instruction

# Sustainability Considerations: Organization

|                                            | <b>No<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> | <b>Some<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> | <b>Various<br/>additional<br/>funds</b> |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier I<br/>Instruction</b>              | Small group<br>Explicit            | Small group<br>Explicit              | Small group<br>Explicit                 |
| <b>In-class<br/>Support for<br/>Tier I</b> | Peers/Older<br>students            | Extra<br>Personnel                   | Extra<br>Personnel                      |

# Sustainability Considerations: Organization

|                                | No<br>additional<br>funds                                             | Some<br>additional<br>funds                                           | Various<br>additional<br>funds                                        |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier II<br/>Instruction</b> | Additional 30<br>minutes of<br>instruction<br>Small group<br>Explicit | Additional 30<br>minutes of<br>instruction<br>Small group<br>Explicit | Additional 30<br>minutes of<br>instruction<br>Small group<br>Explicit |
| <b>Interventionist</b>         | Teacher                                                               | Tutors                                                                | Tutors                                                                |

# Sustainability Considerations: Problem Solving

- Teachers at each grade level regularly meeting with principal
- Providing opportunities for teachers to observe one another
- Utilizing the Student Assistance Team for students making little progress
- Teachers meeting weekly to share ideas and discuss issues

# Sustainability Considerations: Accountability/Evaluation

- Using the training techniques
- Using progress monitoring
- Progress toward reading goals
- Using data to inform instruction
- Organize and analyze data

# Sustainability Considerations: Future Planning

- New teachers
- Mentors
- Materials
  - Re-using existing materials
  - Searching for new materials continually
  - Consistency with use of materials among district schools to lessen the impact of student mobility

# 3-Tier Model: Why Continue?

- Benefits we have observed
  - Student achievement
    - Concrete evidence for student success
    - Using progress monitoring to adjust instruction (This is what has benefited students the most.)
  - Teacher status/Expertise
    - “Experts” in reading instruction
    - Teachers have taken the training and made it theirs-students’ reading scores prove it works.
    - Consultation/coaching after training is an effective model paired with principal expectation that effective instruction will be provided.
    - Follow-through after training
  - Parent conferences
    - Real and measurable progress

# Next Step?

- Tier III

Questions we are now working on. We don't have the answers yet.....

- What will Tier III look like? Who will provide it?
- We don't want to use the same strategies only in a small group.
- How will we use the model to move away from a discrepancy model for identifying students for possible special education placement and services?

# Interface with our Special Education Program and Staff Use

- How can we creatively use the staff we have to meet the needs of all our students?
- How will it be funded?
- Bringing consistency to our intervention programs provided by Sp. Ed. staff across the district.

# Small Group Instruction

- There is a need for consistency with strategies used for interventions.
- Investigating programs that can be used by tutors and for special education reading interventions
- Tier Three needs to be explicit, measurable interventions to meet the criteria for response to intervention mandate.

# We have been waiting for directions from our state

- Specifics for Response to Intervention
- Funding for these additional resources
- How to use the Three Tier Model for possible identification for services for students who aren't responding to Tier II interventions—another big challenge.

# Resources

- <http://reading.uoregon.edu/appendices/maps.php> (Big Ideas in Beginning Reading, University of Oregon)
- 4 Dimensions of Core Reading Instruction; Implementing Effective Core Reading Instruction; Thea Woodruff, [theawoodruff@hotmail.com](mailto:theawoodruff@hotmail.com)

# More Resources

- Texas Education Agency: Online Teacher Reading Academy, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ([www.texasreading.org/otra](http://www.texasreading.org/otra))
- Klinger, Vaughn, Dimino, Schumm and Bryant (2001) Collaborative Strategic Reading. Longmont, Colorado: Sopris West.